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# Interaction

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Putin confronts the American dystopia



UN anti-money laundering dept. launches investigation against Nawaz Sharif



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**Editorial Aug 2018**

## **Save Pakistan from Destabilization**

Elections 2018 have been historic in many ways particularly with regard to the hope it has instilled in the people of Pakistan. Mr. Imran Khan's party, Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI), has won majority of the seats in the National assembly and will be forming the federal government. Also it seems that PTI will succeed in forming its government in Punjab while they will be retaining their status as the ruling party in KPK province. PTI's overall performance in terms of votes received in 2018 elections is commendable as PTI has grown as a serious political force mainly due to the efforts of Mr. Imran Khan. These elections may be seen as the evolution of democracy in Pakistan and in that regard these elections should be celebrated by all Pakistan nationals. These celebrations, however, are somewhat dented mainly due to the reaction of the other political parties on their losses in the general election 2018. In the APC led by Molana Fazal Ur Rehman, his statement was too harsh and he warned of dire consequences for the country. Such a warning is uncalled for and it reeks of conspiracy because anywhere in the world such a statement about one's own country would be considered treacherous as only enemies of Pakistan will benefit from its destabilization. In the past five years such threats of dire consequences for Pakistan from the political players within, have become very common and it leaves the nation in confusion as to whose side such elements are on. It raises questions on the very oath that such politicians take when they are in parliament.

Molana rather Mr. Fazal Ur Rehman, it seems, cannot digest the fact that he actually lost the elections and is not a part of the national assembly anymore, proving that he considers his own self above that of the nation and country and that he desires the seat of power for some other reason other than serving the country. It is important to ask Mr. Fazal Ur Rehman whether his loyalty to Pakistan is conditional to his election in parliament? The same question can be posed to the heads and members of other political parties who participated in all parties' conference (APC). Mr. Shahbaz Sharif, for instance, should be reminded that he was the Chief Minister of Punjab, Pakistan, just a month back and all that he is now is owed to Pakistan. It is important to ask him and his political workers that what is important to them, Pakistan or their own lust for the throne. Is their goal to destabilize and disintegrate Pakistan? Have they aligned themselves with the enemies of Pakistan? Have they forgotten what this country has given them? Have they forgotten the oaths that they took when they were running the government of Pakistan? The answers to these questions are crucial at this time when Pakistan is facing a serious threat from both foreign enemies and from enemies within this country. These parties should remember that when they won in general elections 2013, despite claims of foul play, the opposition accepted their mandate and they did not refrain from taking oath. Instead the opposition exercised their democratic rights while remaining a part of this system. This was a far more appropriate approach which kept the government on its toes, exposed their corruption and led way for the truth to come out. Similarly if the opposition parties view these elections to be rigged, despite the mass acceptance of PTI's mandate by the public, then they should follow the system and should opt for the right way of exposing what they believe to be the truth. Pakistan is a democratic state with an independent judiciary which has proved itself to be above all pressure and capable enough to serve justice. Therefore, the opposition parties should exercise their democratic rights and should lodge their protest while remaining a part of this system instead of looking to take measures which seem arrogant and are aimed at destabilizing Pakistan.

## **PTI tipped for victory as majority election results announced**

### **Imran Khan's PTI leads as ECP declares results of 261 of 270 NA seats**

ISLAMABAD (25 July, 2018) ECP declares complete results of provincial assemblies; PTI bags KP with majority; PML-N fares slightly better than PTI in Punjab; PPP retains hold in Sindh.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf is leading on 117 National Assembly seats whereas Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has managed to take 64 seats so far in general election 2018. According to results of majority constituencies, Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPP-P) stands at third position with 44 seats, while 19 seats have been claimed by independent candidates.

In Punjab, the preliminary results show PTI has taken 124 seats with PML-N holding 129 provincial seats. Independent candidates have bagged 28 seats so far.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, PTI stood on top slot with 65 seats whereas ANP only claimed eight seats.

In Sindh, PTI has emerged as second largest party with 22 seats while PPP grabbed 75 seats so far.

In Balochistan, the situation is different where Balochistan Awami Party took 14 seats so but PTI failed to impress the voters.

### **PTI leads, while others cry foul**

- \* PTI leading on 114 NA seats, followed by PML-N with 64 and PPP with 44 seats
- \* Voter turnout estimated at between 50 to 55 per cent
- \* PML-N, PPP including others political parties rejects poll results due to 'massive irregularities'
- \* PPP claims all parties but one being pushed to wall
- \* ECP rejects claims of all political parties, demands evidence

### **Candidates and voters**

Over 12,500 candidates were in the run for the seats of National and provincial assemblies. According to the electoral rolls, 105.96 million voters were eligible to cast the vote. Of these, 59.22 million were male and 46.73 million are females. As per ECP record, 59.22 percent of the registered voters in Pakistan are males while only 46.73pc are females.

ECP set up 85,307 polling stations across the country. Around 20,000 polling stations were declared sensitive and CCTV cameras were installed inside and outside all the sensitive polling stations.

**In Punjab**, with results from 19 per cent polling stations available with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the PML-N is currently leading the race with 129 provincial seats and PTI is closing in with 123 seats. Independent candidates are leading the race at 28 seats in the province.

**In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)**, the PTI is clearly steering ahead with 65 seats against Awami National Party (ANP), which currently has 10 seats, as per reporting from 16 per cent polling stations in the province. The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) is also leading on 10 provincial assembly seats.

**In Sindh**, the PPP is currently leading the race with 75 seats, followed by PTI's 23 and MQM's 16 seats, Grand Democratic Alliance 11 seats.

**In Balochistan**, Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) is leading the contest with 15 seats, Mutahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan 9 seats, while Balochistan National Party (BNP) has secured 6 seats.

Gallup Pakistan has estimated voter turnout at between 50 to 55 per cent in an electorate of nearly 106 million similar to the previous contest in 2013. According to the data released by ECP, a total of 3,459 candidates 1,623 from Punjab, 824 from Sindh, 725 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 287 from Balochistan were cleared to run for the 272 general seats of the National Assembly.

## Biggest upsets of General Elections 2018 in Pakistan

Leader JUI-F Maulana Fazal ur Rehman in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi in NA 53 and NA 57

ANP leader , Ghulam Ahmed Bilour lost against PTI's from NA 31 – Peshawar.

MMA's Siraj ul Haq defeat in, Lower Dir by by PTI's Muhammad Bashir Khan.

Ex-Interior Minister, Chaudhry Nisar lost their seats against PTI's in Rawalpindi.

Pakistan Sar-Zameen Party leader Mustafa Kama defeat in Karachi.

Former Minister for Water and Power, Abid Sher Ali, lost his seats from Faisalabad.

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As per ECP record, 59.22 percent of the registered voters in Pakistan are males while only 46.73pc are females.

Province	Male Voters	Female Voters	Total Voters
Balochistan	2,486,230	1,813,264	4,299,494
FATA	1,507,902	1,002,252	2,510,154
Federal Area	407,463	357,885	765,348
KhyberPakhtunkhwa	8,705,831	6,610,468	15,316,299
Punjab	33,679,992	26,992,876	60,672,868
Sindh	12,436,844	9954400	22,391,244
<b>Total</b>	<b>59,224,262</b>	<b>46,731,145</b>	<b>105,955,407</b>

# Pakistan General Election 2018 Result

<b>Election Result</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>297</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Party</b>	<b>National Assembly</b>	<b>Punjab</b>	<b>Sindh</b>	<b>KPK</b>	<b>Blochistan</b>
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	114	123	23	65	04
Pakistan Muslim League(N)	64	129	0	5	1
Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians	43	6	75	4	1
Independent .....	13	28	0	5	05
Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan .....	13	5	1	10	9
Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan .....	6	0	16	0	0
Pakistan Muslim League (Q) .....	5	7	0	0	0
Balochistan Awami Party .....	3	1	0	0	15
Balochistan National Party .....	2	0	0	0	06
Grand Democratic Alliance .....	2	5	11	0	0
Awami Muslim League Pakistan .....	1	0	0	0	0
Awami National Party .....	1	0	0	6	03
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insania .....	1	0	0	0	0
Pakistan Awami Raj .....	0	1	0	0	0
Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan .....	0	0	2	0	0
Balochistan Awami Party (Awami) .....	0	0	0	0	03
Hazara Democratic Party .....	0	0	0	0	02
Jamhoori Wattan Party .....	0	0	0	0	01
Pashtoon Milli Awami Party .....	0	0	0	0	01

## list of National Assembly seats for General Elections 2018

### Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Constituencies

NA-1 Chitral	Molana Abdul Akbar Chit..	MMA	48616
NA-2 Swat 1	Haider Ali Khan	PTI	61687
NA-3 Swat 2	Saleem Rehman	PTI	68162
NA-4 Swat 3	Murad Saeed	PTI	71600
NA-5 Upper Dir	Sahibzada Sibghatullah	PTI	66545
NA-6 Lower Dir 1	Mehboob Shah	PTI	63440
NA-7 Lower Dir 2	Muhammad Bashir Khan	PTI6	3017
NA-8 Malakand protected areas	Junaid Akbar	PTI	81310
NA-9 Buner	Sher Akbar Khan	PTI	58037
NA-10 Shangla	Ibadullah Khan	PML-N	34070
NA-11 Kohistan	Dost Muhammad Shakir	IND1	15859
NA-12 Batagram	Muhammad Nawaz Khan	PTI3	4270
NA-13 Mansehra 1	Shah Jahan Yousuf	PML-N	109262
NA-14 Mansehra cum Torghar	Muhammad Sajjad	IND	74889
NA-15 Abbotabad 1	Murtaza Javed Abbasi	PML-N	95340
NA-16 Abbotabad 2	Ali Khan Jadoon	PTI	85203
NA-17 Haripur	Omar Ayub	PTI	172609
NA-18 Swabi 1	Asad Qaiser	PTI	78970
NA-19 Swabi 2	Eng.Usman Khan Trakai	PTI	83903
NA-20 Mardan 1	Mujahid Ali	PTI	78140
NA-21 Mardan 2	Amir Haider Khan Hoti	ANP	78911
NA-22 Mardan 3	Ali Muhammad Khan	PTI	58577
NA-23 Charsadda 1	Anwar Taj	PTI	59371
NA-24 Charsadda 2	Fazal Muhammad Khan	PTI	83495
NA-25 Nowshera 1	Pervez Khan Khattak	PTI	82118
NA-26 Nowshera 2	Imran Khattak	PTI	90256
NA-27 Peshawar 1	Noor Alam Khan	PTI	71158
NA-28 Peshawar 2	Arbab Amir Ayub	PTI	74414
NA-29 Peshawar 3	Nasir Khan Mosa Zai	PTI	49762
NA-30 Peshawar 4	Sher Ali Arbab	PTI	73781
NA-31 Peshawar 5	Shaukat Ali	PTI	87895
NA-32 Kohat	Shehryar Khan Afridi	PTI	28819
NA-33 Hangu	Khial Zaman	PTI	77181
NA-34 Karak	Shahid Ahmad Khattak	PTI	67000
NA-35 Bannu	Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi	PTI	113822
NA-36 Lakki Marwat	Muhammad Anwar Khan	MMA	91065
NA-37 Tank	Asad Mehmood	MMA	27871
NA-38 DI Khan 1	Ali Ameen Khan Gandapur	PTI	80236
NA-39 DI Khan 2	Muhammad Yaqoob Sheikh	PTI	79150

### FATA Constituencies

NA-40 Bajaur	Agency 1 Gul Dad Khan	PTI	34616
NA-41 Bajaur	Agency 2 Gul Zafar Khan	PTI	22730
NA-42 Bajaur	Agency 3 Sajid khan	PTI	22770
NA-43 Mohmand Agency	Noor Ul haq Qadri	PTI	32000
NA-44 Khyber Agency 1			
NA-45 Khyber Agency 2	Syed Jamal	PTI	13601
NA-46 Kurram Agency	Sajid Hussain Turi	PPPP	21461
NA-47 Orakzai	Jawad Hussain	PTI	11102
NA-48 North Waziristan	Mohsin Javed	IND	16415
NA-49 South Waziristan 1	M Jamal Uddin	MMA	7794
NA-50 South Waziristan 2	Muhammad Ali	IND	20868

NA-51 Frontier Region

Abdul Shakoor

MMA 20065

## ICT Constituencies

NA-52 Islamabad 1

Raja Khurram Shahzad Na..

PTI 64690

NA-53 Islamabad 2

Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi

PTI 92891

NA-54 Islamabad 3

Asad Umar

PTI 56945

## Punjab Constituencies

NA-55 Attock 1

Tahir Sadiq

PTI 101776

NA-56 Attock 2

Tahir Sadiq

PTI 163326

NA-57 Rawalpindi 1

Sadaqat Ali Abbasi

PTI 97104

NA-58 Rawalpindi 2

Raja Pervaiz Ashraf

PPPP 125090

NA-59 Rawalpindi 3

Ghulam Sarvar Khan

PTI 89055

NA-60 Rawalpindi 4

Postponed

NA-61 Rawalpindi 5

Aamer Mehmood Kiyani

PTI 105000

NA-62 Rawalpindi 6

Sheikh Rashid Ahmad

AML 117719

NA-63 Rawalpindi 7

Ghulam Sarvar Khan

PTI 102267

NA-64 Chakwal 1

Zulfiqar Ali Khan

PTI 155214

NA-65 Chakwal 2

Chaudry Pervaiz Elahi

PML-Q 106081

NA-66 Jhelum 1

Chaudhry Farrukh Altaf

PTI 112356

NA-67 Jhelum 2

Fawad Ahmed

PTI93102

NA-68 Gujrat 1

Hussain Elahi

PML-Q 104678

NA-69 Gujrat 2

Chaudry Pervaiz Elahi

PML-Q 122336

NA-70 Gujrat 3

Syed Faiz ul Hassan

PTI 95168

NA-71 Gujrat 4

Muhammad Ilyas Chuadhry

PTI 89545

NA-72 Sialkot 1

Armaghan Subhani

PML-N 129041

NA-73 Sialkot 2

Khawaja Muhammad Asif

PML-N 116957

NA-74 Sialkot 3

Ali Zahid

PML-N 97237

NA-75 Sialkot 4

Syed Iftikhar Ul Hassan

PML-N 101617

NA-76 Sialkot 5

Rana Shamim Ahmed Khan

PML-N 133664

NA-77 Narowal 1

Mehnaz Aziz

PML-N 111216

NA-78 Narowal 2

Ahsan Iqbal

PML-N 159651

NA-79 Gujranwala 1

Nisar Ahmad Cheema

PML-N 142545

NA-80 Gujranwala 2

Chaudhry Mehmood Bashir

PML-N 108653

NA-81 Gujranwala 3

Khurram Dastagir Khan

PML-N 130837

NA-82 Gujranwala 4

Usman Ibrahim

PML-N 117520

NA-83 Gujranwala 5

Zulfiqar Ahmad

PML-N 101852

NA-84 Gujranwala 6

Azhar Qayyum Nahra

PML-N 119612

NA-85 Mandi Bahauddin 1

Haji Imtiaz Ahmad Chodh..

PTI 80387

NA-86 Mandi Bahauddin 2

Nasir Iqbal Bosal

PML-N 104105

NA-87 Hafizabad 1

Chaudhary Shaukat Ali B..

PTI 165618

NA-88 Sargodha 1

Mukhtar Ahmad Bharat

PML-N 81566

NA-89 Sargodha 2

Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjha

PML-N 114245

NA-90 Sargodha 3

Doctor Nadia Aziz

PTI 852200

NA-91 Sargodha 4

Chaudhary Amir Sultan C..

PTI 9484

NA-92 Sargodha 5

Syed Javed Hasnain Shah

PML-N 96421

NA-93 Khushab 1

Malik Umer Aslam Awan

PTI 100448

NA-94 Khushab 2

Malik Mohammad Ehsan Ul..

PTI 90123

NA-95 Mianwali 1

Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi

PTI 162499

NA-96 Mianwali 2

Amjad Ali Khan

PTI 156065

NA-97 Bhakkar 1

Muhammad Sana Ullah Kha

IND 78712

NA-98 Bhakkar 2

Muhammad Afzal Khan

PTI 136238

NA-99 Chiniot 1

Ghulam Muhammad

PTI 81987

NA-100 Chiniot 2	Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh	PML-N	76149
NA-101 Faisalabad 1	Chaudhary Muhammad Asim..	IND	147812
NA-102 Faisalabad 2	Nawab Sher Waseer	PTI	109708
NA-103 Faisalabad 3	Postponed	.....	
NA-104 Faisalabad 4	Ch. Muhammad Shahbaz	PML-N	95099
NA-105 Faisalabad 5	Raza Nasrullah	IND	77862
NA-106 Faisalabad 6	Rana SanaUllah Khan	PML-N	106319
NA-107 Faisalabad 7	Khurram Shehzad	PTI	126441
NA-108 Faisalabad 8	Farrukh Habib	PTI	112740
NA-109 Faisalabad 9	Faiz ullah Kamoka	PTI	122905
NA-110 Faisalabad 10	Raja Riaz Ahmed	PTI	114215
NA-111 Tobe Tek Singh 1	Chaudhary Khalid Javed	PML-N	110556
NA-112 Tobe Tek Singh 2	Muhammad Junaid Anwar C..	PML-N	125303
NA-113 Tobe Tek Singh 3	Muhammad Riaz Khan	PTI	128274
NA-114 Jhang 1	Makhdoom Syed Faisal Sa..	PPPP	106043
NA-115 Jhang 2	Ghulam Bibi	PTI	91434
NA-116 Jhang 3	Muhammad Ameer Sultan	PTI	61321
NA-117 Nankana Sahib 1	Muhammad Barjees Tahir	PML-N	71891
NA-118 Nankana Sahib 2	Shezra Mansab Ali	PML-N	70994
NA-119 Sheikhpura 1	Rahat Aman Ullah Bhatti	PTI	126025
NA-120 Sheikhpura 2	Rana Tanveer Hussain	PML-N	99674
NA-121 Sheikhpura 3	Javed Latif	PML-N	101622
NA-122 Sheikhpura 4	Muhammad Arfan Dogar	PML-N	96000
NA-123 Lahore 1	Muhammad Malik Riaz	PML-N	97193
NA-124 Lahore 2	Hamza Shehbaz Sharif	PML-N	146294
NA-125 Lahore 3	Waheed Alam Khan	PML-N	12232
NA-126 Lahore 4	Hammad Azhar	PTI	106734
NA-127 Lahore 5	Ali Pervaiz Malik	PML-N	91197
NA-128 Lahore 6	Sheikh Rohail Asgher	PML-N	85000
NA-129 Lahore 7	Abdul Aleem Khan	PTI	103021
NA-130 Lahore 8	Shafqat Mehmood	PTI	104625
NA-131 Lahore 9	Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi	PTI	84313
NA-132 Lahore 10	Mian Muhammad Shehbaz S..	PML-N	84362
NA-133 Lahore 11	Muhammad Pervaiz Malik	PML-N	111920
NA-134 Lahore 12	Rana Mubashir Iqbal	PML-N	15112
NA-135 Lahore 13	Malik Karamat Ali Khokh..	PTI	64765
NA-136 Lahore 14	Malik Muhamad Afzal Kho..	PML-N	88831
NA-137 Kasur 1	Saad waseem Akhtar	PML-N	121207
NA-138 Kasur 2	Rasheed Ahmed Khan	PML-N	87510
NA-139 Kasur 3	Rana Muhammad Ishaq Kha..	PML-N	65331
NA-140 Kasur 4	Sardar Talib Hassan Nak..	PTI	66023
NA-141 Okara 1	Nadeem Abbas Rabera	PML-N	62318
NA-142 Okara 2	Ch Riaz ul Haq juj	PML-N	140733
NA-143 Okara 3	Rao Muhammad Ajmal Khan	PML-N	142988
NA-144 Okara 4	Muhammad Moin Khan Watt..	PML-N	61467
NA-145 Pakpattan 1	Ahmed Raza Khan Manika	PML-N	118581
NA-146 Pakpattan 2	Rana Iradat Sharif Khan	IND	138789
NA-147 Sahiwal 1	Chuadhry Naveer Shakoor	-----	
NA-148 Sahiwal 2	Chaudhry Muhammad Ashra..	PML-N	128880
NA-149 Sahiwal 3	Rai Muhammad Murtaza Iq..	PTI	137632
NA-150 Khanewal 1	Syed Fakhar Imam	IND	101396
NA-151 Khanewal 2	Muhammad Khan Daha	PML-N	111198
NA-152 Khanewal 3	Zahoor Hussain Qureshi	PTI	108707
NA-153 Khanewal 4	Chaudry Iftikhar Nazir	PML-N	106291
NA-154 Multan 1	Ahmed Hussain Dehr	PTI	74220
NA-155 Multan 2	Malik Mohammad Amir Dog..	PTI	133000
NA-156 Multan 3	Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Q..	PTI	116272

NA-157 Multan 4	Zain Qureshi	PTI	77371
NA-158 Multan 5	Muhammad Ibrahim Khan	PTI	83304
NA-159 Multan 6	Rana Muhammad Qasim Noo..	PTI	102606
NA-160 Lodhran 1	Abdul Rehman Khan kanch..	PML-N	125740
NA-161 Lodhran 2	-----	-----	-----
NA-162 Vehari 1	Chuadhary Faqir Ahmad A..	PML-N	810956
NA-163 Vehari 2	Syed Sajid Mehdi	PML-N	70325
NA-164 Vehari 3	Tahir Iqbal Chuadhry	PTI	82084
NA-165 Vehari 4	Aurangzeb Khan Khichi	PTI	99287
NA-166 Bahawalnagar 1	Muhammad Abdul Ghafar W..	IND	-----
NA-167 Bahawalnagar 2	Alam Dad Lalaika	PML-N	91349
NA-168 Bahawalnagar 3	Ehsan Ul Haq Bajwa	PML-N	124218
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NA-170 Bahawalpur 1	Muhammad Farooq Azam Ma..	PTI	84495
NA-171 Bahawalpur 2	Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada..	PML-N	99200
NA-172 Bahawalpur 3	Tariq Bashir Cheema	PML-Q	106383
NA-173 Bahawalpur 4	Mian Najeeb Ud Din Awai..	PML-N	86142
NA-174 Bahawalpur 5	Makhdoom Syed Sami Ul Haq	PTI	63884
NA-175 Rahim Yar Khan 1	Syed Mobeen Ahmed	PTI	96004
NA-176 Rahim Yar Khan 2	Sheikh Fayyaz uddin	PML-N	78500
NA-177 Rahim Yar Khan 3	Makhdoom Khusru Bakhtiy..	PTI	100768
NA-178 Rahim Yar Khan 4	Syed Mustafa Mehmood	PPPP	93044
NA-179 Rahim Yar Khan 5	Jawaid Iqbal Waraich	PTI	110827
NA-180 Rahim Yar Khan 6	Syed Murtaza Mehmood	PPPP	71988
NA-181 Muzaffargarh 1	Muhammad Shabir Ali	IND	----
NA-182 Muzaffargarh 2	Mehar Irshad Ahmed	PPPP	53726
NA-183 Muzaffargarh 3	Raza Rabbani Khar	PPPP	57289
NA-184 Muzaffargarh 4	Nawabzada Iftikhar Ahmed	PPPP	47903
NA-185 Muzaffargarh 5	Syed Basit Ahmed Sultan	IND	94282
NA-186 Muzaffargarh 6	Amir Talal Gopang	PTI	62915
NA-187 Layyah 1 Abdul	Majeed Khan Niazi	PTI	93903
NA-188 Layyah 2	Niaz Ahmed Jakhar	PTI1	03305
NA-189 Dera Ghazi Khan 1	Khawja Sheraz Mehmood	PTI	78596
NA-190 Dera Ghazi Khan 2	Sardar Zulfiqar Ali Kha..	PTI	62936
NA-191 Dera Ghazi Khan 3	Zartaj Gull	PTI	79817
NA-192 Dera Ghazi Khan 4	Sardar Muhammad Khan Le..	PTI	80522
NA-193 Rajanpur 1	Sardar Muhammad Jaffar ..	PTI	87915
NA-194 Rajanpur 2	Sardar Nasrullah Khan D..	PTI	75209
NA-195 Rajanpur 3	Sardar Riaz Mehmood Kha..	PTI	53724

#### Sindh Constituencies

NA-196 Jacobabad	Mir Aijaz Hussain Jakhr..	PPPP	40458
NA-197 Kashmore	Ehsan-Ur-Rehman Mazari	PPPP	47326
NA-198 Shikarpur 1	Abid Hussain Bahyo	PPPP	61213
NA-199 Shikarpur 2	Ghous Bux Mahar	GDA	62785
NA-200 Larkana 1	Bilawal Bhutto Zardari	PPPP	84426
NA-201 Larkana 2	Khursheed Ahmed Junejo	PPPP	97051
NA-202 Kamber Shahdadkot 1	Aftab Shahban Mirani	PPPP	72159
NA-203 Kamber Shahdadkot 2	Mir Amir Ali Khan Magsi	PPPP	80800
NA-204 Ghotki 1	Khalid Ahmed Khan lund	PPPP	93151
NA-205 Ghotki 2	Ali Muhammad Khan Mahar	IND	71943
NA-206 Sukkur 1	Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah	PPPP	84726
NA-207 Sukkur 2	Nauman Islam Shaikh	PPPP	69379
NA-208 Khairpur 1	Nafisa Shah	PPPP	99747
NA-209 Khairpur 2	Pir Syed Fazal Ali Shah	PPPP	84169
NA-210 Khairpur 3	Syed Javed ALi Shah	GDA	90718

