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PIVOT

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ISLAMABAD CONCLAVE 2021



OIC Summit 2021 Pakistan on the situation in Afghanistan



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'Pakistan is the **PIVOT** of the world, placed on the frontier on which the future position of the world revolves.' Quaid-i-Azam
Mohammad Ali Jinnah, January 1948

Chief Editor's Note



The contemporary world is undergoing transition, so have the undercurrents of progress and development in South Asia. Meanwhile, traditional and non-traditional security threats continue to impact the region. Protracted conflict over Kashmir dispute has turned South Asia into a volatile zone despite region being rich in culture, history and resources. For regional peace and development, regional cooperation is imperative.

Afghanistan, meanwhile, is most pressing issue for regional peace and stability. Situation in Afghanistan has altered significantly in the backdrop of the Taliban takeover since the complete withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan. A growing instability and looming humanitarian crisis can be felt and if necessary and immediate actions are not taken Afghanistan can also become a safe haven for terrorists.

Similarly, strategic stability of South Asia remains in a state of flux as new challenges like doctrinal shifts, forced postures, military space programs, novel emerging technologies and super-power rivalry are adding up to the existing challenges and the complexities across the region.

Furthermore, the harmony and prosperity among different states or within a region depends a lot on how well a country is connected with others in the region. Connectivity has become the buzzword among Asian economies and is taking its place as a dominating trend in international politics. Improving regional connectivity by enhancing regional trade, energy production and infrastructure can aid in making a state and a region peaceful and prosperous.

In conjunction with the regional connectivity and the traditional security challenges the South Asian region faces, what one witnesses are the drastic shifts in the global security environment. Security challenges due to non-traditional threats are on the rise across the globe. Climate change, water, energy, food and poverty are some of the non-traditional threats which many countries are challenged with including Pakistan.

Put in a nutshell, need of the hour is to come up with an effective mechanism and formulate a discourse which puts human security at the centre of national security strategies. Human security is what is needed in Afghanistan at the moment and the international community must at once engage constructively with the new reality of Afghanistan to prevent humanitarian and economic collapse ensuring stability of the state and the region. Therefore, Pakistan should give prime importance to non-traditional security challenges in national economic discourse.

Talat

Dr. Talat Shabbir

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This Issue





DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CONNECTIVITY

By Ambassador Masood Khalid

When we talk of connectivity, our immediate thoughts go to physical infrastructure. However, connectivity has both the hardware and software dimensions. Historically, humans have explored continents and new vistas for trading, conquests for seeking resources and for forging cultural linkages whereby ideas were exchanged and civilizational enrichment took place. The human civilization in ancient times thrived on the Old Silk Route by transcending barriers of geography, culture, ethnicity and politics. Despite communication bottlenecks, the mankind yearned for connectivity both for cultural & economic reasons and indeed out of natural curiosity about others. With scientific advancement,

we face today much lesser challenges to connect with each other. Today it is possible to be in two different countries in the course of a single day, thanks to advanced aviation logistics. Given the interconnectedness and the fact that no single country is capable of surmounting myriad of challenges, connectivity is now the prevailing trend and a buzzword in global lexicon. Connectivity is now a priority for many countries who are keen to establish bilateral and multi-lateral linkages, both inter-regional and intra-regional to overcome their development deficit and to collectively meet existential threats. Mutual benefit and mutual complementarity is the real driver of this process.

The world today is witnessing a transformation, which is

unprecedented. While peace and development is our common aspiration, we see parallel negative trends of unilateralism, protectionism, isolationism, and zero sum approach compounded by the impact of what is called once in a century pandemic, rigours of climate change, eruption of new & old conflicts, opposition to economic globalization and disruptive technologies.

GIVEN THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS AND THE FACT THAT NO SINGLE COUNTRY IS CAPABLE OF SURMOUNTING MYRIAD OF CHALLENGES, CONNECTIVITY IS NOW THE PREVAILING TREND AND A BUZZWORD IN GLOBAL LEXICON

Social and political disarray in developed societies, populist nationalism and increased tensions between the US and China have injected instability and uncertainty in the global order. The question is that of making the right choices.

SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN 2013, BRI HAS BECOME THE MOST POPULAR PUBLIC GOOD AND THE BIGGEST COOPERATION PLATFORM OF THE 21ST CENTURY. BRI IS IN LINE WITH HISTORICAL TRENDS OF GLOBALIZATION BY FOCUSING ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION, INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, FINANCIAL INTEGRATION AND PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE INTERACTION

Do we allow ourselves to be partners in crime or partners in redemption? Alarming, we see an emergence of security oriented and military led alliances on the pattern of cold war, contributing to further strife and turbulence in our universe standing in opposition to initiatives, which call for shared prosperity and common good. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is one such initiative, which seeks, to jointly meet various challenges and risks confronting mankind and aims to deliver win-win outcomes in the words of its architect, President Xi Jinping.

Since its launch in 2013, BRI has become the most popular public good and the biggest cooperation platform of the 21st century. BRI is in line with historical trends of globalization by focusing on poverty alleviation, infrastructure development, financial integration and people-to-people interaction. A study in 2019 by the Global Economic Consultants suggested that BRI would boost the world GDP by \$7.1 trillion per annum by 2040. A redeeming feature of BRI is that the countries have

voluntarily gained it.

Being the largest trading nation, China is the largest trading partner of more than 50 countries and regions, and one of the top 3 partners of over 120 countries. Today, with a huge domestic market and a manufacturing base, China is not only a 'factory of the world' but also a 'market for the world.' By 2020, China's global imports will exceed \$10 trillion. (Our exports have just crossed a 2-billion-dollar mark; shows the market potential of China, which needs to be tapped by our exporters).

We need to understand the linkage between the domestic player in infrastructure and a nation's ability to be an effective and credible player in global affairs. An important facet of China's economic development focuses on building domestic infrastructure, transportation connectivity and innovation and technology. It goes without saying that no country can play an important role in regional or global economic framework if it suffers from a weak infrastructure.

China's focus therefore, since the opening up phase of late seventies, has been to develop a modern and state of the art infrastructure and an enabling environment for foreign investment. This policy has helped China to not only eliminate absolute poverty ten years ahead of SDGs timeline, but also to make it the biggest recipient of FDI. Due to an extensive network of roads, railways and bridges, distances within China have reduced phenomenally. It has the world's largest expressway network of 161000 KMs and the world's largest navigable inland waterway system. Today, it has truly become a knowledge economy by spending about 2.4% of GDP on R+B, the second highest in the world.

This is China's domestic scene of hardware and software connectivity. China embarked on expanding its economic and diplomatic outreach once its economy became buoyant and domestic infrastructure was fully operational, through the vehicle of BRI. Regional integration is extremely important to China as it faces trade and security incitement by the US. China has 14 bordering neighbours' and 6 neighbours' through sea. By as early as 2012, the total volume of trade between China and its neighbouring countries surpassed by total volume of its trade with the United States and Europe.

ENHANCED CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN CHINA AND PAKISTAN WOULD ALTER THE GEO-ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE OF THE REGION. WITH SUCH CONNECTIVITY BECOMING EFFECTIVE, PAKISTAN COULD SERVE AS A BRIDGE FOR CHINA'S OUTREACH TO AFGHANISTAN, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

China is also apprehensive of externally inspired destabilization in Hong Kong, Tibet Xinjiang. It, therefore, seeks a peaceful neighbourhood and economic development of its periphery in order to maintain peace and stability.

Pakistan and China are close friends and reliable partners. Under BRI, both countries are now partners in CPEC, a mega investment project ever undertaken in Pakistan's history by a foreign country. This shows the exemplary relationship as well as the confidence of Chinese government in the economic potential of Pakistan. Located at the Southern edge of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Route, Pakistan recognizes the political and economic dividends of BRI. Pakistan is at the confluence of China, the Eurasian land bridge and the Middle East, which allows

Pakistan to be on the route to a three-pronged corridor between China, Central Asia and the Middle East. Pakistan's long coastline also makes the ports of Gwadar and Karachi a strategic transit point for China's exports and thereof landlocked Central Asia.

CPEC IS A HARBINGER OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY TO PAKISTAN AND A LEVER FOR ITS ECONOMIC TAKE-OFF. PAKISTAN NEEDS TO LEVERAGE BOTH, ITS GEOGRAPHY AND CPEC, TO REALIZE ITS GEO-ECONOMIC AMBITIONS AND TO BECOME A PART OF MAINSTREAM CONNECTIVITY

For example, Gwadar Port can serve as a trade route for Afghanistan's large reserves of minerals such as copper and iron which can be exported worldwide. No doubt, this prospect is linked to peace and stability in Afghanistan. By linking the Gwadar port via KKH with Xinjiang, CPEC could bring about a major change in regional economies. It