NA-211 Naushahro Feroze 1	Syed Abrar Ali Shah	PPPP	92500
NA-212 Naushahro Feroze 2	Zulfiqar Ali Behan	PPPP	90364
NA-213 Shaheed Benazirabad 1	Asif Ali Zardari	PPPP	111179
NA-214 Shaheed Benazirabad 2	Syed Ghulam Mustafa Sha..	PPPP	77396
NA-215 Sanghar 1	Naveed Dero	PPPP	77812
NA-216 Sanghar 2	Shazia Marri	PPPP	82667
NA-217 Sanghar 3	Roshan Uddin Junejo	PPPP	103221
NA-218 Mirpurkhas 1	Ali Nawaz Shah	IND	67552
NA-219 Mirpurkhas 2	Mir Munwar Ali Talpur	PPPP	105823
NA-220 Umerkot	Nawab Yousaf Talpur	PPPP	162979
NA-221 Tharparkar 1	Pir Noor Muhammad Shah ..	PPPP	75360
NA-222 Tharparkar 2	Mahesh Kumar Malani	PPPP	106630
NA-223 Matiari	Makhdoom Jamil uz Zaman	PPPP	85042
NA-224 Tando Allahyar	Zulfiqar Bachani	PPPP	80230
NA-225 Hyderabad 1	Syed Hussain Tarique	PPPP	81983
NA-226 Hyderabad 2	Sabir kaim khani	MQM-P	46646
NA-227 Hyderabad 3	Salahuddin	MQM-H	50865
NA-228 Tando Muhammad Khan	Syed Naveed Qamar	PPPP	76067
NA-229 Badin 1	Mir Ghulam Ali	PPPP	81225
NA-230 Badin 2	Dr Fehmida Mirza	GDA	96015
NA-231 Sujawal	Syed Ayaz Ali Shah Shee..	PPPP	129980
NA-232 Thatta	Shams ul Nisa	PPPP	152691
NA-233 Jamshoro	Sikandar Ali Rahoupoto	PPPP	87860
NA-234 Dadu 1	Irfan Ali Laghari	PPPP	96038
NA-235 Dadu 2	Rafiq Ahmed Jamali	PPPP	81200
NA-236 Malir 1	Jam Abdul Karim Bijar	PPPP	66623
NA-237 Malir 2	Jamil Ahmed Khan	PTI	33289
NA-238 Malir 3	Syed Rafiullah	PPPP	28069
NA-239 Korangi Karachi 1	Muhammad Akram Cheema	PTI	69147
NA-240 Korangi Karachi 2	Iqbal Muhammad Ali Khan	MQM-P	48818
NA-241 Korangi Karachi 3	Muhammad Moin Aamer Pir..	MQM-P	26706
NA-242 Karachi East 1	Saif Ur Rehman	PTI	9923
NA-243 Karachi East 2	Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi	PTI	91358
NA-244 Karachi East 3	Ali Haider Zaidi	PTI	69475
NA-245 Karachi East 4	Amir Liaqat Hussain	PTI	56615
NA-246 Karachi South 1	Abdul Shakoor Shaad	PTI	52750
NA-247 Karachi South 2	Dr Arif Ur Rehman Alvi	PTI	91020
NA-248 Karachi West 1	Abdul Qadir Patel	PPPP	35124
NA-249 Karachi West 2	Faisal Vawda	PTI	35344
NA-250 Karachi West 3	Attah Ulla	PTI	30052
NA-251 Karachi West 4	Syed Amin Ul Haq	MQM-P	18996
NA-252 Karachi West 5	Aftab Jehangir	PTI	21065
NA-253 Karachi Central 1	Usama Qadri	MQM-P	52426
NA-254 Karachi Central 2	Muhammad Aslam Khan	PTI	75702
NA-255 Karachi Central 3	Dr. Khalid Maqbool Sidd..	MQM-P	59807
NA-256 Karachi Central 4	Muhammad Najeeb Haroon	PTI	89850

## Balochistan Constituencies

NA-257 Killa Safiullah, Zhob, Sherani	Molana Abdul Wassay	MMA	43851
NA-258 Loralai, Musa Khail, Ziarat, Dukki, Harnai	Amir Zaman	MMA1	0833
NA-259 Dera Bugti, Kohlu, Barkhan, Sibi, Lehri	Mir Hair Bayar Khan Dom..	IND	11208
NA-260 Nasirabad	Sardar Yar Muhammad Rin..	PTI	36050
NA-261 Jafarabad, Sohbatpur	Mir Khan Muhammad Jamal..	PTI	45222
NA-262 Kachhi, Jhal Magsi	Kamal Uddin	MMA	60258
NA-263 Pishin	Sallah Uddin	MMA	37974

NA-264 Killa Abdullah	Molvi Asmatullah	MMA	14887
NA-265 Quetta 1	Qasim Khan Suri	PTI	25973
NA-266 Quetta 2	Agha Hassan Baloch	BNP	20034
NA-267 Quetta 3	Agha Syed Mehmood Shah	MMA	26645
NA-268 Mastung, Chaghai, Kalat, Shaheed Sikandarabad, Nushki	Muhammad Hashim	BNP	14435
NA-269 Khuzdar	Mohammad Akhtar Mengal	BNP	9173
NA-270 Panjgoor, Washuk, Kharan, Awaran	Meer Nazeer Ahmed Baloc..	BNP	288
NA-271 Kech	Syed Ehsan Shah	BNP-A	3509
NA-272 Lasbela, Gwadar	Muhammad Aslam bhotani	IND	68804

## Party wise vote Bank - National Assembly

16,851,240	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
12,896,356	Pakistan Muslim League (N)
6,901,675	Pakistan People Party Parliamentarians
6,018,291	Independent
2,541,520	Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan
2,231,697	Tehreek-e-labbaik Pakistan
1,257,354	Grand Democratic Alliance
808,229	Awami national Party
729,767	Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan
515,258	Pakistan Muslim League (Q)
317,290	Balochistan Awami Party
215,589	Balochistan National Party
171,587	Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek
139,193	Sindh United Party
134,270	Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party
129,419	Pak Sarzameen Party
117,719	Awami Muslim League Pakistan
115,054	Pakistan Awami Raj
72,461	Pakistan Muslim League (F)
57,267	Tehreek-e-Labbaik Islam
55,722	Qaumi Watan Party
55,184	Pakistan Rah-e-Haq Party
52,970	Balochistan national Party (Awami)
36,489	All Pakistan Muslim League
35,271	Pakistan National Muslim League
34,218	Pakistan Human party
33,969	Jamiat Ulma-e-Islam Nazryati Pakistan
33,102	National Party
28,291	Mutahidda Qabail Party
24,559	Jamiat Ulam-e-Islamb Pakistan (S)
23,397	Jamhoori Wattan party

## **Mastung massacre: 149 martyred, over 200 injured in suicide blast**

QUETTA(July 12, 2018) A suicide bomber targeting a political rally of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) on Friday killed at least 149 people and injured over 200, the deadliest in a string of attacks on electioneering that have heightened security fears ahead of the elections. Among those slain was the candidate for PB-35 (Mastung) Siraj Raisani, whose elder brother Nawab Aslam Raisani had served as the Balochistan chief minister from 2008 to 2013.

Back in July 2011, Siraj Raisani lost his 14-year-old son in a terrorist attack in Mastung, in which several others, including security personnel, were killed.

Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) officials confirmed that it was a suicide blast and noted that almost 16-20 kilogrammes of explosives were used in the explosion. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack. The bombing was the most deadly attack in Pakistan in over three years since the APS tragedy when Taliban extremists assaulted a school in Peshawar in 2014, killing over 150 people, mostly children and is the third incident of election-related violence this week.

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## **Peshawar Suicide Blast: ANP Leader Haroon Bilour Among 22 Others Martyred**

July 10, 2018 | The barbaric incident happened when a suicide bomber blew himself up in YakaToot neighborhood moments after Haroon Bilour arrived at the venue near the stage late Tuesday 10th July, ahead of a corner meeting held here. Haroon Bilour was due to address the supporters at the meeting. The party members and admirers engaged in fireworks to welcome him. Suicide bomber used the firework as his cover. The late ANP candidate Haroon Bilour was set to contest the Pakistan elections 2018 from Peshawar's PK-78 constituency. At least 65 other people were wounded in the bomb explosion.

Deceased ANP leader Haroon Bilour was the son of Bashir Ahmed Bilour, a senior ANP figure who, himself, was martyred in a suicide blast back in 2012. Haroon Bilour was rushed to the hospital in a critical condition but could not survive. The banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) claimed responsibility for the Peshawar suicide blast.

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## **Four Martyred | Attack on JUI-F leader Akram Khan Durrani's convoy in Bannu**

BANNU(July 12, 2018) At least four people were killed and 10 injured in an explosion near a Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) convoy headed back from an election rally on Friday morning in Bannu. Speaking to reporters after the attack, JUI-F leader Akram Khan Durrani said the blast took place near the tire of his jeep when he was passing through Haved Bazaar after addressing an election rally. "There were workers surrounding my jeep when the blast took place."

According to RPO, the blast happened 50 meters away from the rally's site. In addition, 40 police officers were deployed at the venue. However, Akram Khan Durrani survived the attack. He said that it was a fifth attack on him and security forces warned him about the security threats. He further added that his vehicle is totally destroyed due to the explosion. Akram Khan Durrani is the former Federal Minister for Housing and Works.

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## **PTI Candidate Sardar Ikramullah Gandapur Martyred in Suicide Attack**

DI KHAN(22 Jul) Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidate Sardar Ikramullah Gandapur was martyred as a suicide bomber targetted his vehicle in DI Khan's Kulachi Tehsil. Gandapur was said to be leaving his home for an election meeting when his jeep was targetted. The PTI candidate was among four injured in the attack and succumbed to his wounds at the hospital. "Two police guards and Gandapur's driver were injured in the attack.

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## **32 killed from blast near polling station in Quetta on Election Day**

QUETTA (25 July 2018) - According to details, the suspected suicide attack occurred near eastern bypass. DIG Quetta Abdur Razzaq Cheema remained safe in the attack. "The bomber was trying to enter the polling station. When police tried to stop him he blew himself up," a local administration official in Quetta, Hashim Ghilzai, told AFP. Balochistan suffered the brunt of a series of attacks that killed more than 180 people across Pakistan during the brief but acrimonious election campaign.

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## **Nawaz Sharif sentenced to 10 years in jail, Maryam 7 years in Avenfield reference**

ISLAMABAD (Friday July 06, 2018) - An accountability court on Friday jailed former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif, daughter Maryam Nawaz and son-in-law Captain (r) Muhammad Safdar for 10, 7 and 1 year respectively. Announcing verdict judge, Muhammad Bashir ruled that the Avenfield apartments of the Sharif family shall be seized by the federal government. The judge while awarding 10 years imprisonment to Nawaz Sharif also imposed an eight million pound (Rs1.2billion) fine, while a fine of two million pound (Rs322 million) has been imposed on his daughter Maryam Nawaz .

The court also issued permanent arrest warrants of ex-PM's sons Hassan Nawaz and Hussain Nawaz. Maryam Nawaz and Captain (r) Safdar, who were candidates for the forthcoming general elections have been disqualified from contesting elections for 10 years each. A copy of the verdict said the Sharif family had failed to prove a legal source of income for the purchase of Avenfield apartments in 1993, 1995 and 1996.

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## **Nawaz, Maryam shifted to Adiala jail on corruption charges**

Former premier Nawaz Sharif and his daughter Maryam Nawaz were arrested by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) officials upon their arrival in Lahore on Friday night, and subsequently whisked away to Islamabad on a chartered flight.

The sentences, delivered in absentia, against Nawaz Sharif and his daughter who is widely seen as his political heir, have dealt a blow to their Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party. Nawaz and Maryam were served with a legal warrant as soon as they entered Pakistan's airspace. Nawaz and Maryam had taken off from Abu Dhabi for Lahore shortly after 6pm PST on the last leg of their journey home from London. Their flight, Etihad Airways flight EY243, was earlier scheduled to land at 6:15pm PST at Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport, but suffered a nearly three-hour delay.

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## **PML-N leader Hanif Abbasi sentenced to life in ephedrine quota case**

RAWALPINDI: A special anti-narcotics court sentenced Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Hanif Abbasi to life in ephedrine quota case, just four days before the general election in the country on 25 July. The PML-N leader was taken into custody from the courtroom soon after the judge announced the verdict. Abbasi, who was contesting the upcoming election from NA-60 Rawalpindi, faced charges of misusing 500kg of the controlled chemical ephedrine, which he obtained for his company, Gray Pharmaceutical, in 2010.

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## **Heads of Russian, Iranian, Chinese, Pakistani intelligence services discuss IS threat**

MOSCOW, July 10. /TASS/. Heads of intelligence services of Russia, Iran, China, and Pakistan held a meeting in Islamabad on Tuesday to discuss the measures against the threat of aggregation of the Islamic State militants in Afghanistan, Sergei Ivanov, the chief of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service's press bureau told TASS. The Director of the Foreign Intelligence Service, Sergei Naryshkin, represented Russia.

"The discussions focused on the dangers arising from a buildup of the Islamic State on the Afghan territory," Ivanov said. "The conference reached understanding of the importance of coordinated steps to prevent the trickling of IS terrorists from Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan where from they would pose risks for neighboring countries," he said. The top security and intelligence officials stressed the need for a more active inclusion of regional powers in the efforts to settle the conflict in Afghanistan.

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## **Indian Raw chief station Prakash Sinha killed in Afghanistan**

Confirmed RAW Station Chief Prakash Sinha Assassinated in Afghanistan, and other 2 Raw Officers Major Piyush & Major Inkat also abducted by unknown people in Kabul Afghanistan. This news is circulating over the social media especially in Pakistan. Many Defense analysts are talking about the assassination of Station Chief of RAW Prakash Sinha in Afghanistan. It is very hard for India to accept this news and admit it officialy because it will damage the credibility of RAW in India and all over the world, Some says it is the revenge of Balochistan attack in which martyred 147 people including Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) candidate Siraj Raisani and wounded 200 people.

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## **PAF declared runner-up in UK air show**

Islamabad - A PAF C-130 aircraft has been adjudged a runner-up in the prestigious Royal International Air Tattoo Show-2018 in the UK. An aesthetically painted PAF C-130 was honoured out of 300 aircraft in the mega show. According to a PAF spokesperson, it was a moment of joy for the PAF when PAF C-130 aircraft was adjudged runner-up in the prestigious air show.

Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan also witnessed the static display of the No 6 squadron's Hercules. He was briefed about the various photographs and paintings which had been put on display to the aircraft. He congratulated the PAF contingent for their excellent performance and raising the country's flag high at the mega event.

Talking to the PAF contingent, he appreciated their efforts for achieving this honour and hoped that it would go a long way in projecting the soft image of the country across the world. PAF C-130 stole the show with its attractive and artistically painted colour scheme. The participating military and civilian aircraft included USAF F-35A, French Air Force Rafale C, German Air Force Tornado IDS and RAF Red Arrows on display at the Royal International Air Tattoo.

Earlier, the air chief attended Chief of the Air Staff's Air Power Conference with a theme 'Building the Next Generation Air Force'.

The conference was the highlight of a week of events celebrating the Royal Air Force's centenary in London.

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## **Sending money to Pakistan? Read this first**

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has taken stringent measures to tighten currency movement within the country amid depreciation of the national currency following the grey-listing of Pakistan by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The central bank issued a detailed set of instructions to all the money exchange companies, instructing them to help the bank keep a strict vigilance over currency movements, reports Xinhua news agency.

According to the instructions, the money exchange companies will have to properly document and record the purpose of the currency movement after necessary authorization in its system on real time basis by its head office. The central bank has also decided to allocate working capital to each outlet of the exchange companies for carrying out transactions, keeping in view the business needs of the head office of the respective exchange company. This would help the State Bank to keep a check on the movement of the Pakistani rupee and foreign currencies within the company's authorised network.

Pakistan was placed on the grey-list on June 28 by by the FATF, an inter-governmental body which combats money laundering and terror financing among other things, for failing to curb terror financing on its soil. The decision to put Pakistan on the "grey list" was taken in February but then the country was given relief till June to combat the issue.

Pakistan had been included in the list from 2012 to 2015.

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## Brief News International

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### **Deadly blast hits eastern Afghan city, targeting Sikh minority**

JALALABAD, Afghanistan (1st July 2018 ) An explosion hit the center of the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad on Sunday, killing at least 20 people, including several members of the small Sikh minority. A politician representing the minority Sikh community, Awtar Singh Khalsa, who had planned to stand in October's parliamentary elections, was dead. According to Nangarhar Police Chief, said the explosion was caused by a suicide bomber who targeted a vehicle carrying members of the Sikh minority who were traveling to meet the president. Hours earlier, Mr Ghani had opened a hospital in Jalalabad during his two-day visit to Nangarhar. Officials said he was not in the area when the suicide blast occurred. Islamic State claimed the attack in a statement via its online Amaq news agency, but provided no evidence for the claim.

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### **Seven killed in suicide blast near Afghan ministry**

KABUL (July 16, 2018) The attack was the latest in a seemingly unending series of blasts against civilian targets in Kabul and other major cities including Jalalabad, which has seen three major attacks in the past two weeks alone.

"Apparently a suicide bomber detonated his explosive vest at the gate of our ministry," said Fraidoon Azhand, a spokesman at the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. The target was our staff who were leaving to their homes," he said.

(Reuters)

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### **Taliban controls more than half of Afghanistan's territory - Russian diplomat**

By : Zamir Kabulov

MOSCOW /July 16. /TASS | Russia to invite Taliban representatives to Moscow format meeting on Afghanistan. According to the Russian diplomat, Taliban is present in most of the country's provinces and is a key force even where an official administration is present. "As a matter of fact, they establish parallel power bodies, including a court system Afghan people have more confidence in than in the official one," he noted. "So, in this sense, they are very integrated into Afghanistan's state life," he added. Militants from the terrorist group Islamic State are present in nine out of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, he added.

"So far, luckily, they are present only in nine Afghan provinces. But what we are worried about most of all that these are northern Afghan provinces bordering Central Asia," he said. "It is a serious threat for us. So, we cannot play down the Islamic State threat."

"History, including Afghan history, teaches us that problems must be resolved before they grow into a serious threat," the diplomat noted.

According to Kabulov, the problem is that Taliban considers Afghanistan's current government "as a puppet one installed by the Americans, and, hence, illegitimate." "They don't want to hold talks with it but want to negotiate separately with the Americans," he noted. He stressed that the key goal of the Moscow format is to help launch dialogue between the Afghan government and Taliban. "If we don't invite Taliban, there will be no dialogue," the Russian diplomat said. "That is why we hope Taliban will come to the meeting."

The Moscow format involves representatives from Afghanistan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The previous round of consultations was held in April 2017.

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### **Third generation EPR nuclear reactor in China starts providing power to consumers**

AFP | The European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) in Taishan, southern China, “became the first EPR reactor in the world to be successfully connected to the grid”, they said. The reactor using the much-delayed European EPR technology had carried out its first nuclear chain reaction earlier this month. China General Nuclear Power Corporation (CGN) owns 51 percent of the reactor, French utility EDF 30 percent and Chinese provincial power company Yuedian 19 percent.

With EPRs in Finland and France facing setbacks, the Taishan 1 reactor in Guangdong province is the first of its kind to advance to the operational stage. The reactor will now undergo a period of gradual power-up tests, and then will be tested in steady-state conditions at full power, the statement said. A second reactor, Taishan 2, run by the same partners, is expected to enter service next year.

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### **India to adopt new nuclear -capable ICBM as 'strategic deterrent'**

The Indian military is reportedly poised to adopt a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads and striking targets located thousands of kilometers away. India is poised to gain a powerful new addition to its arsenal as the country's military prepares to receive the new Agni V intercontinental ballistic missile, NDTV reports. The new missile can be fitted with a nuclear warhead and reportedly possesses a striking range of 5,000 kilometers, which vastly surpasses the capabilities of other ballistic missiles currently in use by the Indian military. "It is a strategic asset which will act as a deterrent," an official involved in the Agni 5 program told NDTV, adding that "the strategic project" was nearing a conclusion. The TV network's sources said that the first batch of new ICBMs will arrive "soon" and be delivered to India's Strategic Forces Command, though they declined to elaborate any further due to the sensitive nature of the project. Earlier in June, India carried out a successful test of the Agni V missile at the Integrated Test Range on Abdul Kalam Island.

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### **India to get own nuclear missile tracking ship in December**

By Manu Pubby, ET Bureau | APP

NEW DELHI: India's secretive nuclear missile tracking ship, which will become part of an elaborate missile shield being planned against attacks is successfully undergoing harbour trials and is set to be delivered by December, a top official in charge of the project has confirmed. The VC11184, a specialised Ocean Surveillance Ship being built for the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO), is on its way to completion just over four years after it was ordered as part of the Modi government's focus on creating a nuclear missile shield for the nation.

The next step will include sea trials by a joint team of the Indian Navy and the NTRO in which its specialised surveillance systems three dome shaped antennas packed with sensors will be extensively tested before the handing over. “We have as of now finished the basin trials. There were done alongside and were successful.

We expect to deliver the ship by December this year,” Rear Admiral LV Sarath Babu, Chairman & Managing Director of Hindustan Shipyard Limited told ET. The complex vessel, which will generate over 14 MW of power just to power up its tracking radars, will have multiple roles for India from tracking enemy missiles to accurately giving data on tests that are routinely carried out of indigenous strategic missiles.

“The keel of the vessel was laid in June 2014 and we would have completed it in less than five years. It is a very complex vessel and we have set a new standard for building vessels of such class on time,” Rear Admiral Babu said. The 15000-tonne class vessel was initially constructed in a covered dry dock at the shipyard the country's largest -to keep roving satellites and spying attempts at bay. However, for the past several months, the vessel has been docked alongside and is now visible from the Vizag channel with its distinct shape. A large globe shaped radar placed on the aft gives it distinctive visibility.

The Rs 725 crore project is a showcase under the Make in India initiative, with high secrecy being maintained on details, including the capabilities and systems on board. The VC11184, which has not been given a formal 'commissioning' name yet, is one of the largest warships to be built at an Indian yard, weighing in at over 15,000 tonnes.

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## **INDIAN Army will be without arms...if it doesn't revert to Five-year colour service**

by Bharat Karnad | Figures don't lie. The payroll expenses and the pensions and the post-retirement sustenance costs (besides pensions, access to canteen and health services for life) are barreling out of control, taking an ever bigger chunk of the exchequer. Based on the truncated one rank, one pension (OROP) accepted by the BJP government with equalization every five years (instead of every two years as suggested by the ex-servicemen's organizations), the financial subvention for the human resources (HR) category (roughly the defence budget on revenue account + the pensions budget (with 2013 used as base year for one rank, one pension calculations) will hit the country . The scale of outgo on this account will become apparent in its totality when the 2019-20 budget is presented. But even without accounting for the OROP tsunami, the numbers are absolutely stunning.

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## **Donald Trump tells Nato allies to spend 4% of GDP on defence**

Germany Imports Gas From Russia. But Is It a 'Captive'?

(By : Associated Press) : Donald Trump left the opening day of the Nato summit in Brussels in disarray after making a surprise demand for members to raise their defence spending to 4% of GDP, and clashing with German chancellor Angela Merkel over a proposed pipeline deal with Russia. The White House press secretary, Sarah Sanders, confirmed the 4% figure. "During the president's remarks today at the Nato summit he suggested that countries not only meet their commitment of 2% of their GDP on defence spending, but that they increase it to 4%," she said. Sanders added: "President Trump wants to see our allies share more of the burden and, at a very minimum, meet their already stated obligations."

According to newly published Nato figures, countries that meet or exceed that 2% target are: the US on 3.6%, Greece on 2.2%, Estonia 2.14%, the UK 2.10%, and Poland on 2%. France spends 1.8% and Germany 1.2%.

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## **Trump calls Germany 'captive' of Russia; demands higher defense spending**

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - Before heading off for dinner, Trump tweeted: "What good is Nato if Germany is paying Russia billions of dollars for gas and energy? Why are their only 5 out of 29 countries that have met their commitment? The US is paying for Europe's protection, then loses billions on Trade. Must pay 2% of GDP IMMEDIATELY, not by 2025."

U.S. President Donald Trump accused Germany of being a "captive" of Russia due to its energy reliance, before a NATO summit where he pressed allies to more than double defense spending. The exchange was part of an uncomfortable day as anxious Western allies were subjected to the U.S. president's "America first" approach. His comment that Germany was controlled by Russia earned a rebuke from Berlin. "We are not prisoners, neither of Russia nor of the United States," Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told reporters.

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## **Rain fall more than 200 people killed in western Japan hits 200**

OSAKA (Kyodo) -- The death toll from torrential rains in western Japan last week reached 200, as more bodies were found following the downpours that have caused floods and landslides and left thousands still in shelters. The number of casualties announced by the National Police Agency could grow further as dozens of others are still missing, according to local authorities. Of the 200 deaths, more than half occurred in Hiroshima and neighboring Okayama prefectures, according to a Kyodo News tally.

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## **'Unprecedented' Japan heatwave kills 65 people in a week**

Mon, Jul 23, 2018 | An "unprecedented" heatwave in Japan has killed at least 65 people in one week, government officials have said, with the weather agency classifying the record-breaking weather as a natural disaster. The agency said that 80 people had died from the heat since the beginning of the month, and more than 35,000 had been admitted to hospital. Japan, like much of Europe, is in the grip of a blistering heatwave but with significantly higher temperatures. Sweltering 41.1C was recorded in Kumagaya in Saitama prefecture, north-west of Tokyo. All of this will cause safety concerns for city planners and athletic bodies organising the Tokyo Summer Olympics in 2020.

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## **Worst WILDFIRES in decade destroy Athens**

AT LEAST 91 people have been killed and more than 250 injured after wildfires swept through a small resort town near Athens, with huge flames trapping families with children as they fled. The fire hit Mati - 18 miles east of the Greek capital - on Monday 23rd July, afternoon and is the country's worst since the southern Peloponnese peninsula was devastated in August 2007, killing dozens. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras declared a three-day national mourning period for those killed in the wildfires.

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## **Sweden rushes firefighting aircraft to tackle fast-spreading wildfires**

No backyard BBQs: Sweden moves to tighten fire rules: Italian planes and Norwegian helicopters have been deployed to help tackle more than 44 large blazes across central Sweden. Fires were also registered in the country's northernmost county in the Arctic Circle. Fire chiefs said they were tackling 44 large forest fires and that multiple villages in the counties of Gavleborg, Jamtland and Dalarna had been ordered to evacuate their homes.

The three areas are engulfed by the largest blazes encompassing an area of 200 square kilometers (77 square miles). Record heat: Temperatures in the city of Uppsala, north of Stockholm, reportedly reached over 33 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit) this week. It was the hottest temperature recorded there since 1947. (AFP, AP, dpa, EFE)

## **Interaction Regular Articles**

# ISIS is a threat to Pakistan, Iran & Central Asian states

By Mirza Kashif Baig

The attacks of 9/11 brought about a radical change globally. The attack was unique and unanticipated and it took more than a decade for the world to understand the reality of those attacks. If the conspiracy theories are to be believed then it is clear as day that 9/11 attacks were an inside job and so are the reasons. After these, the entire world witnessed the wrath of US either directly or indirectly. In their callous and ambitious approach US administration did not hesitate to kill innocent civilians of its own country and of the world.

They were quick to trace the attacks back to Afghanistan led a conquest against the Taliban and brutally killed the ones defending their motherland, all in the name of keeping of Osama bin Ladin and handing over to USA. The surprising factor in this matter is that America despite its advanced satellite and military hardware was 'mistaken' and in fact they could not trace their wanted man in Afghanistan.

It would have been decent to retract and help re-build the country it had destroyed and this would have been the right course of action if this had been an honest mistake, however, it was not. The attack on Afghanistan was part of a greater plot which then resulted in the attack on Iraq, again in the name of to take control of Iraq's fictional weapons of mass destruction.

In reality Afghanistan was invaded in order to enhance influence in South Asia and Iraq was invaded for its resources. An important aspect in all this was the emergence of a terrorist organization 'Al-Qaeda' which reportedly claimed responsibility for the 9/11 attacks. This organization was not present in Iraq but Afghanistan which resulted in some face saving for US and its naïve allies.

What is even more interesting is that the terrorists of AL-Qaeda while supposedly fighting against US and its allies, were wreaking havoc in the neighboring Muslim countries like Pakistan, and were somehow providing benefit to America. After much orchestrated drama and Pakistan's victory against terrorist factions Al-Qaeda had to go because America could no longer justify why it was not able to eliminate a terrorist organization, despite being a super power and so Al-Qaeda faded away.

But American agenda was not yet complete, hence a new terrorist organization emerged by the name of ISIS, claiming to be fighters of Islam and being led by a man who used to move freely among American controlled prisons in Iraq to recruit followers.

What was not anticipated, this time US, was that the world powers were more aware of their game this time and little time was wasted in pointing fingers towards USA for the birth of ISIS. ISIS was beaten in Iraq by the help of Iranian fighters and in Syria due to the joint efforts of Russia and Iran. ISIS was shipped off to Afghanistan by US support this time to battle the Taliban of Afghanistan in order to strengthen American control in the region and Afghanistan where it has nine sophisticated military bases.

At the moment, ISIS is re-grouping in Afghanistan and is looking to intensify its military operations against the Taliban, by the aid of USA. Taliban and ISIS are very different in their approach. While the Afghan Taliban are fighting against foreign invaders to gain freedom and are limited to Afghanistan only, ISIS is following a global agenda and recognizes no borders.

Their goal is simply to ensure that the American agenda of global domination is carried out. Taliban of Afghanistan are popular amongst their people as they seek to promote the tradition of fending off foreign invaders, a tradition existent in the country for thousands of years. ISIS seeks to eliminate Taliban and gain access to Central Asian countries, majority of the countries of this region, seeks to stand against US and are giving America a tough time.

# The return of Nawaz Sharif

## By General Mirza Aslam Beg

After a long hearing, extending over several sessions, the trial court gave the verdict against Nawaz Sharif, rejecting their appeal for seven days delay, enabling them to be present on the occasion. It is a harsh judgment which sentenced Nawaz Sharif to 10 years in prison and 8 million pounds; his daughter Mariam Nawaz 7 years and two million pounds and Capt Safdar, his son-in-law one year rigorous imprisonment.

The verdict has come at a critical time, with general elections only a few weeks away to be held in a most complex environment, yet the outcome of the elections could be predicted quite clearly, based on the ground realities. Let us get down to count the grand realities, which place Nawaz Sharif in a position of strategic political advantage, on his march to Honour the Vote.

One: The grounds of court verdict, in both the cases of "Aqama" and "Avenfield Apartments" are not very convincing, which provide the necessary space to Nawaz Sharif first to launch successful public agitation in case of Aqama verdict and now on 13th July on their return from London another agitation has been planned.

Two: The sitting government of Nawaz Sharif provided the much needed support to Aqama agitations and to some extent that advantage now will be available to him due to the neutrality of the care-taker government for the 13th July agitations. There would be no mass arrests or ban on agitation as in 1999, and the PML(N) leadership would be free to achieve their purpose.

Three: Nawaz Sharif is challenging the judiciary and the Army, who had been the part of the Nexus which brought down several elected governments in the past. Blaming the national institutions is ill-conceived, yet it gives them a slogan and a cause, which is a must for the success of the movement.

Four: Ostensibly Nawaz is not struggling for premiership, power or prestige, he has enjoyed these several times. He is fighting for the cause of democracy, despite being sentenced for money laundering and corruption. His voters see the righteousness of the cause in his struggle, despite the verdict. They will stand by his side, less those who disagree with him, or have chosen to leave him at the time of his distress.

Five: Out of the 10.6 crore voters, Punjab alone has 60% of them. If PML(N) gets only 40% of these votes, it would emerge as the largest party, with its own government in Punjab as well as in the centre, in coalition with others.

Six: The rural areas of Punjab is the political power base of the party, where Shahbaz Sharif has done enough to attract the voters. Travel through Punjab and you will see the change.

Seven: Pakistani nation possess a delicate political sensibility of sympathy for the under dog and the oppressed. For example, the Pakistan Peoples Party was brutalized. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged and the leadership was declared Security Risk yet the people voted for them in 1988. Undoubtedly PML-N will get the sympathy votes over the others.

Eight: Despite the allegations of corruption, Nawaz Sharif remains the hope for the party voters and not Shahbaz Sharif or Mariam. The voters would rally around him being the oppressed, despite the allegations and defections of some important political personalities.

Nine: If the PML-N voters have had a choice other than Nawaz, they would rather sit at home, than to vote for Zardari or Imran Khan, particularly, who for the purity of his soul, rubbed his forehead at the threshold of the revered Saint.

Ten: PML-N represents the moderate Muslim thought, challenged by the liberals, while the religious right is trying to enter the centre stage of national politics. Thus, the situation presents 'a peculiar mix of alternate voting choices', which is a healthy trend determining the new contours of the emerging democratic order, after 25th July 2008, elections.

Eleven: According to Nawaz Sharif his political struggle is facing the threat from the Khalai Makhlook identifiable by looking at the incident, which occurred during the 2008 elections:

"President Bush visited Pakistan before 2008 elections and gave a pat to Gen Musharraf for making excellent arrangements for regime change in Pakistan, through the democratic process, but the expected results of the elections got reversed to the dismay of the US policy planners.

The Washington Times, thus lamented (more or less), in these words: "The policy makers in Washington must rue the day, they decided regime change in Pakistan, through the democratic process. Lo and behold, Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League has emerged as the leading party in the largest province of Pakistan. Nawaz Sharif is close to Taliban and is friend to such persons who are known American haters."

The myth of Khalai Makhlook is a reality, engaged in machinations, from beyond the borders and not from within the country. Our national institutions are being used as decoys. I am sure the PML-N leadership is cognizant of this fact.

So far so good. Something extra ordinary is happening with NAB carrying out accountability, top-downwards, without discrimination. Corruption is endemic to our day to day life and the process must continue for months and years to root out the evil, to present the real face of Pakistan.

## **Security region - Asia tags - Bomb nuclear war Pakistan India No surprise – The bomb has made a bad situation worse in South Asia**

Testing nuclear devices opens up a Pandora's Box of requirements that can be relieved only by accepting a modus vivendi with an adversary or by accepting minimal deterrence from the competition.

By Michael Krepon

After testing nuclear devices in 1998, Indian and Pakistani leaders genuinely believed or stated for the record, while suspecting otherwise that bringing bombs out of the basement would help make the region safer and more stable. They assumed, as did leading strategic analysts in both countries, that nuclear-weapon requirements could remain modest and minimal.

Subsequent developments made it is all too clear that, in South Asia, as elsewhere, the overlay of nuclear weapons onto existing grievances does not improve bilateral relations and reinforce conditions of stable deterrence. Pro-bomb constituencies grow stronger once the testing threshold is crossed. Testing nuclear devices opens up a Pandora's Box of requirements that can be relieved only by accepting a modus vivendi with an adversary or by accepting minimal deterrence and dropping out of the competition.

After the tests, Indian Prime Minister A. B. Vajpayee declared that, "Ours will never be weapons of aggression." Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif characterized the decision to test an act of national defense, reaffirming that "Pakistan will continue to support the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, especially in the Conference on Disarmament." The conference's agenda has subsequently been moribund for multiple reasons, including that Pakistan has blocked negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Jaswant Singh, India's foreign minister, wrote in Foreign Affairs that "India shall not engage in an arms race, nor, of course, shall it subscribe to or reinvent the sterile doctrines of the Cold War." One of these "sterile" doctrines is presumably the pursuit of nuclear war-fighting capabilities by means of counter force targeting. It is unclear whether New Delhi can resist this temptation.

A subsequent issue of Foreign Affairs carried a piece by Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Shamsah Ahmad asserting that, "By establishing mutual deterrence, [Pakistan and India] have served the interests of peace and stability in South Asia." Caveats followed about the need for India to meet Pakistan's security concerns at least half way.

To reduce nuclear dangers and to head off an arms race, Vajpayee boldly ventured to Lahore in February 1999 for a chaotic summit with Nawaz. At Lahore they pledged to seek the resolution of the Kashmir dispute, refrain from intervening in each other's internal affairs, engage in a composite dialogue on outstanding issues, negotiate confidence-building agreements and other steps to prevent conflict. Nawaz reiterated his "earnest desire to avoid an arms race" at the summit.

Indian heavyweights such as K. Subrahmanyam, Jasjit Singh and K. Sundarji weighed in with assessments that very few nuclear weapons would be needed for stable deterrence. Sundarji, an adventurous former Army chief and unapologetic booster of an Indian bomb, quipped that, for nuclear deterrence, "more is not better if less is adequate."

Three renowned Pakistani strategic thinkers, Agha Shahi, Zulfikar Ali Khan and Abdul Sattar also debunked counter force targeting, writing that, "Nuclear deterrence, unlike the conventional one, is not degraded by qualitative or quantitative disparity." When Abdul Sattar became Pakistan's foreign minister the next month, he announced that, "We shall not engage in any nuclear competition or arms race."

Key Pakistani military leaders did not support a reconciliation process with India. A small clique around Army Chief Pervez Musharraf effectively set fire to the Lahore Declaration with surreptitious advances across the Kashmir divide, resulting in a limited conventional war and a humiliating retreat. The Kargil war was a watershed. The nuclear arms competition picked up steam as the Indian Army adopted plans for "Cold Start" counter-thrusts into Pakistani territory to respond to major provocations. Rawalpindi countered by embracing short-range nuclear weapons to foil these plans.

K. Santhanam, an iconoclastic Indian defense scientist deeply involved in nuclear matters, wryly noted that, "nuclear testing by a debutante . . . is the definitive signal of crossing the nuclear threshold an index of

arrival.” He was right, of course: arrival didn't equate to acceptance. Nuclear testing, as the hawkish Indian commentator Bharat Kharnad, wrote, “gained India an entry but only on the veranda of the nuclear weapons club.”

Access to the main ballroom, symbolized by a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, has so far been beyond reach. Beijing has no incentive to elevate New Delhi's standing in these forums; there are other reasons for India's exclusion, as well.

The quest for status by means of membership seems blocked in the near term if not far longer. But status, while important, was never the primary driver behind New Delhi's decision to test in 1998. Contrary to this metronomic Pakistani talking point, the primary driver behind Indian testing was national security just as it was for Pakistan. In 1995, the Nonproliferation Treaty was extended indefinitely. The next year, negotiations on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty were finally concluded. The doors to the nuclear club seemed to be closing.

Moreover, China's economic growth and military capabilities were far outpacing India's. While Beijing didn't use its nuclear capabilities for leverage against India, there could be no guarantees about the future. Additionally, there was reason to suspect that Pakistan already possessed the Bomb, thanks to a reliable, tested design courtesy of China. For many observers, confirmation on this score came when Pakistan tested soon after India.

# Fate of Balochistan and CPEC

By Naveed Aman Khan

Pakistan is entering into a new phase of economic development through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the rubric of One Belt One Road Initiative. CPEC is more than a US\$62 billion flagship project which emphasizes regional connectivity through economic development. The One Belt One Road Initiative (OBORI) is viewed as the revival of the ancient Silk Route connecting mainland China with Asia, Africa and Europe. It encompasses sixty-three countries of three continents. Being a flagship project of OBOR, CPEC will enhance the existing strategic cooperation between Beijing and Islamabad. It will also open up new avenues of economic development for the people of Balochistan.

With estimated US\$7.1 billion initial investments in energy, transport, development of Gwadar city and port through CPEC, Balochistan ranks second in its share from US\$ 62 billion. Sooner Gwadar would be connected with other cities to expose the full potential of Balochistan. CPEC being a corridor of OBOR will connect Pakistan to Central Asia, West Asia and Western Europe via overland routes also. Pakistan plans to hook itself up with Central Asia via Termiz (Uzbekistan) with Balochistan as the central point of the economic activity in the region. Balochistan in general and Gwadar in particular is the linchpin of CPEC.

OBORI has two major nodes in South Asia. The first one is CPEC, and the second one is Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar (BCIM). India is reluctant to participate in the OBORI due to its concerns related to sovereignty and geo-strategic dimensions of connectivity initiatives. India did not show up at the recently held Belt and Road Summit in China. There is a concern that CPEC has more geo-political dimensions and does not make economic sense. India is apprehensive of Chinese presence in the Arabian Sea through Gwadar port. India is also concerned over Chinese investment in the Gilgit-Baltistan region.

China seeks access to Indian Ocean through building of several ports in the littoral states. China has recently enhanced focus on the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar corridor that would provide China's landlocked Yunnan province access to the Bay of Bengal. Similarly, Gwadar will become centre of intense geo-strategic contest.

The Gwadar port will put Pakistan and China in a strategically beneficial position in the Arabian Sea compounding already existing Indian worries from China's construction in nearby ports as Hambantota in Sri Lanka, Sittwe port in Myanmar and Chittagong in Bangladesh. On the other hand, India is also eagerly looking for access to energy markets through Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Iranian Port of Chabahar. In October 2014, India concluded an agreement to develop Chabahar port to get access to landlocked Afghanistan where it has developed close security ties and economic interests against Pakistan.

China's prime focus of establishing these economic corridors is to strengthen its trade and economic connectivity with regional countries. It is largely meant to fulfill its increasing energy demand and towering exports. One of the core goals of OBORI is the opening up and connecting of Xinjiang with Central Asia. Opening up of Xinjiang to both the East and the West redefines China's geopolitical relations and in accordance with OBOR initiative, China will be a Central Asian as well as Indian Ocean country. In recent years, China has focused on addressing sources of unrest in Xinjiang. Chinese leadership believes that economic development will address root causes of social unrest in the Muslim-majority region of China.

The development of corridor in Pakistan comprises construction of railways, road networks, shipping and airports. This development has been gradually and continuously changing the landscape of Pakistani economy. There is a strong relation between the construction of roads and economic development because when any economic activity is commenced it brings new job opportunities and in turn progress for that particular area of the country.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor cannot become a success story unless there is peace and stability in Balochistan. With the growing economic activity in Balochistan, this irrespective of all negativity is assured to bring economic prosperity to one of the least developed regions of the country. Surely economic gains have convinced both the Baloch separatist leaders and the State to rethink their mutual hard-line approach towards each other.

Baloch leaders, while sensing CPEC as an opening to redeem their political and economic grievances, have realized that insurgency is not a solution to Balochistan's chronic problems, which largely stem from its historically neglected economy. In recent months, hundreds of militants have voluntarily surrendered

because of the government's newly-adopted reconciliation approach which guarantees amnesty from prosecution while providing financial rewards.

According to CPEC projects, industrial zones will be set up in Balochistan. New universities are being established, that will also focus on Chinese language and culture. The universities will be part of the knowledge corridor. In essence, CPEC would unveil a meaningful cooperation between the two neighboring countries Pakistan and China extending its benefits to the West, Central and South Asia.

It will also address socio-economic challenges being faced by Pakistan, particularly the Balochistan province, in near future. It is an admitted fact that the key to success of CPEC is political stability in Pakistan and eventually Balochistan.

# Pakistan & India NSG membership, stake holders and challenges

By Ali Raza

It is a well-known fact that nuclear technology is only used for development of nuclear weapons, but also as a sustainable power source as nuclear energy. Therefore, it is not surprising that many countries aim to have a nuclear programme. At the same time, the international community remains apprehensive of ambitions beyond nuclear technology. This is evident from the nuclear explosion tests conducted by India at Pokhran despite its repeated proclamation, spread over a period of almost three decades, that it would use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes only. It is highlighted that this particular test not only compelled Pakistan to acquire nuclear weapons, but also triggered arms race in the region, which is still ongoing.

To allow nuclear energy to be developed as a power source, the international community has taken into consideration two primary factors i.e., prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ensuring extension of benefits of nuclear technology to the world. Therefore, international community has developed treaties and binding commitments. Such treaties and binding commitments are commonly referred to as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime.

The Nuclear Supplier Group, with Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at its cornerstone, is considered to be one of the most important and credible component of the International Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime. Since its constitution, NSG has served the aforesaid two purposes designed by international community, and has attained credibility in this regard. This fact was also acknowledged by the President of Swiss Confederation Ms. Doris Leuthard in the 27th Plenary Meeting of NSG held on 22-23 June 2017. She applauded the efforts of NSG in curbing the proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

These two facts appear to be contradictory as on one hand the participating governments express their strict commitment to adhere to the meaningful compliance of NPT and on the other hand these states have agreed to consider every possibility of implementation of 2008 of Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India. Those familiar with the rationale behind constitution of NSG understand that there are certain pre-requisites which aspiring members must comply with. To qualify to be a member of NSG, a State should either be signatory of Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or it should become member of Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. The applications for membership in NSG were submitted by the two nuclear states of South Asia, i.e., India and Pakistan in the year 2016.

The interesting fact is that both the states are neither signatories of NPT nor member of Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. However, the credibility of NPT was compromised when United States, in pursuit of economic interests, acquired India specific NSG waiver. The US' India-centric approach raised serious reservations from International community over the criteria which are to be followed for NSG expansion.

The competition between these two states to become member of NSG started after the joint statement of President Bush and Indian Prime Minister in 2005 regarding US India Nuclear Co-operation Initiative and after US obtained India specific waiver from NSG. Further, the member states of NSG are also affirmative about devising a criterion that could enable the states, which are non-signatory to NPT, to enter into the group for availing the benefits of nuclear technology.

This approach of the member states of NSG, and also keeping in view the aspirations of the two nuclear rival states to get entry in to the group, led to intense debate about the two major groups i.e., those who intend to get entry only to India and those who argue for criteria-based approach for enabling the states to enter into the group. China along with some other countries strongly opposed the idea of country specific approach.

This fact was also acknowledged by the President of Swiss Confederation Ms. Doris Leuthard in the 27th Plenary Meeting of NSG held on 22-23 June 2017. She applauded the efforts of NSG in curbing the proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Spokesperson of Chinese foreign ministry expressed that non-discriminatory solutions need to be adopted, which are applicable to all states that are not signatory to NPT, and which must not undermine the core values of NSG as well as the integrity and effectiveness attached to NPT. On the other hand, the formula coined by the Ambassador of Argentine Rafael Grossi, famously known as Grossi-Song formula, clearly favors entry of only India to the group.

For example, among various points proposed by him one is separation of civil and military nuclear facilities, other is signing of additional protocols of IAEA. The formula proposed by Grossi was subject to objections by various states such as China, Brazil, Turkey, New Zealand, Italy, Austria etc. The objections raised vary from lack of transparency, selective engagement to lack of impartiality. It is being maintained by the said states that the said proposal is violation of the spirit of NSG and the norms underlying the Nuclear Non-Proliferation regime.

If, for the sake of arguments, the Grossi-Song formula is implemented, it would have the following implications:-

1. Sanctity attached to the credibility of NSG would seriously be at stake;
2. It would also be detrimental to the importance of NPT being the nucleus of NSG;
3. It could trigger arms-race in South Asia, and could be detrimental to the strategic stability of the region;
4. It could put India in an advantageous position over Pakistan especially when India is clearly violating the norms of Non-Proliferation Regime, and constantly increasing its stock pile of nuclear weapons

However, Indo-Pak's quest to join NSG met with cold feet from member states during 27th plenary meeting during which participating governments reaffirmed their full support and insisted on effective and strict implementation of NPT as the same is the foundation of the international non-proliferation regime. This approach of the member states of NSG, and also keeping in view the aspires of the two nuclear rival states to get entry in to the group, led to intense debate about the two major groups.

However, it was agreed by the participating governments that every aspect of implementation of 2008 statement of Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India would be considered. These two facts appear to be contradictory as on one hand the participating governments express their strict commitment to adhere to the meaningful compliance of NPT and on the other hand these states have agreed to consider every possibility of implementation of 2008 of Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India.

The international community must take serious note of the acknowledgment of the central role of NPT by Ms. Doris Leuthard in curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons by NSG. Participating governments should proceed with the matter of entry of India in the group with utmost care and in a manner that satisfies the requirements of NPT. Therefore, criteria based approach seems most viable option for member states to expand NSG, adhering to internationally agreed principle in their true spirit.

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# India's hybrid warfare Options for Pakistan

By Ikram Sehgal

With the Pacific Ocean dominated by the US and Japan while the Indian Ocean by the US (conceivably along with its new ally India), China has to turn to its centuries-old land routes. As far back as the 13th century, Genghis Khan was exhorting his generals not to depend upon the seas but upon merchants and land routes for trade.

In 1941, Japan went to war being denied sea access to sources of raw material in South and Southwest Asia. An efficient network of land, sea and air passages in Asia, Europe and Africa, that would not be prone to intervention by hostile powers during times of crisis, the "One Belt one Road" (OBOR) strategic initiative was thus launched by the Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013.

The OBOR initiative is geographically structured along six corridors viz (1) western China to western Russia (2) northern China to eastern Russia via Mongolia (3) western China to Turkey via central and west Asia. The sea passages are (4) from southern China to Singapore via Indochina (5) India via Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Important for us is the land passage over the Karakorams from (6) south-western China to and through Pakistan, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Envisaging geo-economic and geo-political initiative, CPEC drastically increases the geo-strategic importance of Pakistan, bringing it into a central nodal position between Asia, South Asia and Central Asia. Connecting about 64 countries in three continents. All agencies of Pakistan must work jointly to cope with the menace of India's hybrid war against us. A win-win synergy for both the nations and the region, CPEC is a rare opportunity for Pakistan to realize its true strategic and economic potential.

Recreating the legendary Silk Road, OBOR's purpose is (1) Policy coordination promoting inter-governmental cooperation and assisting policy exchange and communication; (2) Facilities connectivity to carry out infrastructure projects, e.g. relating to transportation and energy; (3) Unimpeded trade encouraging cross-border investments and reducing trade barriers; (4) Financial integration developing the currency and bond markets in Asia; and (5) People-to-people bonds facilitating cultural exchange through cooperation in academia, tourism, medicine, science and technology.

CPEC's 3218km-long Corridor from China's Xinjiang province passing through Gilgit-Baltistan to Pakistan's Gwadar port will provide the shortest and most cost effective route for landlocked Afghanistan (and Central Asia) to China, India and Indian Ocean. Consisting of highways, railways and pipelines its estimated cost is US\$75 billion. Other OBOR projects around the world do not offer the same advantages to China. Distance would be approx 600 kilometres less as compared to the other nearest port of Chabahar.

Transportation time would be reduced by 50% from 50 days to 25 days. Gwadar port can also be used as a hub port for the Gulf States. Building Pakistan's transportation and power sectors with its resultant economic fallout, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) will have a force-multiplier effect on employment development of many poverty-stricken areas. In his recent talk at a CPEC seminar, Dr Ishrat Husain, former Governor of State Bank of Pakistan, elaborated how because of lack of electricity, manufacturing had gone down, exports of US\$ 25 billion in 2012-13 coming down to only US\$ 20 billion in 2017-2018, naturally putting commensurate pressure on Pakistani Rupee.

If electricity had kept pace with manufacturing, exports should have been US\$ 35 billion in 2017-2018. By better transportation and with more energy, the CPEC has created 60,000 jobs for Pakistanis since 2015 and by 2030 over 800,000 new jobs will be created in the planned 21 energy projects that will double Pakistan's current capacity of electricity production.

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Changing Pakistan's business and economic landscape through infrastructure and transportation development, establishing special economic zones, promoting tourism, there will be major increase in revenue besides generating more revenue through transition of goods of other countries. In a strategic

context, CPEC conforms to Pakistan's security paradigm and "Look East" policy further serving our strategic partnership with China.

An anti-CPEC campaign unleashed by hostile elements, particularly India, aims to scuttle the project and deprive Pakistan of its benefits by creating controversies and mistrust, particularly among the local residents. Some misconceptions and misleading or deceptive statements: (1) Myth: Chinese military bases are planned in the coastal belt and Gwadar Port, aimed at occupying native resources. Fact: China has never invaded any country nor harboured any imperial designs. (2) Myth: Pakistan will become a Chinese colony.

Fact: History tells us that colonialism and imperialism are legacies of countries of the global north. (3) Myth: Exploitation of resources with projects being undertaken against the will of locals will execute demographic changes. Fact: the growth of Balochistan is more than guaranteed with CPEC investment giving more jobs opportunities changing the lives for the better.

(4) Myth: Pakistan cannot provide security to Chinese, especially in Balochistan, due to the prevalent law and order situation. Fact: 15,000 personnel in two Special Security Division (SSD) to provide security on CPEC projects. (5) Myth: Pakistan's rising trade deficit with China is of concern. Fact: China's competitiveness in exports is not just confined to Pakistan.

The CPEC has created 60,000 jobs for Pakistanis since 2015 and by 2030 over 800,000 new jobs will be created in the planned 21 energy projects that will double Pakistan's current capacity of electricity production. One current trade deficit with China is \$6.2 billion whereas India's trade deficit is \$47 billion while US trade deficit stands at a whopping \$347 billion. (6) Myth: Chinese labor and workers (mainly Chinese prisoners) will replace Pakistani workers and render them jobless.

Fact: With plenty of work in their own country, for security reasons the ten thousand Chinese nationals living in several camps will go back when projects are completed. (7) Myth: CPEC has a high degree of possibility of becoming a thriving ground for trans-national terrorism. Fact: CPEC bringing prosperity will reduce space for terrorists to operate by engaging youth in jobs and reduce their vulnerability and exposure to extremist teaching and elements. (8) Myth: CPEC will harm local businesses.

Fact: CPEC will increase competitiveness of goods in local markets providing incentive for producing quality products (9) Myth: Imagine my surprise when a senior Professor visiting told the students during an IBA seminar in 2017 that CPEC is a figment of imagination. Fact: this academic needs to physically see for himself what's happening in Gwadar (10) Myth: high insurance, high loan interest and high ROE. Fact: most loans being of low interest, in projects investment is guaranteed with 17% return per annum on equity.

All agencies of Pakistan must work jointly to cope with the menace of India's hybrid war against us. A win-win synergy for both the nations and the region, CPEC is a rare opportunity for Pakistan to realize its true strategic and economic potential.

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## **Imran Khan Could be Ousted by Pakistanis If Fails to Fails to Keep Idealistic Promises**

MOSCOW (Sputnik) - Imran Khan, who surged into office with a strong support by promising an idealistic scenario of lifting millions out of poverty and combating corruption in Pakistan, could be quickly dethroned by its own people who had voted for him if he does not put in concrete efforts and take painful but necessary steps, experts told Sputnik.

Pakistan's centrist party Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), led by former cricketer Imran Khan, won the general election after it received 116 out of the 272 directly elected seats in the lower chamber of the Pakistani parliament.

"Imran Khan will have to put in concrete efforts in the education and healthcare departments, in improving the performance of bureaucratic sectors and in alleviating the poverty that most of the masses of Pakistan continue to live in; or he will be severely criticized and might be electorally punished more severely than conventional parties in the next elections.

He served idealistic dreams in a silver platter to the gullible hopeful masses, and so his government will be judged accordingly harsh," Muhammad Zia, a research assistant at the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS), told Sputnik.

Saima Sial, a senior research fellow at CISS, in turn, noted that only time would tell if Khan would be able to honor his promises despite the obstacles in his path. "Running an election campaign is different from holding a public office and so much would have to be seen in terms of how much of what he claimed, he actually delivers under a challenging internal and regional environment," she stressed.

The dust and smoke have hardly settled over the nation following the election, which was overshadowed by allegations of interference of Pakistan's military in the vote as well as restrictions on freedom of speech and the media, but Khan already declared on Monday that he intended to swear in on August 11 as the country's new prime minister, according to local media.

In order to become next country's leader, Khan needs to win over independents and smaller parties gaining enough coalition support to reach the magical number for a majority in the parliament, according to the experts.

"He will need to make very sensitive decisions in choosing his coalition partners. Once he begins to form his government, he'll face the crucial task of choosing the right candidates to pick for his cabinet, and in the most important seats of the government, for instance the candidates for foreign minister, minister of defense, interior minister, and the candidates for the Chief Minister positions for KPK [Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province] and the newly attained government in Punjab .... The public won't tolerate the same old corrupt faces holding the seats of the government in this 'Naya Pakistan' (New Pakistan). Making wise and sensitive decisions on this front will be the earliest crucial challenge facing the new government," Zia noted.

### **Test on Economy**

Both experts agreed that the economy remained the biggest challenge for a pivotal nation and the world's sixth-most populated country that has a nuclear arsenal and strategic location in the region. For decades, it faced serious security problems with extremism and terrorism coupled with serious economic difficulties. Nowadays, Pakistan is undergoing great stress with a foreign debt exceeding \$90 billion.

"With a huge and mounting debt that has crippled Pakistan's economy, Imran Khan's government faces a colossal economic challenge in terms of how to get the country back on its feet. As foreign exchange reserves are running out and dollar is pushing against rupee, the country needs an economic package or a loan facility," Zia highlighted.

He noted that the steps that the next prime minister would have to take would obviously be painful.

"In any case, the public reaction to asking for loans from the IMF or friendly countries will be stressful for Imran Khan as he has always spoken against the previous governments borrowing," Zia pointed.

## Foreign Policy Challenges

Assuming Khan gets the Prime Minister job, his cabinet will face a multitude of foreign policy challenges as well, according to the experts.

"There is an upcoming election in India in 2019, US forces in Afghanistan wanting to dictate, impose their terms of cooperation with Pakistan on Afghan Taliban issue, internal stability, security issues, water crisis," Sial stressed.

During his election campaign, Khan declared Pakistan's readiness to extend an olive branch toward its neighboring India and was ready to march two steps forward in return for India's one step toward peace in South Asia.

Sial noted that when it comes to a dialogue with India, it can be complicated by several factors. "The media coverage in Indian channels has been very toxic against Khan even though in his speech he was calling for peace with India. In addition, it is election time in India and although hostility with India is no more a major election agenda in Pakistan, in India hostility with Pakistan is a riding political agenda during elections and so major headway may not be possible very soon," she stated.

The experts underlined that under Khan, they expected Pakistan's clearer articulation of its foreign policy and an active engagement with neighbors.

During his election campaign, Khan spoke of his overall desire for better relations with the neighboring countries such as Afghanistan and Iran as well as with China a neighbor that he praised conspicuously as a role model.

"Touching upon his commitment to improved relations with Afghanistan and the US whose presence in the former makes it a direct neighbor of Pakistan, Imran Khan pointed out that he seeks an open border policy with Afghanistan. It's clear that betterment of foreign policy relations with these three countries and continuing the spell of mutually beneficial relations with China is high on the priority list for Khan," Zia said. Sial, in her turn, pointed that with the United States, which in recent years had harshly criticized Pakistan for Afghan policies and slashed military aid to Islamabad, Khan showed forcefulness calling for a more equally beneficial relationship.

"US administration has already stated its willingness in working with the new administration and his narrative about dialogue and peace talks (with warring factions in Afghanistan Taliban and the unity government) would be a positive denominator in this regard for US-Pakistan relationship in the context of Afghanistan," Sial said, noting, nevertheless, that Khan was a known critic of the US drone strikes and that could cause tensions.

Being A-list celebrity and having strong name recognition, Khan, according to the experts, could have better chances to defend country's interests in the international arena but to succeed as a leader should focus first and foremost on social and economic issues through developing skilled manpower at home, as human development was a main political manifesto on which people of Pakistan have elected him.

## A Vietnam “solution” to the Afghanistan war?

The January 1973 agreement between North Vietnam and the United States can be applied to the present, stalemated situation in Afghanistan

By John Mueller

It was in 2010 that United States President Barack Obama told an interviewer that he could easily imagine a situation in which "we ended up staying in Afghanistan for another five years, another eight years, and another ten years. And we would do it not with clear intentions but rather just out of an inertia."

Last year, well into that decade of inertial guidance, President Donald Trump, although noting that his "original instinct was to pull out," authorized an increase of a few thousand American troops to the war in Afghanistan. It was, he said, "a plan for victory." However, he then defined "victory" as something more akin to a stalemate preventing the Taliban from taking over and then perhaps negotiating "a political settlement."

Earlier this month, a brief three-day ceasefire took place, and Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani has said he is willing to negotiate with the Taliban at any time and in any place. However, the Taliban has repeatedly said it wants to talk with the United States directly and that an American military withdrawal has to be a primary, up-front part of the deal. There is, as it happens, a precedent for this condition. It happened in the January 1973 agreement in Vietnam between the United States and the Communists that settled the war there for a while.

It contained several elements that can be applied to the present, essentially stalemated, situation in Afghanistan. These situations are parallel as Afghan forces are incapable of being able to seize, hold, and then coherently govern areas controlled by the Taliban. Furthermore, substantial elements in the Taliban recognize that a takeover of government strongholds, in particular, the heavily-populated capital area of Kabul, is likely impossible.

These elements include 1) a cease-fire in place, 2) withdrawal of US military forces, 3) continued resupply of the central regime by the United States, and 4) an exchange of prisoners. For instance, the Taliban has for years been particularly interested in getting the release of some aging prisoners in Guantanamo. The United States might still retain a considerable presence in the country, but any transfers of funds or munitions would be handled by civilians and any training, or private contractors would handle other military contributions.

As noted, the Taliban, while probably open to talks, wants only to negotiate with the United States, not with what they call the "slave" or "puppet" regime in Kabul. That happened as well in Vietnam where the US pushed ahead with the 1973 agreement often without substantive participation by the South Vietnamese government. However, there are, not surprisingly, some problematic elements to this proposal.

One is that the Taliban, unlike the communists in Vietnam, is not a unified force. There are disagreements and factions aplenty. The United States had contributed to this process at times as in 2016 when it killed the top Taliban leader who may have been favorable to a settlement only to have him replaced by a hardliner. Moreover, also unlike Vietnam, an agreement with the Taliban would not bring the end of all fighting because there are spinoff and independent insurgent elements throughout the country. However, it is also at least conceivable that some of these could be brought into the agreement.

This case is still very much like Vietnam in that the settlement might well prove to be only temporary. In Vietnam, after a decent interval of two years, the communists launched an offensive and the US - supplied South Vietnam military and government folded in fifty-five days.

The United States wrung its hands from afar and then promptly, and with remarkably little obvious regret, moved on to other concerns. Later on, as it happened, the United States and the communist regime in now-unified Vietnam became bosom buddies. It is possible that Afghan forces, trained and funded by the

United States, would similarly collapse when pushed, but that is far from a certainty. For one thing, the Taliban, as a military force, is far weaker than the communists in Vietnam were in 1975.

On the brighter side, after a cease-fire, the main Afghan forces might over time develop a degree of cooperation and coordination even though the country would likely remain effectively partitioned. A great deal has changed since the American invasion, and a wired-in generation has been developed in Afghanistan's cities. And at least some in the Taliban realize that a full return to the Islamic Emirate that existed there before the invasion is no longer possible.

But partition has been the effective condition for some time indeed, it is how Afghanistan has traditionally been organized. The difference would be that the war, a decades-long disaster for all involved, would be ended or at least substantially tempered. To begin with, however, the United States needs to realize that it would have to negotiate alone at least at the start and that a military withdrawal must, as in Vietnam, be a key up-front component of any agreement.

John Mueller is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and a political scientist at Ohio State University. Among his books are *The Remnants of War*, *Atomic Obsession*, *Retreat from Doomsday*, *War and Ideas*, and (as co-editor) *A Dangerous World?*.

# IS spectre spooks Afghanistan

Regional powers need to come together for a peaceful settlement of the conflict Top intelligence officials of Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan recently met to discuss an anti-ISIS strategy but India wasn't invited

**By M K Bhadrakumar**

The wheel has come full circle in Afghanistan. What had first appeared in 1980 as a brilliant brainwave in the thought processes of the late American strategist on the global chessboard (and then US National Security Adviser) Zbigniew Brzezinski deployment of radical Islamist groups as a geopolitical tool to bleed the Red Army in Afghanistan as payoff for the humiliating defeat in the Vietnam War is taking a new avatar. Plainly put, the stunning defeat that the US suffered in Syria will not go unanswered.

This time around, however, a far more brutal form of Islamism than the Afghan Mujahideen of the 1980s is appearing the Islamic State of Khorasan Province. (Khorasan is a historical region that encompasses modern-day Afghanistan, Central Asia and parts of Iran.) To be sure, the regional powers most affected by the IS are circling their wagons Russia, China, Iran and Pakistan. They are profoundly worried that the rough beast from Mesopotamia and the Levant is slouching toward their region to be born. A meeting of top intelligence and security officials of these four countries took place in Islamabad on July 11 to discuss a strategy to meet the threat.

Russia's state news agency TASS reported that the officials held discussions that "focused on the dangers arising from the buildup of the Islamic State on the Afghan territory" and "reached understanding on the importance of coordinated steps to prevent the trickling of IS terrorists from Syria and Iraq to Afghanistan from where they would pose risks for neighbouring countries". The report added meaningfully that the meeting "stressed the need for a more active inclusion of regional powers in the efforts to settle the conflict in Afghanistan".

This last point, which is implicitly addressed to President Trump himself, has an intriguing backdrop to it. It is an open secret that the IS fighters have appeared in Afghanistan following their crushing defeat in Syria at the hands of the Russian-Iranian alliance supporting the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

There have been persistent reports that they were being airlifted to Afghanistan. Russia has repeatedly sought investigation. The former Afghan President Hamid Karzai openly alleges that Afghans have witnessed unmarked helicopters ferrying the IS cadres under cover of darkness. Both Russia and Iran have been alleging brazen US military support for the IS fighters in Syria.

The matter has been raised even in the UN Security Council. But, alas, the US consistently stonewalled, arguing with a straight face that the IS (which in Russian estimation has a strength of 10,000 fighters in Afghanistan) does not pose any serious security threat. Clearly, the meet in Islamabad last Wednesday was an act of sheer despair at the US' mulish attitude of downplaying the IS surge in Afghanistan lately.

But the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back would have been the dastardly move by the US to invite Saudi Arabia and the UAE to "return" to Afghanistan in a proactive role after a prolonged period of absence. These two petro dollar states used to be the mentors, financiers and philosophers of the Taliban in the 1990s alongside, ironically, American oil companies eyeing the potentials of evacuation of the fabulous untapped hydrocarbon reserves in the newly independent Central Asian states via Afghanistan.

In fact, Saudi Arabia and the UAE were the only two countries (other than Pakistan) to give diplomatic recognition to the Taliban government in Kabul. But then, in an abrupt reversal of policy, a terrible beauty was born following the 9/11 attacks by Osama bin Laden on New York and Washington when the sheikhs ostentatiously distanced themselves from Taliban, fearing American wrath.

In a curious role reversal, the two Gulf allies will now help the US to contain the Taliban. While the UAE, which has experience in fighting hybrid wars (Libya, Yemen, etc.), will join the NATO forces fighting the Taliban, Saudis are useful for de-legitimising the Taliban's "jihad" from the religious angle and thereby erode the movement's popular base among the Afghan people steeped in the folklore of traditional Islam. US Defence Secretary James Mattis personally piloted the project at the highest level in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi. In March, the National Security Council in Washington finalised the action plan at a meeting of top

security officials from the 'Quad' US, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Afghanistan. On June 6, Kabul formally gave approval for deployment of Emirati troops on Afghan soil. On July 10-11, Saudi Arabia hosted in Jeddah and Mecca an international Ulema Conference on Afghanistan.

The Saudi King is the Custodian of the Holy Places and Washington pins hopes that his imprimatur on a fatwa issued by the Jeddah-Mecca conference de-legitimising the Afghan "jihad" and calling on insurgents to join the Kabul government, may sow the seeds of ideological disarray and engineer defections from the Taliban movement.

The bottom line is a Clausewitzian approach of "war by other means" weaken and splinter the Taliban, since the war has been practically lost and a peace process is conditional on meeting the insurgents' non-negotiable demand of an immediate vacation of US occupation of Afghanistan.

Prima facie, the weakening of the Taliban as such may not be a bad thing. But on the contrary, the spectre that is haunting the regional states today is that the US also has a master plan to have the IS proxy to fill in any vacuum ensuing from Taliban's retrenchment so that there is an alibi for an open-ended US military presence in Afghanistan and permanent military bases.

How far the Pentagon's best-laid plans will succeed remains to be seen. Taliban has reacted ferociously by launching a series of attacks Wednesday night, killing dozens of Afghan troops. Meanwhile, much depends on what happens next in the civil war conditions prevailing in US politics too. In particular, how far Trump backs Mattis' strategy is the key question. The alignments within the Trump administration are in constant flux and there are persistent reports lately that Mattis himself is on a slippery slope. At any rate, Trump is known to disfavour imperial overreach and is on record rejecting an open-ended American military deployment to Afghanistan. Importantly, he prefers a cooperative relationship with Russia.

Therefore, it makes eminent sense that the meet in Islamabad implicitly called on the US, which exercises virtual monopoly over conflict resolution in Afghanistan, to eschew zero-sum mentality and share with the regional powers the political and diplomatic space to work jointly toward a peace process and peaceful settlement that helps counter effectively the looming IS menace.

(The writer is a former ambassador.)

**AI-Khanoum**

## **A Greek city in North - East Afghanistan**

**By Alexander Hamer**

In 1961, King Mohammed Zaher Chach of Afghanistan was on a hunting trip in Takhar province of north-east Afghanistan. It was during this expedition that he stumbled across the remains of an ancient settlement. Three years later, a group of French archaeologists led by Paul Bernard began excavating the site. What they uncovered proved to be one of the more remarkable relics of the ancient world.

It was a major urban centre unlike any that had previously been discovered. Ancient ruins are not hard to come by in Central and Western Asia. The entire region is littered with them. However, what made this settlement, known as Ai-Khanoum ('Lady Moon' in Uzbek), special was the fact that it would not have looked out of place in Ancient Greece.

Indeed, it had all the hallmarks of a Classical Greek city; a large gymnasium (one of the largest in the ancient world), a 6,000 seat amphitheatre, temples to Greek gods and a number of Greek-style houses, complete with colonnaded courtyards. Even the city walls were built in the Greek style. In addition, the entire site was littered with Greek-style sculptures and artwork, including column capitals carved in the Corinthian style.

So what was this place and how did something so distinctly Greek come to exist in a far corner of Afghanistan? Given it was located alongside the Amu Darya river (known historically as the Oxus), it was posited that this was the lost city of Alexandria on the Oxus, one of around twenty such cities founded by Alexander the Great and named in his own honour in the late 4th Century BCE. The most famous of these cities was the first Alexandria, located in Egypt and destined to become the greatest city in the ancient world.

However, more recent research, particularly the dating of artefacts found at the site, has suggested that the city was founded later, around 280 BCE, by Antiochus I, King of the Seleucid Empire. Regardless of when it was established, Ai-Khanoum represents the pinnacle of the ancient phenomenon known as 'Hellenisation'. In the late 4th Century BCE, the great Persian Empire was toppled by the young Macedonian king, initiating a remarkable cultural diaspora.

Alexander and his army essentially brought Macedonian/Greek culture with them wherever they marched. As part of this, Alexander established new settlements in strategic locations, populating them with Macedonian and Greek settlers. Though his colossal empire collapsed following his death, the Diadochi ('Successors') who carved up the empire between themselves began the process of Hellenisation in earnest.

This was the Hellenistic period, which began with Alexander's invasion and ended with the death of Cleopatra of Egypt in 30 BCE. During this period, Greek culture was in the ascendancy from Greece itself to Egypt and as far as modern Afghanistan. The result of this amalgamation was a distinctly Greek culture that nonetheless had recognisable local influence. One manifestation of this can be found in one of the main temples at Ai-Khanoum, which was dedicated to and housed a large statue of Zeus but was built in the Zoroastrian style with huge enclosing walls rather than the open, columned structure found in traditional Greek temples.

The motivation for Hellenisation has long been debated. The ancient Roman historian Arrian suggests that it was a deliberate attempt to 'civilise the natives'. However, modern historians have largely dismissed this argument. After all, Alexander famously began adopting Persian dress and elements of Persian court culture in the years before his death, much to the resentment of his followers. Instead, it is more likely that the establishment of new settlements was in response to the enormous administrative challenges that came with an empire of such massive size. The new colonies were likely intended to serve as centers of Macedonian power and control in newly conquered regions.

The Seleucid Empire was arguably the greatest of the Successor states, at its height encompassing almost all of the former Persian Empire, with the notable exception of Egypt. During the reigns of Seleucus I Nicator (the founder) and his son Antiochus I, the number of new settlements expanded rapidly. These

colonies were populated by settlers from Macedonia and Greece itself, drawn so far from home by generous incentives. Interestingly, settlements inhabited by Macedonians were generally established further to the west, while those inhabited by Greeks appear more in the eastern provinces of the empire. Ai-Khanoum was one such settlement. The region in which it was located, Bactria, represented the eastern fringe of the empire. Situated in the Oxus valley, the settlement had access to rich agricultural lands, as well as substantial mineral resources in the foothills of the nearby Hindu Kush mountain range. Perhaps most importantly, Ai-Khanoum was perfectly positioned to act as a trade hub with the Indian subcontinent via established trade routes through the Hindu Kush.

#### Independence

Bactria and nearby Sogdiana and Ferghana had always proven difficult for even the Persian Empire to control, chiefly as a result of the sheer distance of these fringe provinces from the heart of the empire. After all, the city of Bactra, from which Bactria derives its name, was over 2,800kms (1,730 miles) from the Persian capital at Babylon (in the vicinity of modern Baghdad). For the Seleucids that distance was even greater, with Bactra some 3,700kms (2,300 miles) from the capital at Antioch (near modern Antakya, Turkey).

Unsurprisingly, these eastern provinces would prove troublesome for the Seleucids. Around 250 BCE, Diodotus, the Satrap (governor) of Bactria, broke away from the Seleucid Empire and declared himself King of Bactria, thereby founding the state known among historians as the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom. Along with Bactra, Ai-Khanoum was one of the largest and most important cities in the fledgeling kingdom.

With the Seleucids focused on the ongoing jostling with the other Successor states in the west, the Greco-Bactrians were able to expand their influence in the east. Greco-Bactrian control was extended to include nearby Ferghana under King Eurythdemus, who had overthrown Diodotus II sometime between 230 and 220 BCE. However, the Seleucids would return to reestablish their control around 210 BCE, when Antiochus III the Great reached the easternmost point of his great campaign to re-conquer the eastern half of the Seleucid Empire.

Once again, Ai-Khanoum and the rest of Bactria and Ferghana was part of the Seleucid Empire. However, this was not to last. Indeed, almost as soon as Antiochus and his army departed for the west, the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom reestablished its independence. This second coming was to prove the dawn of a golden age for the Kingdom, which began to prosper as it expanded in all directions, reaching its territorial peak in 180 BCE. During these decades, Ai-Khanoum continued to grow in importance in its role as a trade hub with India. It is a testament to the level of Greek interaction with India and the influence of urban centres such as Ai-Khanoum in the region that even as early as 258 BCE Ashoka, ruler of the Mauryan Empire (the dominant state in India), created the so-called 'Kandahar Edict of Ashoka', a bilingual rock inscription written in Greek and Aramaic. Another of Ashoka's inscriptions near Kandahar was written solely in Greek. The actual content of these edicts also gives a clear indication of the level of exchange between India and the Hellenistic world.

In the 13th Edict, Ashoka accurately names all of the rulers in the Hellenistic world at the time of the inscription: "The conquest by Dharma has been won here, on the borders, and even six hundred yojanas (4,000 miles) away, where the Greek king Antiochos (Antiochus II Theos of the Seleucid Empire) rules, beyond there where the four kings named Ptolemy (Ptolemy II Philadelphus of Egypt), Antigonos (Antigonus II Gonatas of Macedonia), Magas (Magas of Cyrene) and Alexander (Alexander II of Epirus) rule, likewise in the south among the Cholas, the Pandyas, and as far as Tamraparni." In addition to its interaction with the Indian subcontinent, the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom as a whole would eventually come to develop increasing contacts with a power even further to the East: China. In the late Second Century BCE, Zhang Qian, a Han dynasty diplomat and explorer, arrived in Bactria.

His account of his visit to Bactria, including his recollection of his amazement at finding Chinese goods in the markets (acquired via India), as well as his travels in the rest of Central Asia, is preserved in the works of the early Han historian Sima Qian. Upon returning to China, Zhang Qian informed the Emperor of the sophisticated urban civilisations in Ferghana, Bactria and Parthia. Zhang Qian's discoveries prompted the Emperor to dispatch Chinese envoys across Central Asia to negotiate and encourage trade with China.

This was the birth of the Silk Road

Unfortunately, Ai-Khanoum would not survive to benefit from trade with China. Nomadic tribes, principally the Yuehzi, had been migrating into the region since around 135 BCE, overwhelming the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom's borders. It is not clear exactly how Ai-Khanoum was destroyed, but archaeologists suggest it was totally abandoned by 120 BCE and there is evidence of huge fires in all the major buildings in the city. Despite its destruction, the cultural legacy of Ai-Khanoum and other Hellenistic cities like it would endure for generations, not to mention the important role these settlements played in the development of the famous Silk Road.

One of the more entertaining anecdotes highlighting the influence of Hellenistic culture is provided by ancient historian Plutarch. After his disastrous defeat at the Battle of Carrhae in 53 BCE, the head of Roman politician and general Marcus Licinius Crassus was presented to King Orodes II at the Parthian court, where it was used as a prop in a performance of Euripides' *The Bacchae*.

## After discouraging year, US officials expect review of Afghan strategy

The United States is preparing to undertake a review of its strategy in Afghanistan, US officials told Reuters, a year after President Donald Trump begrudgingly agreed to extend America's involvement in the 17-year-old war. Officials said Trump has shown signs of frustration over the lack of progress since he unveiled a strategy last August that committed to an open-ended deployment of US military advisers, trainers and Special Forces and increased air support for Afghan security forces. The goal was to force the Taliban militants to open peace talks with the Kabul government.

Trump was opposed to remaining in America's longest war, but was convinced by his advisers to give it more time. He authorized last year the deployment an additional 3,000 US troops, bringing the total to around 15,000. Nearly a year later, the current situation is in a stalemate in which Afghan civilians are paying a heavy toll, the Taliban are expanding in rural areas but are unable to capture major urban centers and the capability of Afghan security forces remains in doubt.

Several current US officials and other former officials and advisers with direct knowledge said the White House had not yet formally ordered the review, but they were preparing for a government-wide appraisal in the next few months. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the issue.

"We've received some indications from the White House that Trump could ask for a review in the next few months. So we're preparing for what it would look like," said a senior US Official. The review would examine all facets of the current strategy, including what progress had been made, the US troop's presence, and prospect of negotiations with the Taliban. It also would include US relations with Pakistan, which US officials accuse of supporting the insurgents, the senior official said. Islamabad denies the charge. "We regularly conduct reviews of our strategies examining their effectiveness and making necessary adjustments to ensure US resources are being used in the most efficient ways possible," a National Security Council spokesperson said in an e-mailed response to a request for comment.

"We are not planning an overarching review of our core strategy, like the one conducted last summer." The official did not define "an overarching review of our core strategy," but added as Trump arrived in Brussels for a NATO summit that, "We expect allies and partners to carry their fair share of the burden in Afghanistan by continuing to increase troop and financial contributions."

## Putin confronts the American dystopia

We have to hand it to Putin. He is the best that there is. Note the ease with which he mopped up the floor with that idiot Chris Wallace.

**By Paul Craig Roberts**

What is wrong with the US media that it cannot produce a second competent journalist as company for Tucker Carlson? Why America's are remaining good journalists, such as Chris Hedges, now in the alternate media? All I can say, and Putin probably already knows it, is that there is more going on than prostitutes holding the relationship between Russia and the US hostage to an internal political struggle between the Democratic Party and President Trump.

It is not just that the corrupt US media is serving as propagandists for the Democratic Party against President Trump. The prostitutes are serving the interest of the military/security complex, which has ownership interests in the highly concentrated US media, to keep Russia positioned as the enemy that justifies the huge \$1,000 billion budget of the military/security complex. Without the "Russian enemy," what is the justification for such a waste of money when so many real needs go underfunded and unfunded?

In other words, the American media are not only stupid, they are corrupt beyond all measure. Today at 12:40 Eastern Time NPR had a collection of Trump-bashers doing their utmost to prevent the Trump/Putin meeting from leading to a normalizing of relations between the two governments.

For example, as every informed person knows, the US intelligence community has most certainly not concluded that Russia interfered in the presidential election. That conclusion was reached by a few hand-picked members of 3 of the 16 intelligence agencies and was expressed not as a proven fact but as "highly likely." In other words, it was nothing but an orchestrated opinion given by cooperative agents who no doubt expect promotions in return.

Despite this known fact, the NPR propaganda team said that Trump had believed Putin instead of an unanimous US factual intelligence report that proved Russia interfered. The NPR Trump-bashers said that Trump had believed the "thug Putin" and not his own American experts. The NPR Trump-bashers went on to compare Trump's "siding with Putin" with Trump's opinion that the Charlottesville violence had contributors from both sides.

The NPR Trump-bashers equated Trump's factual statement about violence from both sides into "siding with the neo-Nazis" in Charlottesville. NPR's point is that Trump sides with Nazis and Russian thugs and is against Americans.

What Trump said in fact about alleged election interference was that whether there was or was not any election interference, it had no effect as Comey and Rosenstein have admitted, and is certainly not as important as two nuclear powers getting along with one another and avoiding tensions that could result in nuclear war. One would think that even an NPR idiot could understand that.

The Trump-bashing on NPR has gone on all day intermixed with an occasional bashing of Russia for killing Syrian civilians in air attacks on the Washington-supported jihadists that are, as instructed by Washington, trying to hold on to a bit of Syria so that Washington and Israel can restart the war. One wonders at the stupidity of those who give money to NPR so that NPR can lie to them all day long. Like George Orwell foresaw, people are more comfortable with Big Brother's lies than with the truth.

NPR was once an alternative voice, but it was broken by the George W. Bush regime and has become completely corrupt. NPR still pretends to be "listener-supported," but in fact is now a commercial station just like every commercial station. NPR tries to disguise this fact by using "with support from" to introduce the paid advertisements from the corporations.

"With support from" is how NPR traditionally acknowledged its philanthropic donors. The real question is: how does NPR hold on to its 501c3 tax-exempt status when it sells commercial advertising? No need for NPR to worry. As long as the prostitute entity serves the ruling elite at the expense of truth, it will retain its illegal tax-exempt status.

It is obvious that the indictments of the 12 Russian intelligence officers immediately prior to the Trump/Putin meeting was intended to harm the meeting and to give the pressites more opportunities for more dishonest shots at President Trump. In my day, journalists would have been smart enough and would have had enough integrity to understand that. But Western pressites have neither intelligence nor integrity.

How much proof do you want? Here is pressite Michelle Goldberg writing in the New York Times that "Trump shows's the world he's Putin's lucky." The pressite says she is "staggered by the American president's slavish and toadying performance." Apparently Goldberg thinks Trump should have beaten up Putin. The Washington Post, formerly a newspaper, now a sick joke, alleged that "Trump just colluded with Russia. Openly."

It is not only the pressites. It is the so-called experts, such as Richard Haass, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, a self-important group, financed by the military/security complex that presides over American foreign policy. Haass, sticking to the official military/security line, declared erroneously:

"International order for 4 centuries has been based on non-interference in the internal affairs of others and respect for sovereignty. Russia has violated this norm by seizing Crimea and by interfering in the 2016 US election. We must deal with Putin's Russia as the rogue state it is."

What is Haass talking about? What respect for sovereignty does Washington have? Surely Haass is familiar with the ruling neoconservative doctrine of US world hegemony. Surely Haass knows that the orchestrated troubles with Iraq, Libya, Syria, North Korea, Russia, and China are due to Washington's resentment of their sovereignty. What is Washington's unilateralism about if Washington respects the sovereignty of countries?

Why does Washington want a unipolar world if Washington respects the sovereignty of other countries? It is precisely Russia's insistence on a multi-polar world that has Russia in the propaganda cross hairs. If Washington respects sovereignty, why does Washington overthrow countries that have it? When Washington accuses Russia of being a threat to world order, Washington means that Russia is a threat to Washington's world order. Is Haass demonstrating his idiocy or his corruption?

As the American media has conclusively proven that it has no independence but is a mouthpiece for Democrats and corporate interests, it should be nationalized. The American media is so compromised that nationalization would be an improvement.

The armaments industry should also be nationalized. Not only is it a power greater than the elected government, it also is vastly inefficient. The Russian armaments industry with a tiny fraction of the US military budget produces far superior weapons. As President Eisenhower, a Five-Star General, said, the military-industrial complex is a threat to American democracy. Why are the pressite scum so worried about non-existent Russian interference when the military/security complex is so powerful that it can actually substitute itself for the elected government?

There was a time when the Republican Party represented the interests of business, and the Democratic Party represented the interests of the working class. That kept America in balance. Today there is no balance. Since the Clinton regime, the rich one percent has been getting vastly richer, and the 99 percent has been getting poorer. The middle class is in serious decline.

The Democrats have abandoned the working class, which Democrats now dismiss as "Trump deplorables," and support instead the divisiveness and hatreds of Identity Politics. At a time when the American people need unity to stand up to warmongering and greed, there is no unity. Races and genders are taught to hate one another. It is everywhere you look. Compared to the America I was born into, the America of today is fragile and weak. The only effort at unity is to create unity that Russia is the enemy. It is just like George Orwell's 1984. In other aspects the current American dystopia is worse than the one Orwell described.

Try to find an American public or private institution that is worthy of respect, that is honorable, that respects truth, that is compassionate and strives for justice. What you find in place of compassion and demand for justice are laws that punish if you criticize the Israeli genocide of the Palestinians or leak information showing the felonies committed by the US government.

With all of their institutions corrupted, the American people become corrupted as well. Corruption is what the young are born into. They know no different. What future is that for America?

How can Russia, China, Iran, North Korea reach a compromise with a government that does not know the meaning of the word, a government that requires submission and when submission is not given destruction follows as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen learned.

Who would be so foolish as to trust an agreement with Washington? Instead of pursuing an agreement with Trump, who is being set up for removal, Putin should be preparing Russia for war.

**War is definitely coming.**

# US soon to leapfrog Saudis, Russia as top oil producer

By David Koenig

The US is on pace to leapfrog both Saudi Arabia and Russia and reclaim the title of the world's biggest oil producer for the first time since the 1970s. The latest forecast from the US Energy Information Administration predicts that US output will grow next year to 11.8 million barrels a day.

"If the forecast holds, that would make the US the world's leading producer of crude," says Linda Capuano, who heads the agency, a part of the Energy Department. Saudi Arabia and Russia could upend that forecast by boosting their own production. In the face of rising global oil prices, members of the OPEC cartel and a few non-members including Russia agreed last month to ease production caps that had contributed to the run-up in prices.

President Donald Trump has urged the Saudis to pump more oil to contain rising prices. He tweeted on June 30 that King Salman agreed to boost production "maybe up to 2,000,000 barrels." The White House later clarified that the king said his country has a reserve of 2 million barrels a day that could be tapped "if and when necessary."

The United States led the world in oil production for much of the 20th century, but the Soviet Union surpassed America in 1974, and Saudi Arabia did the same in 1976, according to Energy Department figures.

By the end of the 1970s the USSR was producing one-third more oil than the US; by the end of the 1980s, Soviet output was nearly double that of the US.

The last decade or so has seen a revolution in American energy production, however, led by techniques including hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, and horizontal drilling. Those innovations and the breakup of the Soviet Union helped the U.S. narrow the gap, although Russia and Saudi Arabia both pumped more crude than the US last year.

The U.S. has been pumping more than 10 million barrels a day since February, and probably pumped an average of 10.9 million barrels a day in June, up from 10.8 million in May, the energy agency said Tuesday in its latest short-term outlook. Capuano's agency forecast that US crude output will average 10.8 million barrels a day for all of 2018 and 11.8 million barrels a day in 2019, up from 9.4 million in 2017.

The current US record for a full year is 9.6 million barrels a day in 1970. The trend of rising US output prompted Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency, to predict this spring that the US would leapfrog Russia and become the world's largest producer by next year if not sooner. One potential obstacle for US drillers is a bottleneck of pipeline capacity to ship oil from the Permian Basin of Texas and New Mexico to ports and refineries.

"They are growing the production but they can't get it out of the area fast enough because of pipeline constraints," said Jim Rittersbusch, a consultant to oil traders. Some analysts believe that Permian production could decline, or at least grow more slowly, in 2019 or 2020 as energy companies move from their best acreage to more marginal areas.

'Courtesy ABC News'.

# Trump launches trade wars

By Shahid M Amin

During his presidential campaign, Donald Trump had won the support of many Americans, among the white working class, by claiming that the world was taking advantage of USA by 'ripping it off' in trade. He accused China, in particular, of using unfair trade practices to build large trade surpluses that deprive the American businessmen and workers of profits and jobs.

He promised that if elected President, he would end one-way traffic and outright exploitation. Most economists disagreed with Trump's diagnosis of world trade and his proposed cure. But Trump being Trump, he has been doing exactly what he promised, by launching the dreaded trade wars with many countries in the world.

Figures show that the US trade deficit with China stood at \$375 billion in 2017: the US exports to China were \$130 billion while its imports from China were \$506 billion. It mostly imports consumer electronics, clothing and machinery from China. Much of these imports are due to the practice of US manufacturers to send raw material to China for low-cost assembly. When these items are shipped back to USA, they are considered as imports.

Such trading is taking place because China can produce many consumer goods at lower cost than others, for two reasons: a lower standard of living which allows companies in China to pay lower wages to workers and an exchange rate that is seen as under-valued. But many economists argue that Trump seems unaware that trade protectionism against China would mean that US consumers will have to pay higher prices for the goods made in America. The consumer would prefer paying less for computers, electronics and other items even if it means that the manufacturing is done in China and not in USA, resulting in fewer jobs for US workers.

In keeping with his promise to lower the trade deficit with China, President Trump decided, in February 2018, to impose tariffs and quotas on solar panels and washing machines imported from China. In March, he announced a 25% tariff on steel imports and 10% tariff on aluminum.

On June 15, Trump imposed steep tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of Chinese goods, ranging from dishwashers to aircraft tyres. China responded immediately by announcing its own tariffs on \$35 billion worth of US goods. The stock market fell amidst fears that this might start a trade war, with the world's two largest economies at each other's throat.

A trade war would be against the pattern of inter-dependence that is an important aspect of US-China commercial relations. Due to persistent trade deficits, by February 2018, the US debt to China stood at \$1.18 trillion i.e. 19 percent of the total public debt the US owes to foreign countries. That gives China a huge leverage over US fiscal policy.

There is much worry about what would happen if China were to threaten to or actually call in its loan. Among other things, it would result in rise in US interest rates and a crippling mortgage crisis, since millions of Americans have taken mortgages on housing and other items. Such a crisis could throw the US and world economy into recession. However, that situation would also not be in China's own interest, since US consumers would be buying fewer Chinese goods.

Hence, China does not have a free hand but must carefully consider the implications of any kneejerk reaction that could result in starting a catastrophic crisis. A trade war is a situation when countries try to attack each other's trade with taxes and quotas. When one country raises tariff i.e. a tax on imports, the other will respond in a tit-for-tat escalation. The end result will be hurting of economies, leading to political tension and even a threat to peace.

Trump has also been at odds with traditional US friends in NATO and Europe, creating a rift in the old ties of solidarity between them. The G-7 Summit held in Canada earlier this month saw Trump openly feuding with EU leaders and the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. Trump's "America First" policies have

caused deep diplomatic schisms, with the result that the Group of the world's richest nations is more divided than at any time in its history.

Apart from hefty tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, Trump has threatened to impose the same for car imports. Earlier, he estranged traditional friends by walking out of environmental agreements, as well as on the international nuclear deal reached with Iran. French President Macron has worked hard to establish a good equation with Trump but he had to warn Trump, ahead of the Summit, that G-6 could survive even without USA.

Trudeau warned there could be a 'robust discussion' at the Summit. Undeterred, Trump fired back at the two leaders over Twitter, accusing them of imposing massive trade tariffs and other barriers against the US, which he said were "totally unfair to our farmers, workers and companies. Take down your tariffs and barriers or we will more than match you." Trump warned them of retaliatory action.

Considering the background of very close relations between USA and Canada, the rift between Trump and Trudeau caused shock waves. The latter told a press conference that US tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminum were "insulting" to Canadians who had stood with the US in wars. He said that Canadians are polite and reasonable "but we will not be pushed around." These comments angered Trump who accused Trudeau of back-stabbing. Quite understandably, some observers have described Trump as a "wrecking ball" and acting as an unguided missile.

The writer served as Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Soviet Union, France, Nigeria and Libya.

## Musings II

### The "intelligence community," "Russian interference," and due diligence Did the United State "Intelligence Community" judge that

Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election?

By Jack Matlock

Most commentators seem to think so. Every news report I have read of the planned meeting of Presidents Trump and Putin in July refers to "Russian interference" as a fact and asks whether the matter will be discussed. Reports that President Putin denied involvement in the election are scoffed at, usually with a claim that the US "intelligence community" proved Russian interference.

In fact, the US "intelligence community" has not done so. The intelligence community as a whole has not been tasked to make a judgment and some key members of that community did not participate in the report that is routinely cited as "proof" of "Russian interference."

I spent the 35 years of my government service with a "top secret" clearance. When I reached the rank of ambassador and also worked as Special Assistant to the President for National Security, I also had clearances for "code word" material. At that time, intelligence reports to the president relating to Soviet and European affairs were routed through me for comment. I developed at that time a "feel" for the strengths and weaknesses of the various American intelligence agencies. It is with that background that I read the January 6, 2017 report of three intelligence agencies: the CIA, FBI, and NSA.

This report is labeled "Intelligence Community Assessment," but in fact it is not that. A report of the intelligence community in my day would include the input of all the relevant intelligence agencies and would reveal whether all agreed with the conclusions. Individual agencies did not hesitate to "take a footnote" or explain their position if they disagreed with a particular assessment. A report would not claim to be that of the "intelligence community" if any relevant agency was omitted.

The report states that it represents the findings of three intelligence agencies: CIA, FBI, and NSA, but even that is misleading in that it implies that there was a consensus of relevant analysts in these three agencies. In fact, the report was prepared by a group of analysts from the three agencies pre-selected by their directors, with the selection process generally overseen by James Clapper, then Director of National Intelligence (DNI).

Clapper told the Senate in testimony May 8, 2017, that it was prepared by "two dozen or so analysts-hand-picked, seasoned experts from each of the contributing agencies." If you can hand-pick the analysts, you can hand-pick the conclusions. The analysts selected would have understood what Director Clapper wanted since he made no secret of his views. Why would they endanger their careers by not delivering?

What should have struck any congressperson or reporter was that the procedure Clapper followed was the same as that used in 2003 to produce the report falsely claiming that Saddam Hussein had retained stocks of weapons of mass destruction. That should be worrisome enough to inspire questions, but that is not the only anomaly.

The DNI has under his aegis a National Intelligence Council whose officers can call any intelligence agency with relevant expertise to draft community assessments. It was created by Congress after 9 / 11 specifically to correct some of the flaws in intelligence collection revealed by 9 / 11. Director Clapper chose not to call on the NIC, which is curious since its duty is "to act as a bridge between the intelligence and policy communities."

During my time in government, a judgment regarding national security would include reports from, as a minimum, the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and the Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR) of the State Department. The FBI was rarely, if ever, included unless the principal question concerned law enforcement within the United States. NSA might have provided some of the intelligence used by the other agencies but normally did not express an opinion regarding the substance of reports.

What did I notice when I read the January report? There was no mention of INR or DIA! The exclusion of DIA might be understandable since its mandate deals primarily with military forces, except that the report

attributes some of the Russian activity to the GRU, Russian military intelligence. DIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency, is the US intelligence organ most expert on the GRU. Did it concur with this attribution? The report doesn't say.

The omission of INR is more glaring since a report on foreign political activity could not have been that of the US intelligence community without its participation. After all, when it comes to assessments of foreign intentions and foreign political activity, the State Department's intelligence service is by far the most knowledgeable and competent. In my day, it reported accurately on Gorbachev's reforms when the CIA leaders were advising that Gorbachev had the same aims as his predecessors.

This is where due diligence comes in. The first question responsible journalists and politicians should have asked is "Why is INR not represented? Does it have a different opinion? If so, what is that opinion? Most likely the official answer would have been that this is "classified information." But why should it be classified? If some agency heads come to a conclusion and choose (or are directed) to announce it publicly, doesn't the public deserve to know that one of the key agencies has a different opinion?

The second question should have been directed at the CIA, NSA, and FBI: did all their analysts agree with these conclusions or were they divided in their conclusions? What was the reason behind hand-picking analysts and departing from the customary practice of enlisting analysts already in place and already responsible for following the issues involved?

As I was recently informed by a senior official, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence Research did, in fact, have a different opinion but was not allowed to express it. So the January report was not one of the "intelligence community," but rather of three intelligence agencies, two of which have no responsibility or necessarily any competence to judge foreign intentions.

The job of the FBI is to enforce federal law. The job of NSA is to intercept the communications of others and to protect ours. It is not staffed to assess the content of what is intercepted; that task is assumed by others, particularly the CIA, the DIA (if it is military) or the State Department's INR (if it is political).

The second thing to remember is that reports of the intelligence agencies reflect the views of the heads of the agencies and are not necessarily a consensus of their analysts' views. The heads of both the CIA and FBI are political appointments, while the NSA chief is a military officer; his agency is a collector of intelligence rather than an analyst of its import, except in the fields of cryptography and communications security.

One striking thing about the press coverage and Congressional discussion of the January report, and of subsequent statements by CIA, FBI, and NSA heads is that questions were never posed regarding the position of the State Department's INR, or whether the analysts in the agencies cited were in total agreement with the conclusions.

Let's put these questions aside for the moment and look at the report itself. On the first page of text, the following statement leapt to my attention: "We did not make an assessment of the impact that Russian activities had on the outcome of the 2016 election. The US Intelligence Community is charged with monitoring and assessing the intentions, capabilities, and actions of foreign actors; it does not analyze US political processes or US public opinion."

Now, how can one judge whether activity "interfered" with an election without assessing its impact? After all, if the activity had no impact on the outcome of the election, it could not be properly termed interference. This disclaimer, however, has not prevented journalists and politicians from citing the report as proof that "Russia interfered" in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

As for particulars, the report is full of assertion, innuendo, and description of "capabilities" but largely devoid of any evidence to substantiate its assertions. This is "explained" by claiming that much of the evidence is classified and cannot be disclosed without revealing sources and methods. The assertions are made with "high confidence" or occasionally, "moderate confidence." Having read many intelligence reports I can tell you that if there is irrefutable evidence of something it will be stated as a fact. The use of the term "high confidence" is what most normal people would call "our best guess." "Moderate confidence" means "some of our analysts think this might be true."

Among the assertions are that a persona calling itself "Guccifer 2.0" is an instrument of the GRU, and that it hacked the e-mails on the Democratic National Committee's computer and conveyed them to Wikileaks. What the report does not explain is that it is easy for a hacker or foreign intelligence service to leave a false

trail. In fact, a program developed by CIA with NSA assistance to do just that has been leaked and published.

Retired senior NSA technical experts have examined the "Guccifer 2.0" data on the web and have concluded that "Guccifer 2.0's" data did not involve a hack across the web but was locally downloaded. Further, the data had been tampered with and manipulated, leading to the conclusion that "Guccifer 2.0" is a total fabrication.

The report's assertions regarding the supply of the DNC e-mails to Wikileaks are dubious, but its final statement in this regard is important: "Disclosures through WikiLeaks did not contain any evident forgeries." In other words, what was disclosed was the truth! So, Russians are accused of "degrading our democracy" by revealing that the DNC was trying to fix the nomination of a particular candidate rather than allowing the primaries and state caucuses to run their course. I had always thought that transparency is consistent with democratic values. Apparently those who think that the truth can degrade democracy have a rather bizarre-to put it mildly-concept of democracy.

Most people, hearing that it is a "fact" that "Russia" interfered in our election must think that Russian government agents hacked into vote counting machines and switched votes to favor a particular candidate. This, indeed, would be scary, and would justify the most painful sanctions. But this is the one thing that the "intelligence" report of January 6, 2017, states did not happen. Here is what it said: "DHS [the Department of Homeland Security] assesses that the types of systems Russian actors targeted or compromised were not involved in vote tallying."

This is an important statement by an agency that is empowered to assess the impact of foreign activity on the United States. Why was it not consulted regarding other aspects of the study? Or-was it in fact consulted and refused to endorse the findings? Another obvious question any responsible journalist or competent politician should have asked.

Prominent American journalists and politicians seized upon this shabby, politically motivated, report as proof of "Russian interference" in the U.S. election without even the pretense of due diligence. They have objectively acted as co-conspirators in an effort to block any improvement in relations with Russia, even though cooperation with Russia to deal with common dangers is vital to both countries. This is only part of the story of how, without good reason, US - Russian relations have become dangerously confrontational. God willin and the crick don't rise, I'll be musing about other aspects soon.

Jack Matlock is a career diplomat who served as US ambassador to the Soviet Union when the Cold War ended.

# Losing military supremacy

By **Andrei Martyanov**

The fact that the USA is facing a profound crisis, possibly the worst one in its history, is accepted by most observers, except maybe the most delusional ones. Most Americans definitely know that. In fact, if there is one thing upon which both those who supported Trump and those who hate him with a passion can agree on, it would be that his election is a clear proof of a profound crisis (I would argue that the election of Obama before also had, as one of its main causes, the very same systemic crisis).

When speaking of this crisis, most people will mention the deindustrialization, the drop in real income, the lack of well-paid jobs, healthcare, crime, immigration, pollution, education, and a myriad of other contributing factors. But of all the aspects of the “American dream”, the single most resilient one has been the myth of the US military as “the finest fighting force in history”.

In this new book, Andrei Martyanov not only comprehensively debunks this myth, he explains step by step how this myth was created and why it is collapsing now. This is no small feat, especially in a relatively short book (225 pages) which is very well written and accessible to everyone, not just military specialists.

Martyanov takes a systematic and step-by-step approach: first, he defines military power, then he explains where the myth of US military superiority came from and how the US rewriting of the history of WWII resulted in a complete misunderstanding, especially at the top political levels, of the nature of modern warfare.

He then discusses the role ideology and the Cold War played in further exacerbating the detachment of US leaders from reality. Finally, he demonstrates how a combination of delusional narcissism and outright corruption resulted in a US military capable of wasting truly phenomenal sums of money on “defense” while at the same time resulting in an actual force unable to win a war against anything but a weak and defenseless enemy.

That is not to say that the US military has not fought in many wars and won. It did, but in the words of Martyanov: Surely when America fought against a third-rate adversary it was possible to rain death from the skies, and then roll over its forces, if any remained by that time, with very little difficulty and casualties. That will work in the future too against that type of adversary similar in size and flimsiness of Iraqi Forces circa 2003. But Ledeen's Doctrine had one major flaw one adult cannot continue to go around the sandbox constantly fighting children and pretend to be good at fighting adults.

The main problem for the USA today is that there are very few of those third-rate adversaries left out there and that those who the USA is trying to bring to submission now are either near-peer or even peer adversaries. Martyanov specifically lists the factors which make that kind of adversary so different from those the USA fought in the past:

1. Modern adversaries have command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities equal to or better than the US ones.
2. Modern adversaries have electronic warfare capabilities equal to or better than the US ones
3. Modern adversaries have weapon systems equal to or better than the US ones.
4. Modern adversaries have air defenses which greatly limit the effectiveness of US airpower.
5. Modern adversaries have long-range subsonic, supersonic and hypersonic cruise missiles which present a huge threat to the USN, bases, staging areas and even the entire US mainland.

In the book, all these points are substantiated with numerous and specific examples which I am not repeating here for the sake of brevity.

One could be forgiven for not being aware of any of these facts, at least if one considers the kind of nonsense written by the US corporate media or, for that matter, by the so-called “experts” (another interesting topic Martyanov discusses in some detail). Still, one can live in an imaginary world only as long as reality does not come crashing in, be it in the form of criminally overpriced and useless weapon systems or in the form of painful military defeats.

The current hysteria about Russia as the Evil Mordor which is the culprit for everything and anything bad (real or imaginary) happening to the USA is mostly due to the fact that Russia, in total contradiction to all the “expert” opinions, not only did not crash or turn into a “gas station masquerading as a country” with her economy “in tatters”, but succeeded in developing a military which, for a small fraction of the US military budget, successfully developed armed forces which are in reality far more capable than the US forces.

I realize that this last statement is quite literally “unthinkable” for many Americans and I submit that the very fact that this is so literally unthinkable greatly contributed to making this possible in the first place: when you are so damn sure that by some kind of miracle of history, or God's will, or Manifest Destiny or any other supernatural reason, you are inherently and by definition superior and generally “better” than everybody else you are putting yourself in great danger of being defeated.

This is as true for Israel as it is for the USA. I would also add that in the course of the West's history this “crashing in of reality” in the comfy world of narcissistic delusion often came in the form of a Russian soldier defeating the putatively much superior master race of the day (from the Crusaders to the Nazis). Hence the loathing which western ruling elites always had for everything Russian.

In this book, Martyanov explains why, in spite of the absolutely catastrophic 1990s, the Russians succeeded in developing a modern and highly capable combat force in a record time. There are two main reasons for this: first, unlike their US counterparts, Russian weapons are designed to kill, not to make money and, second, Russians understand warfare because they understand what war really is.

This latest argument might look circular, but it is not: Russians are all acutely aware of what war really means and, crucially, they are actually willing to make personal sacrifices to either avoid or, at least, win wars. In contrast, US Americans have no experience of real warfare (that is warfare in defense of their own land, family and friends) at all. For US Americans warfare is killing the other guy in his own country, preferably from afar or above, while making a ton of money in the process. For Russians, warfare is simply about surviving at any and all cost. The difference couldn't be greater.

The difference in weapons systems acquisition is also simple: since US wars never really put the people of the USA at risk, the consequences of developing under-performing weapons systems were never catastrophic. The profits made, however, were immense. Hence the kind of criminally overpriced and useless weapons system like the F-35, the Littoral Combat Ship or, of course, the fantastically expensive and no less fantastically vulnerable aircraft carriers.

The Russian force planners had very different priorities: not only did they fully realize that the failure to produce an excellently performing weapons system could result in their country being devastated and occupied (not to mention their families and themselves either enslaved or killed), they also realized that they could never match the Pentagon in terms of spending. So what they did was to design comparatively much cheaper weapons systems which could destroy or render useless the output of the multi-trillion dollar US military-industrial complex.

This is how Russian missiles made the entire US ABM program and the US carrier-centric Navy pretty much obsolete as well as how Russian air defenses turned putatively “invisible” US aircraft into targets or how Russian diesel-electric submarines are threatening US nuclear attack subs. All that at a tiny fraction of what the US taxpayer spends on “defense”. Here again, Martyanov gives plenty of detailed examples.

Martyanov's book will deeply irritate and even outrage those for whom the US narcissistic culture of axiomatic superiority has become an integral part of their identity. But for everybody else this book is an absolute must-have because the future of our entire planet is at stake here: the question is not whether the US Empire is collapsing, but what the consequences of this collapse will be for our planet. Right now, the US military has turned into a “hollow force” which simply cannot perform its mission, especially since that mission is, as defined by US politicians, the control of the entire planet.

There is a huge discrepancy between the perceived and the actual capabilities of the US military and the only way to bridge this gap are, of course, nuclear weapons. This is why the last chapter in the book is entitled “The Threat of a Massive American Military Miscalculation”. In this chapter, Martyanov names the real enemy of both the Russian and the American people the US political elites and, especially, the Neocons: they are destroying the USA as a country and they are putting all of mankind at risk of nuclear annihilation.

The above summary does not do justice to Martyanov's truly seminal book. I can only say that I consider this book as an absolutely indispensable "must read" for every person in the USA who loves his/her country and for every person who believes that wars, especially nuclear ones, must be avoided at all costs. Just like many others (I think of Paul Craig Roberts), Martyanov is warning us that "the day of reckoning is upon us" and that the risks of war are very real, even if for most of us such an event is also unthinkable. Those in the USA who consider themselves patriots should read this book with special attention, not only because it correctly identifies the main threat to the USA, but also because it explains in detail what circumstances have resulted in the current crisis.

Waving (mostly Chinese made) US flags is simply not an option anymore, neither is looking away and pretending that none of this is real. Martynov's book will also be especially interesting to those in the US armed forces who are observing the tremendous decline of US military power from inside. Who better than a former Soviet officer could not only explain, but also understand the mechanisms which have made such a decline possible?

# Bottom line - A wound too deep Major Gogoi's incident is a proof of the erosion of value system in the army

**By Pravin Sawhney**

It takes a special kind of talent to make news for the wrong reasons twice in barely 13 months. And when the newsmaker is a major of the Indian Army, long regarded as one of the last bastions of integrity, honour, courage and fortitude, then one must sit up and look hard both inside the glorious institution and outside at the environment that it has created for itself.

Major Leetul Gogoi attained fame or notoriety, depending upon which side of integrity you are on, last April when in an inspired moment he picked up a Kashmiri artisan, Farooq Ahmed Dar, during the Budgam bypolls, tied him on the bonnet of an army jeep and paraded him through the day across several districts. Dar claimed that he was 'mercilessly beaten' before being harnessed onto the jeep.

This act was met with understandable horror not only by the human rights activists, often dismissed as professional breast-beaters by the nationalistic uniformed class, but also by military veterans, some of whom went public with their condemnation. They feared that this one incident would have set back all the good work that the army has tried to do in the insurgency-ridden Jammu and Kashmir.

The bigger fear was that the incident was evidence of everything that is going wrong in the army, including the erosion of its ethos and values that ensured that even under the most extraordinary circumstances the army retained its humanity and professionalism.

The fears were not unfounded. On May 23 this year, the same officer was handed over to the Jammu and Kashmir police by civilians, who in turn handed him over to his unit. This time Major Gogoi was trying to check into a Srinagar hotel with a girl from the same district Budgam which was singled by his action last year. This sets to rest the half-baked argument about consenting adults. Only a person who has spent all his life in a fairy tale bubble would fail to see the power dynamic between an army officer and the civilian girl living in fear of that army.

More to the point, Major Gogoi is not on a holiday to Kashmir, he is posted there. Yet, he saw nothing wrong in hiding his army identity and pretended to be on a business trip when booking the room online. According to a news report, when the hotel insisted on an ID proof he was reluctant to show his and instead furnished the girl's Aadhar card.

Are these the officer-like qualities (OLQs) that the army now expects in its officers? OLQs, each gentleman-cadet is taught at the Indian Military Academy (IMA) and similar schools, are what distinguishes the raw cadets from officers. Thus, can an officer who has no qualms about shedding his army identity for alleged personal gratification be trusted to uphold the army ethos, which puts self-interest as the last interest? Yet, none of these questions troubled Major Gogoi's conscience because he believed he had immunity from accountability, both moral and physical. After all, didn't his earlier misdemeanour earn him the commendation of the Chief of Army Staff award?

Last year, after the human shield incident, even as the Indian Army had instituted court of enquiry against Major Gogoi, Army Chief, General Bipin Rawat had stepped in to reward him. The reasoning for that was given by him in an interview earlier this month. He said: "We were investigating the issue when a FIR was filed against him. My officer felt that he is being abandoned. I can't let my officer feel that."

So, General Rawat chose to stand by one erring officer and abandon the entire institution that is the Indian Army, and all the other honourable young men and women who make this institution what it is. Seen dispassionately, Gen. Rawat actually abandoned that officer too by standing by him when he needed to be upbraided.

If Major Gogoi and officers like him are punished for wrong-doing, it not only sets an example for others, but also may bring them to the right path. That is what military discipline is all about.

This is how professional militaries are distinguished from rogue armies. And this is how the military leadership takes his service to the highest level of competence or the lowest level of human fallibility. I hope with this incident we have hit the pit and now we can build our way up.

This should be the wake-up call for General Rawat to see the larger picture about the future of the Indian Army. Gogoi's instance should tell the army that the idea of Rashtriya Rifles (RR) is taking a heavy toll on its reputation and professionalism.

Surely, Major Gogoi's case is not an exception. Many more perhaps never get reported. Since intimidation of a people is also human rights violations, what does all this do to the reputation of the Indian Army?

Given this, when the locals do not partake in festivities hosted by the army, can they really be blamed? Aren't we pushing the local youth on to the road which leads to alienation and death, thereby taking 10 steps back every time we take one forward?

As a former officer who served the Indian Army with great pride, I have long been saddened by this gradual whittling away of our value system. I drew comfort from the fact that in recent past there were chiefs who were equally concerned about this and wanted the army to 'go back to the basics'.

But today the sadness has been replaced by rage. The gradual erosion of values has acquired the speed of an avalanche in the last two and half years. How debilitated it will leave the army after it settles down is the stuff nightmares are made of.

# Is US president officially in charge of India's foreign policy now?

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

The megalomaniac man in the White House has embarked on an economic offensive against the Islamic Republic of Iran, with Tuesday's announcement that the US State Department intends to cut off all Iranian oil exports by November 4. Many countries have felt the heat. But among Iran's three biggest buyers of oil China, India, and Turkey only India has buckled under the US pressure. These three countries account for about half of Iran's oil exports.

Ankara and Beijing have refused to cut oil imports from Iran, claiming that the corrosively unilateral U.S. sanctions are not binding on them so they won't pay heed to Trump's diktats. China, Iran's biggest purchaser, accounts for about one-quarter of Iran's oil sales 600,000 barrels a day out of total 2.2 million barrels a day Iran exports. What makes it difficult to persuade China to limit its purchases from Iran is the escalating trade war between Beijing and Washington.

India is Iran's second largest buyer and Iran is India's third largest supplier. Iran's share in India's import volumes stands at 10.4 percent in the current financial year, and the recent developments indicated enhanced cooperation between the two countries, especially since President Hassan Rouhani's historic visit to India in February. At least, that is what appeared.

During President Rouhani's visit, the two countries with age-old historical, commercial and cultural ties had pledged to deepen bilateral ties and enhance cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including energy, petroleum and gas. The two sides had also agreed on 'rupee-rial mechanism' to evade banking problems caused by the draconian US sanctions.

Iran has been the main supplier of crude oil to India, even at the peak of Western sanctions between 2012 and 2016. Although the volume of business was affected by the crippling sanctions, the partnership did not break down.

The export of crude oil had substantially increased in last one year, making Iran the third largest oil exporter for India.

A few weeks ago, India's Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj, in a rebuke to Trump administration, had declared that India will not respect unilateral US sanctions against Iran and will recognize only the UN sanctions. It was seen as a principled stand against an unprincipled regime that seeks to impose its hegemony over the world. The vibes were nice but nobody exactly knew what was brewing behind the scenes.

A few days ago, less than a month after Swaraj's statement, India buckled under the overwhelming U.S. pressure, betraying national interest and confirming its status as a pygmy, rather than a giant. Incidentally, it happened a day after US ambassador to UN Nikki Haley visited India.

India's oil ministry ordered refiners to prepare for drastic reduction or zero import of Iranian oil from November when the 180-day wind-down period ends. The news stirred hornet's nest in India as any cut in Iranian oil means substantial jump in oil prices in India, which will hit people hard.

Modi-led BJP government in New Delhi has come under blistering criticism at home over this 'ill-advised' decision that will only tarnish India's reputation globally. Responsible nation states act responsibly without allowing anyone to bully or threaten them. By succumbing to the pressure of U.S., India has not only risked its age-old ties with Tehran, but also demonstrated its weak diplomacy.

As one Twitter user sardonically and quite rightly asked, is the US President officially in charge of India's foreign policy now? A country that aspires to be a global power, a financial and industrial giant, a protagonist of new international policy, and a viable counter-weight to China's rise is outsourcing its foreign policy to a country that has a terrible foreign policy record. India has just touched a new low.

A senior Communist Party of India (CPIM) leader Sitaram Yechury took to Twitter to blast the Modi-led government for kneeling before the US "India had stated only sanctions by the UN would be acceptable not by individual countries. What is India's foreign policy under Modi about? Following US diktats, and betraying India's interests," he asked, bluntly.

Randeep Singh Surejewala, spokesperson of the main opposition party Congress, said the decision was not in national interest. "Will the PM and Petroleum Minister tell the nation if they will adhere to the US

decision asking to stop oil imports from Iran and its impact on petro prices and national interests,” he tweeted.

Gaurav Pandhi, a young Congress leader, lamented that his country was 'bowing' to pressures. “We always stood up to any country that tried to arm-twist us. But now we 'bow' to pressures,” he wrote. Ashok Swain, a university professor, said Trump's “small hands” were big enough for “Modi's 56 inch chest”, referring to Modi's oft-repeated assertion, which has become an idiom of political machismo in India now.

India's foolhardy decision to cut Iranian oil imports under U.S. pressure at a time when the US government has imposed higher tariff on many Indian products shows how the power dynamics work. However, the mood in Iran remains upbeat. Iranians are not panicking just because India has backstabbed them.

The country has seen the worst and bounced back stronger every time. The US attempts to destabilize Iran and provoke Iranians against their government are bound to fail. Trump, Pompeo, Bolton and their surrogates in Tel Aviv and Riyadh would do well to remember that it is Iran, not just any other country where they can play their dirty games.

## Fear of Khalistan

### India demands UK to disallow Social Justice meet

India has issued a demarche to the UK protesting a meeting convened in London by separatist organization Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) next month. The meeting has been called with an intention to shape the 'Referendum 2020' campaign in August that seeks a separate Khalistan and "independence of Punjab". This wholesale slaughter, which led to the deaths of many Sikhs including entire families, has been widely condemned by human rights activists and has been designated as genocide by the California State Assembly.

"We have taken up the matter with the UK government. We have also issued a demarche and we expect that the UK government does not allow any such group to use its country whose intention is to spread hate and which can affect our bilateral ties. "We have told them the intention of the event is the same," the ministry of external affairs spokesperson said. He was responding to a question on what action has India taken to stop the meeting.

Mr. Kumar said the ties of the Sikh community residing in the UK and other parts of the world are good with India. "Their ties, with the country they reside in, are also good. As far as the small groups are concerned, they are fringe elements and their job is to spread hate and communal disharmony," he said. The SFJ has also offered to sponsor Punjabi youths as well as political activists to take part in the gathering next month.

The specter of a Sikh State in the form of Khalistan has scared New Delhi since India's creation in 1947. The Khalistan Movement is a Sikh nationalist movement that wants to create an independent state for Sikh people, via peaceful struggle, inside the current North-Western Republic of India. An ignored aspect is that the concept of an independent Sikh state was originally floated by none other than Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru in the pre-independence period through a Sikh leader whose ear he had at that time.

Although the term had popped up occasionally as a non-serious slogan by stray unrepresentative voices during the period leading up to the partition of the country into India and Pakistan, the concept was first given formal shape and the term Sikh Home Land first used by Master Tara Singh at Nehru's behest as a "counterblast to Jinnah's demand for an independent Muslim state, Pakistan. In other words, the demand for Khalistan was first raised to counter and kill the demand for Pakistan. Thus, ironically, Khalistan was invented to preserve India's unity and integrity, and not to break it. It was used to frighten the British away from the idea of Pakistan.

The Sikhs as a separate nation before British rule chose to join India by choice on promises made by Nehru. The Independence of India was not a joyful event for Sikhs and the scars of partition left Sikhs in a lot of discontentment with regard to their traditional lands being lost to Pakistan and truncated Eastern Punjab being dominated by a non-Punjabi speaking majority. These grievances were further aggravated by a turn of Nehru on promises made to the Sikh community.

Further on, Indira Gandhi tried to prop up Deras of Nirankaris to counter the Sikh's growing political clout. Nirankari Gurus desecrated the Sikh scriptures and were allowed to do it under police protection. In a major altercation, 8 Sikhs were murdered by Nirankaris while they were protesting the desecration. This was the incident that created a call for taking up arms against the Nirankaris, and thereof against the government if it protected them.

The SFJ has also offered to sponsor Punjabi youths as well as political activists to take part in the gathering next month. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale emerged as the voice of Sikhs, over-ruling the pro-State leaders like Longowal. Bhindranwale declared himself as the protector and arbiter of Sikh rights and acquired arms. A list of attacks attributed to Bhindranwale by the government but never substantiated by proof finally gave New Delhi the excuse to impose an emergency in October 1983.

In June 1984, an event would happen that would ignite the flame for Khalistan. The assault on Darbar Sahib, popularly known as the Golden Temple (the holiest of Sikh temples) by the Indian military forces using tanks and artillery known as Operation Blue Star was conducted in order to evict a group of armed pro-Khalistan activists from the temple a claim that remains controversial to this day with prominent politicians like Subramanian Swamy asserting that this was a disinformation campaign to legitimize the attack.

According to the Indian Army, 136 army personnel were killed and 249 injured. In all, 493 people in the complex were killed including Bhindranwale and 86 injured; the government report also mentions that 1600 people were unaccounted for, though it does not state what fraction were killed or injured. Unofficial figures go well into the thousands. Massive human right violations by Indian Army personnel took place like gunning down of prisoners and burning & looting of the Sikh Reference Library.

Retaliation by some Sikhs came in the way of the assassination of Indira Gandhi by her bodyguards, Satwant Singh and Beant Singh. This act triggered the so-called anti-Sikh riots of 1984, which has been reported to be a planned pogrom by the Congress against the Sikhs. This wholesale slaughter, which led to the deaths of many Sikhs including entire families, has been widely condemned by human rights activists and has been designated as genocide by the California State Assembly.

The army occupation of Punjab which followed Operation Blue Star was highly detrimental to the Sikhs. Mass human rights violations like torture, extrajudicial murders, rapes, illegal detentions, forced disappearances were inflicted upon the Sikh community by the Indian authorities to subdue resistance. Sikh groups resisted through an armed insurgency, which carried on for decades.

India has been unable to suppress the demands of a separate Sikh state by both force and greed. In order to demean the struggle for Khalistan it often uses the foreign boogeyman as a tool for disinformation.

# Mastering the art of politicization

By Maj Gen (R) Ashok K Mehta

Surgical strikes have been used to the hilt by the BJP which prides itself on its commitment to the military and national security. With the launch of the video, it is at it again. It is unfortunate that the already politicized issue of surgical strikes against terror camps in PoK was revived through a video clip, 20 months after the event. It triggered a tsunami of competitive nationalism among 'loyal to Government' TV channels, a bitter battle of words between the BJP and the Congress and sporadic criticism by military experts.

It would have been better to let sleeping dogs lie. It will, however, be useful to recall two of the many epochal statements made by the BJP president Amit Shah following the surgical strikes. First, that it was the first time in 68 years that Indian troops crossed the LoC. Second, the party would take the issue of surgical strikes to the people.

The LoC has been crossed many times in the past covertly for similar raids. Our political class is severely deficient in military history, strategic thinking and political direction of operations and war. They rely on the generalist civil service, making it the blind leading the blind. Surgical strikes, and later Doklam, were used by the Government during the elections for political gains, particularly to showcase the strategic acumen of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

I was among the seven military veterans who were briefed by Army chief Dalbir Singh and DGMO Lt Gen Ranbir Singh on the morning after the surgical strikes. Those facts do not require repetition. The video clip is authentic but for a layman, difficult to decipher. It could have been taken out of any Sylvester Stallone movie.

Even before going public, the DGMO displayed exceptional civility in informing his Pakistani counterpart immediately after the last commando was back home that the target of the strikes was not the Pakistan Army but terrorist launch pads. He added that there were no plans for further strikes. This was Incredible India. Pakistan helped by denying the strikes altogether and called the video clip 'farcical'. Fortunately, this prevented retaliation and escalation for which India was unprepared. The rest is folklore.

This was not the first time a raid/raids were carried out covertly. Yes, it was the first time multiple and coordinated raids were executed across the LoC and the Army, instead of maintaining silence and secrecy, was asked by the Government to go public for the first time ever. According to the Army, the operation was in retribution for the terrorist attack at Uri.

Contrary to claims then that the surgical strikes as also the demonetisation that followed would deter Pakistan's cross-border terrorism, the spin now is that it was primarily a revenge attack. What happened in the past were silent raids including exchanging body parts of military personnel. I have witnessed such mutual bestiality since 1957 on both sides of the PirPanjal range. The ground situation changed significantly after the rigged elections of 1987 when the seeds of insurgency were sown.

Today, even the military community is divided over the merits of releasing the video clip. The disclosure can be viewed as a force multiplier for the forthcoming Assembly Elections but anyone who questions the military utility of the strikes is considered anti-national. Further, it does little to cheer the military whose modernisation woes have been publicised by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence chaired by BJP military veteran, Maj Gen BC Khanduri. The Government's latest charade is of the Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft 2.0 (MMRCA) for the Indian Air Force.

About marketing the strikes, as pledged by Shah, full marks to him and Modi's team for their superb advertising skills. The surgical strikes were first milked in Lucknow by former Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar at public rallies in October-November 2016. I was with the Army in Central Command Lucknow and was, therefore, privy to Parrikar's operations. Posters and hoardings blanketed Lucknow as never before. Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, also in town, was clouded by BJP event managers. What was striking was that for the first time, posters and banners carried pictures of the DGMO, Lt Gen Singh flanked by Modi, Shah, and Parrikar. This depiction was gross politicisation of the Army and the General who is today

the Northern Army Commander. This was not all. A few days later, Modi arrived in Lucknow at a public felicitation at the grand Sheesh Mahal.

BJP and RSS leaders indulged in grandstanding, talking up Modi as the conqueror in chief and presenting him with the mace of conquest. This Army-reflected glory was lapped up by the BJP brass as Parrikar narrated stories of how he had injected in the Army the great Hanuman spirit. In every election since Uttar Pradesh, surgical strikes have found a mention, including in Karnataka where Modi's scriptwriters got their history of the Kodava Generals Cariappa and Thimayya completely wrong. Once again, Modi is denigrating the Congress and politicising the Army for votes.

However modest, surgical strikes were morale boosters. For the common man, it meant India was not always going to turn the other cheek. In that sense, it lifted the morale of the people but it did nothing to stop Pakistan from fighting its proxy war even more violently. After the victory in the 1971 war, Indira Gandhi was deified as Durga and Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw as the key architect of victory. On June 27, a day after Modi tore into the Congress for the Emergency, was Manekshaw's 10th death anniversary. Except for Meghna Gulzar, who is making a film on the iconic Manekshaw, no one spared a thought for him.

The BJP prides itself on its commitment to the military and national security. It considers OROP as its crowning glory. But having squeezed the Army for maximum political advantage, it has done little for modernisation, enhancing capacities, defence reforms, and status vis-à-vis civilian services. The strategic utility of a 2-km deep incursion is questionable. Last Saturday, a Citizens Conclave in New Delhi pledged to safeguard the Constitution, the judiciary, civil services and the armed forces.

A military veteran noted that the armed forces and civil services are pandering to those in power. The reverse is also true. The political class must not forget that the armed forces are secular, apolitical and professional. Once-in-68 years military operations must be game-changers and never politicised. National interest must not become synonymous with winning elections.

The writer is a retired Major General of the Indian Army and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the revamped Integrated Defence Staff.

# Growing vulnerabilities India's Maoist insurgency in the red corridor

By Taimur Khan

On June 27, 2017, the FARC of Colombia handed over its guns/weapons to the United Nations (UN), making the Indian Maoists the largest group of Communist fighters besides the YPG of Syria. Ranging from 8,000 to 10,000 in its guerilla army, approximately 40,000 cadres and active supporters in its people's militia, a number of active fighters, have been fighting a protracted people's war against the Indian government for more than fifty years with no end in sight.

Since the two main Maoists groups merged in September 2004, the Communist Party of China (Maoists) has become the largest armed group operating in India. This protracted people's war in the Central and Eastern parts of India, euphemistically known as "The Red Corridor", is about land ownership, displacement of locals from their hometowns and the exploitation of resources (that are abundant) in these areas, that provide shelter to approximately 84 million adivasis or indigenous people.

The Red Corridor which is under the control of Maoists is spread across the districts of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Kerala, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Maoists have a strong presence in the states of West Bengal and Maharashtra as well. The stalemate has remained elusive to a variety of political, economic and social factors. The Indian government has deployed more than a 100,000 paramilitary troops in regions constituting The Red Corridor, to crush the Maoist movement.

From a small uprising that was launched in 1967, from a remote village of Naxalbari in West Bengal, the Maoist insurgency has turned into a Frankenstein that, according to former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is "the single biggest internal security threat to India." The severity of the situation in the Red Corridor, can be gauged by the number of casualties of innocent adivasis, Maoists and Indian security forces personnel, suffering at the hands of this conflict. Approximately 15,000 people have been killed (including Maoists and Indian security forces personnel) with an average death count of 100 people every year since 1990. The question remains, why the insurgency has persisted for so long, and the Maoist movement is still soaring?

According to the Indian government, the Maoists want to overthrow the government and establish communist rule while according to the Maoists' literature, their fight is against the 'economic-imperialist exploitation' of their land and resources (first by the Feudal lords and now by multinational companies). This fight is also against the 'social oppression' of the Indian government and the prevalent caste system.

The answer to the above asked question is, that this war persists due to the conditions that create war, do. The area districts that consists of The Red Corridor in India, are full of valuable ores and metals. The forests have wood and irritable land in abundance. The subsequent governments and politicians have only used the slogan of development, however in reality, the manifestation of development has never taken place in the areas that constitute The Red Corridor. The Red Corridor which is under the control of Maoists is spread across the districts of Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Kerala, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Maoists have a strong presence in the states of West Bengal and Maharashtra as well.

The tribal people have seen no such development. Their lands, forests, rivers have always been exploited for resources alongside their tribal women, who have been abused sexually. The livelihoods of the tribal people are snatched away by the government on the behest of the mining corporations who took over their lands and forests. To top it all off, the tribal people are not even employed by the corporations that set up shop in their tribal lands, overall simply exploiting the resources.

Members of the civil rights activists and Maoists watchers in India and abroad are divided over whether the use of violence as a means by Maoists is necessary or not. However, when it comes to the Maoists' cause being rooted in the opposition against the unscrupulous exploitation of forest lands and displacement of tribal people for the sake of resources, all are in agreement.

Furthermore, the longevity and persistency of the Maoists' armed struggle can be attributed to the lack of political will in the Indian State to resolve the issue, the double game of the Indian authorities and adherence of the Indian government to seeking a purely military solution to the conflict.

Despite the declarations of a unilateral ceasefire by the Maoists, the Indian government has shown total unwillingness to work towards establishing peace, and never reciprocated any overtures of peace made by

Maoists. Instead of negotiating with the Maoists, addressing the grievances and concerns of the local population and the insurgents, the Indian state has always resorted to violent and hard power means to resolve the issue.

During the government of PM Manmohan Singh, a special budget was allocated for districts with Maoists presence and rapid militarization of police started where armories were upgraded and high-intensity warfare equipment was provided to the police. Operation Green Hunt against the Maoists was also launched in 2009. The government even attempted to reel in the Indian Army into this conflict but fortunately, the military decided not to get involved. The forests have wood and irritable land in abundance. The subsequent governments and politicians have only used the slogan of development, however in reality, the manifestation of development has never taken place in the areas that constitute The Red Corridor.

As an alternate strategy, the Indian government also sponsored counter-militias and bribed local tribes to fight against the Maoists. One such example is of the infamous "Salwa Judum", where the strategy of creating counter-militias backfired as she came under international scrutiny for gross human rights violations, employment of child soldiers, rape and murder. In the end, the Indian government had to ban the organization.

The Indian security forces are also blamed for carrying out extrajudicial killings of Maoists and causing mass sexual and rights abuses of adivasis as reported by independent journalists covering the conflict. From April 22nd to 23rd, 2018, at least 39 Maoists were killed in an alleged encounter with Indian security forces in the district of Gadchiroli.

The Maoists accepting the loss have vowed to take revenge. Local human rights organizations have raised questions on the authenticity of the Gadchiroli incident mentioning that not even a single police personnel had received injuries. They have termed it a planned mass murder and a cold-blooded killing of Maoists. Even the human rights activists and journalists have been targeted for reporting the abuse and targeted killings.

According to Dr. Lakhman Singh, President of People's Union for Civil Liberties, the situation is that of a civil war in Central and Eastern districts of India. However, to avoid UN monitoring, the government refuses to declare this as an internal armed conflict. The government of India boasts that violence has decreased over the past few years, however, the decline in casualties is due to a stalemate, not due to a peaceful political settlement. The stalemate has remained elusive to a variety of political, economic and social factors.

The Indian government has deployed more than a 100,000 paramilitary troops in regions constituting The Red Corridor, to crush the Maoist movement. The mass killings of Maoists and innocent adivasis is being completely ignored in the international media, just like the Indian state's atrocities in the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) where thousands of innocent civilians have been and still are being subjected to state oppression and mass killing's for the past seven decades.

The international media should highlight the atrocities of the Indian state against the innocent adivasis of Central and Eastern India, the Maoists (who are raising a voice for their rights) and the people of IOK. It is the responsibility of the international media to become the voice of the oppressed who are living under the iron fist of the Indian state.

The farce of the "biggest democracy of the world" should be eliminated in order to make the international community realize that the state of India is responsible for the ills it faces and not its neighbors who are conveniently blamed by India whenever something goes wrong.

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## **Let me begin by giving a brief roundup of activities on the foreign policy front**

### **Please note MoFA spokesperson's response to N smuggling reports in India...**

This week marks the 2nd death anniversary of Kashmiri leader Burhan Muzaffar Wani, who was brutally killed by Indian occupation forces on 8 July 2016, marking another dark chapter in the lives of innocent Kashmiris of Indian occupied Jammu & Kashmir. His struggle symbolizes that of every Kashmiri, who is fighting the inhumane and treacherous Indian rule in IoK every day, for the just right to self-determination, which is enshrined in the relevant UNSC Resolutions and calls for a UN-mandated plebiscite in Jammu & Kashmir.

The OHCHR Report on Jammu and Kashmir is a reflection of Pakistan's repeated calls on the international community to put an end. India's brutal use of pellet guns, indiscriminate firing, use of human shield and promulgation of draconian AFPSA and SPA laws that are making lives of Kashmiris in IoK a living hell.

Also, in Indian occupied Jammu & Kashmir, brutal killing and maiming of innocent civilians continued with impunity. The Indian occupation forces killed 08 Kashmiris last week, including teenagers Andleeb Jan (13 yrs old), 11th grade student Ubaid Manzoor Lone, 10th grade student Tamsheel Ahmad Khan, Shakir Ahmad Khanday (19 yrs old), Irshad Ahmad Lone (22 yrs old) and Sameer Ahmad Sheikh in Kulgam, Shopian, Sopore and Kupwara areas. While inhumane killing of Kashmiri youth continues unabated, Indian occupation forces also injured over 170 innocent civilians during last week with use of brute force including bullets, pellets and teargas shells.

A matter of grave concern is the shifting of aged female resistance leader Syeda Aasiya Andrabi, as well as Nahida Nasreen and Fehmeeda Sofi to India's infamous Tihar jail, wherein other detained political leaders like Shabbir Ahmad Shah, Masarrat Alam Bhat and others are already languishing in inhumane conditions with acute danger to their health and wellbeing.

We condemn these brutal human rights violations of Indian occupation forces in the strongest possible terms. These are but a small reflection of the gravest excesses India is carrying out in the Valley, which tower even the blackest of human tragedies in world history. The UN Report is a vindication of the brutalities and atrocities India is committing in Indian occupied Jammu & Kashmir since decades. We call upon the international community to take cognizance of the human rights situation in IoK as well as the OHCHR Report, and immediately call India to account to stop the bloodshed and give the Kashmiris their just right to self-determination through a UN-mandated plebiscite.

Separately, in a major scientific breakthrough, on 9 July, Pakistan launched the Remote Sensing Satellite-1 (PRSS-1) by LM-2C/SMA launch vehicle from Jiuquan Satellite Center, China. The 1,200 kg satellite PRSS-1 will operate at an altitude of 640 km. The satellite will enable Pakistan to meet its imagery requirements in the areas of land mapping, agriculture classification and assessment, urban and rural planning, environmental monitoring, natural disaster management and water resource management for socio-economic development of the country.

Another flagship satellite, Pakistan Technology Evaluation Satellite-1A (PakTES-1A) indigenously designed and developed by SUPARCO's engineers, has also been co-launched with PRSS-1 by the same launch vehicle. PakTES-1A is a 285 kg satellite equipped with an optical payload commensurate with national needs. It has a design life of three years and will operate at an altitude of 610 km.

The successful implementation of PRSS-1 and PakTES-1A projects has further strengthened the space cooperation between Pakistan and China for future collaborations. The President and Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan have congratulated the nation on this historic event and appreciated SUPARCO's scientists and engineers for their technical excellence and untiring efforts. The Prime Minister has assured the nation and SUPARCO of complete support for further advancement in space technology, so vital for socio-economic development and national security of Pakistan. Our scientists and engineers are the source of pride for the nation and the country.

Moreover, the employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will contribute in the fund for the construction of "Diamer Basha and Mohmand Dam 2018". All officers of the Ministry will contribute their three days

pay, whereas all staff members one day pay in this fund. This humble contribution is an effort to contribute towards a national cause.

Mr. Maurice Gourdault - Montagne, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France paid a courtesy call on the Foreign Minister on 10 July 2018. He was in Islamabad to lead the 13th Round of Pakistan-France Bilateral Political Consultations.

The two sides expressed satisfaction at the growing bilateral relations in all fields of mutual interest and agreed to further enhance ties in political, trade and economic, defence and security, science and technological, educational and cultural spheres as well in the context of the European Union.

The Foreign Minister informed the French Secretary General on Pakistan's achievements in the field of democracy trade, economy, business, law and order and security environment. He also highlighted our efforts aimed at securing peace and stability in the region and neighborhood. The French Secretary General expressed appreciation for Pakistan's efforts in combating the twin menace of terrorism and extremism and stressed the need for a coordinated international response in this regard.

The Secretary General Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France also met Foreign Secretary, Tehmina Janjua. Both sides reviewed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and identified opportunities for further cooperation in political, economic, trade, investment, defence, education and cultural fields.

They also expressed satisfaction at the growing cooperation in the context of the European Union. The Foreign Secretary provided an overview of progress made by Pakistan in strengthening democracy, political stability and improved law and order situation in the country. The achievements in the fight against terrorism and implementation of the National Action Plan were also highlighted. The two sides exchanged views on important global and regional issues of mutual interest.

The French side also highlighted challenges confronting France and the European Union, including migration. The Foreign Secretary briefed the French delegation on Pakistan-India relations and expressed grave concern at continued human rights violations in the Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir, which has been verified in recent report by the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights.

The Second Round of Policy Planning Dialogue between Pakistan and Indonesia was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Indonesian Delegation was led by Dr. Arifi Saiman Head for Center of Policy Analysis and Development of Asia-Pacific and African Region from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Jakarta, while the Pakistan side was led by Additional Secretary Asia Pacific Mr. Imtiaz Ahmad. The two sides exchanged views on political, security and economic policy areas of mutual interest. Unanimity of views was found on major regional and global issues.

Now the floor is open for Questions

Question: Reportedly, Saudi Arabia has asked Afghan Taliban to stop fighting and recognize the government in Kabul, as the Kingdom is set to host an international conference of Islamic Scholars in collaboration with OIC. How do you view this statement in the context of peace and stability in Afghanistan? Do you think Saudi Arabia has considerable influence on the Taliban? (Rashida Sial - Ab Takk)

Supplementary Question

Reportedly, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, while in Afghanistan, has hinted about US willingness to be part of the dialogue process with the Taliban. He has also acknowledged that all stakeholders in contact with Taliban must play their due role in bringing Taliban to the negotiating table. Your comment? (Tariq Mehmood - Hum News)

Voice of America has reported that Pakistan recently hosted a meeting of Heads of Intelligence Agencies of Russia, China and Iran with a focus to bring Afghan Taliban to the negotiating table. Can you confirm this meeting? (Anas Malik - Republic TV)

Answer

Regarding your first question, I won't comment on the reported advice of the Saudi government to the Taliban and will also avoid speculating on the level of influence the Saudi government enjoys over Taliban. On the second question, I won't comment on the statement of the US Secretary of State. However, you are aware that we have been saying all along that there is no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan.

Others who were insistent to resolve the issue through military means are also arriving at the same conclusion, which is a good omen for the people of Afghanistan who have suffered immensely from the

merciless conflict. We urge all sides including Taliban to renounce kinetic options and join the peace and reconciliation process to end this brutal conflict in Afghanistan.

Regarding the third question, I have no information about this meeting.

Question

Pakistan has not publicly acknowledged the contents of US talks with Pakistan. Do you confirm that the US wants Pakistan to play a decisive role in Afghanistan as conditional to its bilateral relationship with Pakistan?

Reportedly, US Ambassador in Pakistan, Ambassador David Hale, has recently been promoted to Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs. Are you hopeful that this elevation will help in resolving disagreements between both sides effectively? (Mateen Haider - Freelance)

Answer

You must be aware that Pakistan and the US are engaged in continuous dialogue. This continuation is reflective of the political will on both sides to move forward in the relationship. Regarding your second question, I have seen some media reports to this effect. We wish him well.

Question

You must be privy to the reports that Terbela Dam is without water these days. We have seen videos of water diversion of the rivers in IOK by India. Recently, India has also tried to pass a resolution by IOK Assembly, to allow India to divert these waters. Since water is of prime importance to all countries in the region. What is Pakistan's position on this issue? (Zahid Malik - Daily Metro)

Answer

Ministry of Water and Power is the dealing Ministry for all issues related to water. Foreign Office is fully playing the role assigned to it regarding water issues.

Question

Reportedly, starting July 1, the Afghan government has denied entry to all Pakistani traders on grounds of visa validation. Apparently, there is an agreement on Integrated Border Management between both sides, according to which small-scale traders and shopkeepers are exempted from visa requirements. How do you see this development? (Shabbir Waghra - PTV World)

Answer

We haven't received any complaints from our traders and business people regarding visa denials by Afghan embassy and consulates in Pakistan. As per my understanding, Afghan government has recently changed its visa regulations and liberalized the visa regime for traders and business people.

Question

In your last press briefing, you said that Pakistan wants Taliban to take part in the peace process unconditionally. Today, you have said the same again. The US administration has undertaken numerous visits in the context of Afghanistan. However, we have seen the regional initiatives, especially those by China, Russia and Iran coming to a halt at the official and Ministerial levels. In your view, what is the potential for these regional initiatives if Taliban joins the peace process?

How would you comment on the recent episode in which 5 Indian nationals carrying and selling uranium while arrest in India earlier on, we have witnessed similar instances of ineffective safety and security mechanism of Indian nuclear program? Has International community taken notice of it? (Shaukat Paracha - Freelance)

Answer

Regarding your second question, Pakistan is deeply concerned about the reported incident involving the attempted sale of Uranium on the black market. We are looking forward to the results of further investigations. The report raises several questions about nuclear security and or/interest of criminal groups and individuals in Uranium and their motivations.

On Taliban, Pakistan is directly engaging with the Afghan Government under APAPPS mechanism. We believe that only through continuous and sustainable dialogue can the problem of Afghan conflict be resolved. Any initiative on Afghanistan must be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led. All stakeholders must play their part in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table.

Question

First, you mentioned in your opening remarks about Diamer Bhasha Dam. This dam comes in the disputed Gilgit Baltistan area. The people of GB, affected by the construction of this dam, fear that they will not be compensated appropriately by the government authorities. In your view will these people have any say in the project?

Second, while you are mentioning about India's human rights violations in IOK, people in GB region are being put in Schedule IV for raising their voices against social and political estrangement. These people are demanding the same rights as that the people of AJK. Don't you think that such acts also come under human rights violations? (Fida Hussain - Radio News Network)

Answer

For technical information regarding dams, please concern Ministry of Water and Power. However, I assure you that justice will be meted out to the people of GB. Regarding your second question, Ministry of Kashmir Affairs is the dealing Ministry in this regard.

Question

It is ironic that on the occasion of Kashmiri leader Burhan Wani's second death anniversary, our Permanent Representative in NY, Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi chose to organize a Pakistani film festival at the UN Headquarters. Did the Foreign Office ask her for an explanation in this regard? (Aon Sherazi - Sach TV)

Supplementary Question

Please elaborate on what is more important to the Foreign Office - Kashmir or films/cultural diplomacy? (Mateen Haider - Freelance). A defence analyst has recently said that India is still using Bosphorus and chemical elements in pellet guns in IOK. Do you confirm this? Why hasn't the Foreign Office highlighted the issue at the international forums?

Answer

Kashmir is the cornerstone of Pakistan's Foreign Policy. It has remained so for the past seven decades. Our position on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is consistent and in accordance with UNSC resolutions that call for the UN mandated plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir, so that Kashmiris may be given the just right to self-determination. There shall not be any iota of doubt in this.

One of the fundamental responsibilities of our Mission at the UN is to effectively highlight the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Our Mission in New York is regularly doing that at all UN Forums and I will check about the film festival. Regarding the third question, we are investigating the use of chemical materials in pellet guns by Indian occupation forces. We will raise it at the highest level once facts are established.

Question

Indian media is claiming that Mr. Zafar Bangash, a Canada based Pakistani Imam and director of Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought (ICIT), has played a role in the recent OHCHR's Report on Kashmir. What are your comments on this? (Khawaja Nayyar Iqbal - Kashmir Post)

Supplementary Question

Indian media, particularly ANI has alleged that Mr. Zafar Bangash, who is a Pakistani cleric based in Toronto, has played a key role in collusion with Pakistan's Foreign Office and OHCHR to produce the recent report on Kashmir. Your comments on this please! (Anas Malik - Republic TV)

Answer

India has unfortunately become desperate, and now in its exasperation, will say anything to take the focus off the report. Assertions such as these are as preposterous as they are laughable. Next question please.

We completely reject the false and baseless accusations being made by the Indian media outlets. It is a part of India's malicious campaign against the credibility of the report by distorting facts and figures. The fact of the matter is that the OHCHR's report with its categorical focus on systematic and state-sponsored human rights abuses in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir has caught India completely off-guard.

In response to India's accusations, the article published by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights on 27 June 2018 where he has expressed disappointment on India's reaction to the OHCHR's report and has shrugged off India's baseless accusations by stating that the report is motivated by the desire to contribute to the search for peace and justice in Kashmir, is ample proof of the positive spirit of the report.

It is high time that India realizes that it can no longer conceal its vicious face of tyranny and oppression behind politics of hate and deception.

Question

A Pakistani student hailing from Karachi was brutally stabbed by a Chinese co-worker in Nanjing yesterday. What is the status of his early repatriation? (Khalid Azeem - SAMAA TV)

Answer

I have seen the media reports of the incident. I will get detail from the Mission and revert.

Question

China has recently agreed to purchase Indian medicine on reduced tariffs. Do you think that similar steps can be taken under SAFTA to increase trade between South Asian countries?

The Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) was signed during the 12th SAARC Summit held at Islamabad on 6th January 2004. The first tariff reduction under the Trade Liberalization Programme (TLP) was enforced w.e.f. 1st July 2006. As a result of successful completion of SAFTA TLP, Pakistan's trade in the SAARC region has increased.

In Fiscal Year 2003-04, Pakistan's total export to the SAARC region was US\$ 886 million which increased to US\$ 2,510.71 million in Fiscal year 2016-17. SAARC Member States are in process of reducing tariffs to increase regional trade. The details may be sought from the Ministry of Commerce? (Asghar Ali Mubarak - Diplomatic Mail)

Question

What is the update on Afghan refugees' repatriation, as the last date of their return expired on 30 June. What is the update on sanctions imposed on Pakistan under FATF?

Answer

Regarding your first question, I gave a detailed response in my last press briefing. The date of the return of Afghan refugees has been extended for another 3 months.

The line Ministry for FATF is Ministry of Finance.

Question

When will the Foreign Office submit its reply in ICJ in Commander Kulbushan Jhadev case? (Mona Khan - Geo TV)

Answer

We will submit our reply on 17 July 2018.

## What Amarinder alias Capt. Amarinder Singh of Patiala thinks of himself?

### Dr. Awatar Singh Sekhon

Amarinder of Patiala alias Captain (R) Amarinder Singh of the former Sikh State of Patiala thinks of himself, when he criticized the Honorable Harjit Singh, Defense Minister, Government of Canada, of the Right Honorable Justin Pierre Sinclair Trudeau' administration? The latter is one of the best prime ministers of the governments of our world. The Government of Canada, under the Right Honourable Justin P S Trudeau has four Sikh cabinet ministers and the Hon. Harjit Singh Sajjan is one of them. The Sikhs are proud of the Government of Canada headed by the Right Honourable Trudeau.

Who is Amarinder of Patiala, anyway? Amarinder is the son of Yadvinder Singh of Patiala. Bhupinder Singh had been Sikh king of the State of Patiala in the pre- and post-15th August, 1947. In the post-15th August 1947, Amarinder's father became the "Security Guard" of J L Nehru, the first prime minister of the Indian Democracy. The term 'Democracy' has been in use since the late 1990s and in the 21st century.

This has been mainly because of "The Sustained Genocides of Sikhs" in India alias since 15th August, 1947 rather prominently since 15-August, 1947, the time when the British India Empire's agent transferred the "annexed" Punjab, that had been the first and second Sovereign nation and secular as well in the 18th and 19th centuries, under General Banada Singh Bahadur (1708-1716) and Monarch Ranjit Singh of the Sikhs' second Sovereign and Secular nation, 1799 to 14th March, 1849, respectively.

The "annexed" Sikh nation of Monarch Ranjit Singh had been merged, but not amalgamated, to the British Empire of England. The "annexed" Sikh Nation's citizens 'gifted away' their nation to the unelected leaders of the Indian Congress. To-date, the Sikhs' elected leaders have not signed / accepted / endorsed the Indian Constitutional Act of 1950. To say the least and mildly, this Constitutional Act has been "rejected" by the Sikhs of the "annexed" Sikh nation, Punjab of monarch Ranjit Singh.

Yadvinder Singh, father of his child Amarinder., after the job of a 'Security Guard' of Nehru, had been sent as an Ambassador to the Netherlands, to complete his rest of lifespan away from his hometown. Amarinder became a commissioned officer in the Indian army and could rise only to the rank of Captain. The Captain's rank among the commissioned officer is nothing more than a two or three-stripped soldier among the non-commissioned personnel in Indian democracy's armed forces.

Amarinder had been sent by the Indira Gandhi's Congress to foreign countries, including Canada, to assess the situation on the Canadian Sikhs in the post-"Operation Bluestar" of June, 1984, known as 'undeclared' war on the Sikhs of Punjab, the Holy and Historic homeland of Sikhs. He visited prominent Gurdwaras (Houses of Worship) while visiting Canada.

The author is one of those who had been one of the members of the Congregation where Amarinder had been standing in the "Langar Hall", known as 'Free Community Kitchen', of a Gurdwara. The author did not exchange a word with him, because he (Amarinder) was one of the traitors of the Sikh homeland and supposedly he knew very well in advance of "Operation Bluestar" of June, 1984.

He did not disclose to the citizens of the Sikh Homeland, under the occupation of India, of the forthcoming 'undeclared' war on the Sikhs and their Homeland, PUNJAB 'occupied since 15th August, 1947'? Why did he do that? Because a non-Sikh Congress party member and the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's secret plan was given to him and her other confidants. He did not have the spine to say anything (refusal) to Indira Gandhi, as the author perceives it.

Amarinder is no different than Hanera Singh Badal, whom he succeeded in March, 2017, as far as his anti-Sikh activities against the Sikhs' sovereignty struggle is concerned. He is not any different than Beant Singh (deceased), Gurcharan Tohra (deceased), Harchand Longowal, Balwant Ramoowalia, Maluka, Tota Singh Akalis or non-Akalis are concerned to serve Guru Khalsa Panth, the Sikh nation, South Asia's second Sovereign Sikh nation, Punjab of a Sikh monarch Ranjit Singh.

Amarinder, you criticized the Sikh cabinet ministers of the Government of Canada, saying that they are Khalistanis. Here, you showed how much is your knowledge and also what is your knowledge of the history

of Khalistan alias the Sikh Nation, and the word 'Khalistan', associated with the Sikh homeland. Speaking of the history of the Sikhs' struggle for sovereignty.

What a person like Amarinder would know the meaning of the word "Khalsa"? So what will you know about the Khalistan, the Sikhs holy and historic homeland? And you pass your derogatory remarks on my country's ministers of Defence. Even the Right Honourable Justin P S Trudeau, accompanied by the defence, had told the Chief of the New Delhi administration that my cabinet has more Sikhs than the New Delhi administration, India.

Let me tell you, Amarinder of Patiala, the meaning of the word Khalsa is Khalsa's homeland, Khalistan. The tenth master of Sikhs, Sahib Guru Gobind Singh ji used the word Khalsa, a word of the Arabic language, which means "Sovereign". Simply and precisely, Khalistan means, the Land of Sovereign people (The Sikhs). Indeed, the Sikh Nation had been 'Sovereign' in the centuries three times (early 18th and 19th centuries, and General Bhaghel Singh and his followers flurred the Sikh flag, the Nishan Sahib on the Red Fort).

The Sikhs have never been "subservient" to anyone, with the exception of "annexation" to the British Empire and then in the post-15th August 1947 (see above) of the Saffaronized and fundamentalists Brahmins-Hindus-turbaned Hindus, all are the enemies of the Guru Khalsa Panth. Non-Sikh people (Brahmins-Hindus), they had been "subservient" to the Afghans, Mughals, Sikhs, British, Portuguese, etc., for more than 3,500 years.

India became 'sovereign' only on the late morning hours of 15th day of August, 1947'. The 'sovereignty' of the predominantly Hindus' India carried out the "Sustained Genocide of the Sikhs, Muslims, Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir (occupied illegally by India), Buddhists, Christians, Adivasis, Tamils and other non-Hindu minorities."

The Canadian politicians, federal, provincial and territories are "Sovereign and Secular" in reality. They are not like the Indian politicians and governmental people who are criminals, murderers, rapists, fundamentalists and have their illegitimate accounts outside the Indian financial institutions. Further, none of the Canadian prime ministers is like the present Chief, Council of Ministers, New Delhi administration; for example, Narendra Damodar Modi is a criminal, murderer and one of the prime actors of the "Genocide of Muslims and Sikhs of Gujarat, 2002-2003."

In 2002-2003. In this duration, the Genocide of had been taken place while Gujarat, Narendra Damodar Modi the Chief Minister of the State of Gujarat, while Narendra Damodar Modi, as the Chief Minister, did not utter a single word from his mouth (National Post, 2002). This is one of the examples of one of the Chief Ministers of India's provinces.

On the other hand, only Mr Justice (out of 1.3 bn), Hon A Qadri, of the Gujarat High Court's bench, had to deliver his statement, "the Constitution's Article A-14 has been rendered ineffective", when he saw that the Province of Gujarat's politicians have become impotent politicians and sealed their mouths.

Modi made sure all the Sikh farmers who have tilled the land since 1950 were rendered landless in a masterstroke in 2014-2015 by calling them foreign residents. Therefore, not illegible to own land in Gujarat. Unless Gujarat is not part of India how dare you discriminate against hardworking Sikhs who brought greenery to thousands of acres of agriculture land in Gujarat's uncultivated marsh land.

So much so, the Indian Chief, Council of Ministers, NDA, played an active role in the "Sustained Genocide of the Sikh Nation alias Punjab's citizens," along with foreign diplomats, the Hinds-Brahmins-turbaned Hindus in the Sikh identity. In 2013, the "Genocide of Muslims" had been carried out in the Meerut, Saharanpur, Bulandshahar, Aligarh, Muzaffarnagar, etc., districts of the Province of U. P.

It would be better for you Amarinder of Patiala, Chief Minister, Punjab under occupation of the Brahmins-Hindus-turbaned Hindus to keep your mouth shut: because (i) you are in contempt of the Sikh Rehait Maryada since you paint and dye your face. (ii) You are in contempt of The Akal Takht's code of conduct, and cheques of administration issued to farmers have been bouncing (Des Pardes Times of 31stMay, 2018). You had demanded a "Siropa" from The Akal Takht Sahib, the Supreme Seat of Sikh Polity.

You forgot that a "siropa" or the robe of honour is blessed by the Sikhs' Supreme seat of polity and/or the Darbar Sahib Complex, Amritsar, Punjab, the Sikh Nation alias the Guru Khalsa Panth nation. Would you kindly tell the world as to what kind of extraordinary duties you have been performing for the Guru Khalsa Panth nation? Also, tell that the Brahmins-Hindus' administration gave a bill of 8,700-cror for the "Operation Bluestar'84; your administration is bankrupt."

Furthermore you possibly cannot be a Sikh! You gave your own sister's hand in marriage to Natwar Singh a rabid hookah smoking Hindu years ago. You have had both your grandson's marry Hindu women in the last 1-2 years. Your grandfather had 365 women in his harem to satisfy his lust. You drink like a fish. Your younger brother Malwinder Singh has had multiple affairs.

Not to mention that you are ethically and physically handicapped since you have no scruples and you can barely move, since all you do is to eat, drink and scheme all day as how to suck the common Sikhs' blood for your personal benefit! By kissing and sucking up to the Gandhi dynasty aka Sonia Mano a low class Italian Catholic 'ayah', whose family decimated and committed genocide against the Sikhs, you continue to show your true colors! The Patiala clan was always known as professional philanderers, cigar smoking, binge drinking traitors to the Khalsa Panth, even as far back as the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. So you are only continuing what you know best being a Hindu snake in the garb of a turbaned Sikh!

Finally, you were damn wrong to say that the Honorable Harjit Singh Sajjan is a Khalistani. When you do not know the meaning of the term Khalsa and Khalistani, you are a blot on the pristine Guru Khalsa Panth nation. In fact, the Canadians, including myself (the author of this write up) is a great believer of the philosophy of the Guru Khalsa Panth and the "Sovereignty Struggle to regain Khalistan by peaceful means." The Sikh nation that had been sovereign three times before it became the slave and under the tight fist control of the Brahmins-Hindus' criminal rulers.

You seem to have acute amnesia since you spoke from the podium of a Khalistani stage in Toronto (The Dixie Road Gurdwara) in June 2005. The photograph and the news is available on the internet for you to see and remember the bare truth. Now you have the gall to defame the Canadian Defense Minister Sajjan, so you can please your Hindu masters. Shame on you! You are professional 'gassy' (one who is castrated) and do not think the rest of the Sikh panth is like you and your clan!

You, Amarinder of Patiala, owe an apology to the Sikhs, Sikh Diaspora, the Honorable Harjit Singh Sajjan, and the Government of Canada headed by the Right Honorable Justin Pierre Sinclair Trudeau, as well as the great people of Canada.

**Dr. Awatar Singh Sekhon Editor in Chief, The International Journal of Sikh Affairs.**

## Rohingya Crises / Burma

### 'We want peace' - A Rohingya family's 40 years of suffering

Rohingya refugees tell of decades of persecution and horrors suffered at the hands of Myanmar security forces

By Mohammed Jamjoom | Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

Gul Zahar is the head of four generations of family and the bearer of 40 years of suffering. A Rohingya refugee in her 90s, she has fled persecution in Myanmar on three separate occasions in her life: first in 1978, then in 1991 and, finally, in 2017. Like many other Rohingya members of her generation, Gul isn't exactly sure how old she is. And while she readily admits her advanced age may keep her from remembering everything, Gul also insists she'll never forget the constant horrors she says her family suffered at the hands of security forces in Myanmar over the decades.

Inside the hut she now calls home, Gul, who is remarkably alert, speaks softly and slowly. "They beat us," says Gul in a voice so low it almost belies the brutality she is describing. "They kidnapped us. They detained us." "We struggled with everyday life, earning a living and moving around," explains Gul before going quiet. As her eyes begin to drift, a pained expression appears on her face - as though Gul had suddenly been confronted with more details of a past she wished had never come back into focus.

Asked if she wishes to return home, she says simply: "I want to die where there is peace. I want to die where my parents died." Bonded through blood and displacement, they now all live in a single, small dwelling constructed out of bamboo and tarpaulin; the kind of makeshift shelter that, by all appearances, seems unlikely to be able to withstand the pounding rains this current monsoon season will bring.

Gul and the rest of her family members residing here at the Kutupalong Camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh - including her son, daughter-in-law, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and more - span almost a century in age. The last military crackdown started on Aug 25, 2017, when an armed Rohingya group attacked military posts in Myanmar's Rakhine State. In retaliation, the Myanmar military is reported to have burned dozens of Rohingya villages and fired indiscriminately at unarmed men, women and children.

Myanmar's army has denied the reports of atrocities against Rohingya

'They slaughtered people' Gul's son, Oli Ahmed, first fled Rakhine State with his family as a teenager. Now 53, Oli's demeanour is both kind and stern. Speaking outside his family's hut, he wears the kind of protected expression that can only be learned from a life of having seen too much misery and experienced too much injustice. Under grey clouds that threaten rain at any minute, Oli recalls the sheer terror of what happened when Myanmar's military descended upon them last year. "They set the village ablaze," says Oli, "firing on people, killing people. They cut people. They slaughtered people. And we escaped out of fear."

When Oli speaks, he does so matter-of-factly, in a manner seemingly devoid of emotion. But his words convey the kind of dread most people would have trouble processing, let alone understanding. "If we couldn't have made our way here," he says, "we would have been killed like stray dogs." Oli explains how, throughout his life, the Rohingya haven't been bestowed even the most basic rights and freedoms.

"Our movement was restricted," he says. "There was a curfew from 6pm to 6am. And a ban on people gathering. And a ban on religious practices. If they saw people gather outside, either they disappeared them or killed them. There was no peace." He then adds: "We want peace ... We want to be granted Rohingya citizenship".

Learning more about this particular family, it becomes clear their experiences - both inside and outside Myanmar - mirror what's happened to so many other Rohingya. Having faced decades of repression and abuse, the Rohingya aren't just the world's largest group of stateless people, they're also among the world's most persecuted minorities. 'Most vulnerable on earth' The United Nations has called Myanmar's military operations against the mostly Muslim Rohingya in Rakhine State in 2017 a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing". As a result, more than 700,000 Rohingya have fled Myanmar a situation that's become one of the world's fastest-growing refugee crises in decades.

During a visit to Bangladesh last week to highlight the plight of the Rohingya, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described the Rohingya as, "one of the most discriminated against and vulnerable communities on earth," and called the Rohingya refugee crisis, "a humanitarian and human rights

nightmare". Upon completing his tour of Kutupalong Camp, Guterres urged the international community to do more to help, adding how, "nothing could have prepared me for the scale of the crisis and extent of suffering". Mohammad Ayub,31, is Gul's grandson-in-law and father to her great-grandchildren. Voluble and expressive, when Mohammad talks, the outrage is audible in his voice and the anger is visible on his face.

He says he'll always be haunted by the crimes he witnessed security forces commit back home. "They were grabbing people and shooting them," describes Mohammad as he winces. "And in some cases, they would beat them to death with the butt of their guns." Mohammad struggles as much with the grief over family members who were killed as he does over the friends and relatives who went missing.

"Nobody could even ask questions about the forced disappearances," says Mohammad. "Even a brother didn't have the right to ask about his missing brother. You understand? We had no clue who was disappeared and to where. We just had to remain silent about it." More than anything, Mohammad wants his children to be granted citizenship and to experience the kind of peace and justice he's never known. He says there's only one way that can happen. "Atrocities that have been committed against our men and women should be heard by the International Criminal Court so that we get justice," says Mohammad. "And if it's not, we won't be satisfied."

'Courtesy AL JAZEERA'.

# 'It's going to create a revolution' - how AI is transforming the NHS

## NHS at 70 - all our anniversary coverage in one place

The tumour is hard to miss on the scan. The size of a golf ball, it sits bold and white on the brain stem, a part of the organ that sends messages back and forth between body and brain. In many ways it is the master controller: from the top of the spinal cord, the brain stem conducts every heartbeat, every swallow, every breath.

For this young man, the cancer came to light in dramatic fashion. The growing tumour blocked fluid draining from his brain, triggering a huge seizure. Now doctors must work out the best way to treat him. Raj Jena, a neuro-oncologist at Addenbrooke's hospital in Cambridge, has pulled up the image to explain how doctors plan radiotherapy for patients.

For a case like this he might need to study more than 100 images, each showing a thin slice of the brain. Then, image by image, Jena must carefully mark out the border of the tumour and the contours of sensitive brain regions that should be spared the radiotherapy beams: the hypothalamus, the pituitary gland, the pathways to the brain's vision centres, for example. The process can take hours. But only once it is done can computers start calculating how to hit the tumour with radiotherapy beams without frazzling important parts nearby.

"Until we define where the tumour is and have defined the healthy tissues we want to protect, we cannot start the treatment," says Jena. "This is the bottleneck. The quicker you get this done, the quicker you can get the patient into treatment."

With artificial intelligence (AI), the painstaking task can be completed in minutes. For the past six months, Jena has used a Microsoft system called InnerEye to mark up scans automatically for prostate cancer patients. Men make up a third of the 2,500 cancer patients his department treats every year. When a scan is done, the images are anonymised, encrypted and sent to the InnerEye program. It outlines the prostate on each image, creates a 3D model, and sends the information back. For prostate cancer, the entire organ is irradiated.

The software learned how to mark up organs and tumours by training on scores of images from past patients that had been seen by experienced consultants. It already saves time for prostate cancer treatment. Brain tumours are next on the list.

Automating the process does more than save time. Because InnerEye trains on images marked up by leading experts, it should perform as well as a top consultant every time. The upshot is that treatment is delivered faster and more precisely. "We know that how well we do the contouring has an impact on the quality of the treatment," Jena says. "The difference between good and less good treatment is how well we hit the tumour and how well we avoid the healthy tissues."

A mile or so from Addenbrooke's, Antonio Criminisi, the lead researcher on InnerEye at Microsoft Research, explains how automatic processing could pave the way for even smarter radiotherapy. Because it is so time-consuming and expensive, tumour images today are marked up only once, before radiotherapy begins.

If it was fast and cheap, patients could have "adaptive radiotherapy" where scanning, image mark-up and beam planning are done before every treatment session. That way, the radiotherapy beams are sculpted to the tumour's size and shape on the day, not when it was first imaged. "This could be transformative," says Criminisi. "It could enable a new way of treating cancer that is faster and a lot less burdensome for patients and the NHS."

Computer engineers are fond of asserting that data is the fuel of AI. It is true: some modern approaches to AI, notably machine learning, are powerful because they can divine meaningful patterns in the mountains of data we gather. If there is a silver lining to the fact that everyone falls ill at some point, it is that the NHS has piles of data on health problems and diseases that are ripe for AI to exploit.

Tony Young, a consultant urological surgeon at Southend University hospital and the national clinical lead for innovation at NHS England, believes AI can make an impact throughout the health service. He points to companies using AI to diagnose skin cancer from pictures of moles; eye disorders from retinal scans; heart disease from echocardiograms.

Others are drawing on AI to flag up stroke patients who need urgent care, and to predict which patients on a hospital ward may not survive. "I think it's going to create a revolution," he says.

Technology will not transform the NHS overnight. Like any other innovation, AI systems must be tested, validated and approved. And systems that learn often need careful interpretation. A patient's blood test may reveal sure signs of life-threatening cancer, but an AI may rate the patient as low risk if that cancer can be treated very well.

What may help drive AI through the NHS is the hope that, in some instances, the innovations can save money as well as lives. If patients are triaged faster, tests performed more efficiently, and good diagnoses made more swiftly, the whole system becomes streamlined. One technology the NHS has embraced is called HeartFlow.

Spun out of Stanford University, it draws on CT scans that are taken routinely for patients suspected of having coronary heart disease. HeartFlow uses AI to create a personalised 3D model of the heart and the flow of blood around it. From this, doctors can see how specific blockages disrupt blood flow in individual blood vessels and better decide what treatment, if any, is needed.

In tests, more than half of patients who had HeartFlow analysis avoided an invasive angiogram, a common but costly procedure that squirts dye into the heart, cutting costs by a quarter. "People ask how can we afford to have these kinds of technologies in the NHS? My answer is we cannot afford not to," says Young.

It is early days for Vishal Nangalia, a consultant anaesthesiologist at the Royal Free hospital in London, but his company, Life Engine.AI, is honing an AI that crunches blood test results and other data to predict which patients are most likely to die, or have serious problems such as kidney failure, when they are admitted to hospital.

Trained on nearly 1bn blood test results from 20 hospitals, the program spots subtle changes in red and white blood cells, and electrolytes such as sodium and potassium, which suggest a patient is going downhill. It does not tell doctors what to do, but helps them intervene sooner by flagging up those patients who might benefit from tests, a scan, or a review from a specialist. "What machine learning can do is help identify issues and bring them to the attention of doctors," Nangalia says.

Will AI replace doctors, or diminish their role? Back at Addenbrooke's, Jena shakes his head. "I'd rather spend my time thinking about how to optimise a patient's treatment than clicking a mouse," he says. "For many oncologists, we are coming in at weekends and on evenings. With this, we are freed up to do the things that we bring real expertise to."

# Oil settles higher in volatile pre-holiday session

By Jessica Resnick

Crude prices ended slightly higher on Tuesday after a volatile session in which the US benchmark passed \$75 a barrel for the first time in more than three years before turning negative and later recouping its losses. Oil rallied early in the session on supply concerns, then slid as traders booked profits ahead of the July Fourth holiday in the United States, and bet that global supply shortages would not persist as long as expected. Crude pared its losses late in the session, turning positive on market sentiment that supply disruptions would not resolve faster than previously expected.

US light crude CLc1 settled up 20 cents at \$74.14 a barrel, rebounding from a session low of \$72.73 a barrel. In early trade, the contract rose to \$75.27, a 3-1/2-year high. Brent crude LCOc1 was up 46 cents at \$77.76 a barrel, after trading as low as \$76.67 and as high as \$78.85.

In post-settlement trade, prices extended gains after the American Petroleum Institute said crude stockpiles had fallen more than expected last week. Stockpile data from the US Energy Information Administration is expected on Thursday after a delay due to the July 4 holiday. The early gains came after Iran appeared to threaten to disrupt oil shipments from the Middle East Gulf if Washington pressed ahead with sanctions. US crude rose above \$75 a barrel for the first time since 2014.

Prices retreated as some thought talk of supply disruptions might be overblown, said Gene McGillian, vice president of market research at Tradition Energy in Stamford, Connecticut. He also said traders could be moving to liquidate bullish positions. Pressure to liquidate may have accelerated ahead of the US holiday on Wednesday, said Tariq Zahir, managing member at Tyche Capital in New York.

Traders said supply disruptions could be short-lived as OPEC and allied producers ramp up output. The United Arab Emirates is ready to help alleviate possible oil shortages and OPEC will aim to adhere to the group's "overall conformity levels," said UAE Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazrouei, who holds the OPEC presidency for 2018.

Traders also debated when production would restart at Syncrude Canada's 360,000 barrels per day (bpd) oil sands facility near Fort McMurray, Alberta, hit by a power outage last month and likely to remain offline through July. A quicker restart could boost supplies at the Cushing, Oklahoma, delivery hub for US crude.

Oil's early gains came after the website president. ir quoted Iranian President Hassan Rouhani as dismissing Washington's attempt to stop Iran's oil exports. While the comments were ambiguous, Iranian officials in the past have threatened to block the Strait of Hormuz, a major oil shipping route, in retaliation for any hostile US action. Asked whether he intended to make a threat, Rouhani declined to provide a clarification. "Just the threat ... would add uncertainty and warrant a certain risk premium," Carsten Fritsch, senior commodities analyst at Commerz bank, told Reuters Global Oil Forum. Additional reporting by Henning Gloystein in Singapore and Christopher Johnson in London;.

## Israel passes controversial 'Jewish nation-state' law

Law defines the country as Jewish homeland, further marginalising 1.8 million Palestinian citizens of Israel. The legislation becomes part of the country's basic laws, which serve as a de facto constitution

Israel's parliament on Thursday adopted a law defining the country as the nation-state of the Jewish people, provoking fears it will lead to blatant discrimination against its Palestinian citizens. The legislation, adopted by 62 votes to 55, makes Hebrew the country's national language and defines the establishment of Jewish communities as being in the national interest.

The bill also strips Arabic of its designation as an official language, downgrading it to a "special status" that enables its continued use within Israeli institutions.

### Highlights

- Self-determination is "exclusive" to the Jewish people/Israel is the Jewish nation's historical homeland
- Views the establishment of Jewish-only settlements as being in the national interest
- Arabic will be demoted from official language to a "special" status
- Calls the "undivided" city of Jerusalem Israel's capital
- National symbols include the Israeli flag, menorah, Jewish holidays, Hatikva anthem, the Hebrew calendar, and Israel's Independence Day
- It stipulates that "Israel is the historic homeland of the Jewish people and they have an exclusive right to national self-determination in it". It also states that an undivided Jerusalem is the capital of Israel.
- "This is a defining moment in the annals of Zionism and the history of the state of Israel," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the Knesset after the vote.
- Palestinian members of the Knesset have condemned the bill.
- "It has passed a law of Jewish supremacy and told us that we will always be second-class citizens," Ayman Odeh, the head of the Arab Joint List - an alliance of four predominantly Arab parties - said in a statement following the law's passage.
- Ahmed Tibi, one of the lawmakers, said: "I announce with shock and sorrow the death of democracy."

### 'Key elements of apartheid'

Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, called the law a bid to advance "ethnic superiority by promoting racist policies". "The Jewish nation-state law features key elements of apartheid, which is not only immoral but also absolutely prohibited under international law," said Hassan Jabareen, general director of Adalah.

### 'We are not citizens with equal rights'

"By defining sovereignty and democratic self-rule as belonging solely to the Jewish people - wherever they live around the world - Israel has made discrimination a constitutional value and has professed its commitment to favouring Jewish supremacy as the bedrock of institutions."

According to Adalah, there are currently over 65 Israeli laws that discriminate against Palestinian citizens in Israel and Palestinian residents of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) on the basis of their national belonging. The Jewish nation-state law features key elements of apartheid, which is not only immoral but also absolutely prohibited under international law.

In Ma'alot-Tarshiha, a municipality in northern Israel which was created by linking the Jewish town of Ma'alot and the Palestinian town of Tarshiha, there was anger among Palestinian residents. "I think this is racist legislation by a radical right-wing government that is creating radical laws and is planting the seeds to create an apartheid state," said physician Bassam Bisharah, 71.

EU leads criticism after Israel passes Jewish 'nation state' law

Legislation stipulates only Jews have right of self-determination in the country. The European Union has led a chorus of criticism after Israel passed a controversial law declaring that only Jews have the right of self-determination in the country.

Adding that the legislation would complicate a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the EU joined Israeli Arab political leaders, Israeli opposition politicians and liberal Jewish groups in the US in flagging up concern, with some saying the law amounted to “apartheid”. The legislation stipulates that “Israel is the historic homeland of the Jewish people and they have an exclusive right to national self-determination in it”.

It also strips Arabic of its designation as an official language alongside Hebrew, downgrading it to a “special status” that enables its continued use within Israeli institutions. “We are concerned, we have expressed this concern and we will continue to engage with Israeli authorities in this context,” said a spokeswoman for the EU foreign affairs chief, Federica Mogherini.

“We've been very clear when it comes to the two-state solution, we believe it is the only way forward and any step that would further complicate or prevent this solution of becoming a reality should be avoided,” the spokeswoman added. The law was also condemned by the Turkish foreign ministry, which said the legislation trampled on the principles of universal law and disregarded the rights of the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

## US - Russia - China triangle in flux, again

In a conversation with the Financial Times last week, Henry Kissinger made a highly significant remark about President Donald Trump's attempt to improve the United States' relations with Russia. The conversation took place in the backdrop of the Helsinki summit on July 16. Kissinger said:

“I think Trump may be one of those figures in history who appears from time to time to mark the end of an era and to force it to give up its old pretences. It doesn't necessarily mean that he knows this, or that he is considering any great alternative. It could just be an accident.”

Kissinger did not elaborate, but the drift of his thought is consistent with opinions he has voiced in the past the US' steady loss of influence on global arena, rise of China and resurgence of Russia necessitating a new global balance. As far back as 1972 in a discussion with Richard Nixon on his upcoming trip to China, signifying the historic opening to Beijing, Kissinger could visualize such a re-balancing becoming necessary in future.

He expressed the view that compared with the Soviets (Russians), the Chinese were “just as dangerous. In fact, they're more dangerous over a historical period.” Kissinger added, “in 20 years your (Nixon's) successor, if he's as wise as you, will wind up leaning towards the Russians against the Chinese.”

Kissinger argued that the United States, which sought to profit from the enmity between Moscow and Beijing in the Cold War era, would therefore need “to play this balance-of-power game totally unemotionally. Right now, we need the Chinese to correct the Russians and to discipline the Russians.” But in the future, it would be the other way around.

Of course, Kissinger is not the pioneer of US-Russia-China 'triangular diplomacy'. It is no secret that in the 1950s, the US did all it could to drive a wedge between Mao Zedong and Nikita Khrushchev. The accent was on isolating “communist China”. Khrushchev's passion for 'peaceful co-existence' following his summit with Dwight Eisenhower in 1959 at Camp David became a defining moment in Sino-Soviet schism.

But even as Sino-Soviet schism deepened (culminating in the bloody conflict in Ussuri River in 1969), Nixon reversed the policy of Eisenhower and opened the line to Beijing, prioritizing the US' global competition with the Soviet Union.

The de-classified Cold-War archival materials show that Washington seriously pondered over the possibility of a wider Sino-Soviet war. One particular memorandum of the US State Department recounts an incredible moment in Cold War history a KGB officer querying about American reaction to a hypothetical Soviet attack on Chinese nuclear weapons facilities.

Then there is a memo written for Kissinger's attention by then influential China watcher Allen S. Whiting warning of the danger of a Soviet attack on China. Clearly, 1969 was a pivotal year when the US calculus was reset based on estimation that Sino-Soviet tensions provided a basis for Sino-American rapprochement.

It led to the dramatic overture by Nixon and Kissinger to open secret communications with China through Pakistan and Romania. Now, this recapitulation is useful today, because Trump's moves so far are indicative of an agenda to revert to the Eisenhower era containment of China by forging an alliance with Russia.

Will Putin fall for Trump's bait? Well, it depends. To my mind, there is no question Putin will see a great opening here for Russia. But it will depend on what's on offer from the US. Putin's fulsome praise for Trump on North Korean issue and the latter's warm response was a meaningful exchange at Helsinki, has been a good beginning to underscore Moscow's keenness to play a broader role in the Asia-Pacific.

Beijing must be watching the 'thaw' at Helsinki with some unease. The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson welcomed the Helsinki summit. But the mainstream assessment by Chinese analysts is that nothing much is going to happen since the contradictions in the US-Russia relations are fundamental and Russophobia is all too pervasive within the US establishment.

The government-owned China Daily carried an editorial Has the meeting in Helsinki reset US-Russia relations? Where it estimates that at best, “Helsinki summit represents a good beginning for better relations between the US and Russia.” Notably, however, the editorial is pessimistic about any real US-

Russia breakthrough, including on Syria, the topic that Putin singled out as a test case of the efficacy of Russian-American cooperation.

On the other hand, the Chinese Communist Party tabloid Global Times featured an editorial giving a stunning analysis of what has prompted Trump to pay such attention (“respect”) to Russia. China can learn from Trump's respect for Russia. It concludes that the only conceivable reason could be that although Russia is not an economic power, it has retained influence on the global stage due to military power:

v Trump has repeatedly stressed that Russia and the US are the two biggest nuclear powers in the world, with their combined nuclear arsenal accounting for 90 percent of world's total, and thus the US must live in peace with Russia. On US-Russia relations, Trump is clearheaded.

On the contrary, if the US is piling pressure on China today, it is because China, although an economic giant, is still a weak military power. Therefore:

v China's nuclear weapons have to not only secure a second strike but also play the role of cornerstone in forming a strong deterrence so that outside powers dare not intimidate China militarily... Part of the US' strategic arrogance may come from its absolute nuclear advantage...

China must speed up its process of developing strategic nuclear power... Not only should we possess a strong nuclear arsenal, but we must also let the outside world know that China is determined to defend its core national interests with nuclear power.

Indeed, if the crunch time comes, China will be on its own within the Kissingerian triangle. And China needs to prepare for such an eventuality. On the other hand, China's surge to create a vast nuclear arsenal could make a mockery of the grand notions in Moscow and Washington that they are the only adults in the room in keeping the global strategic balance.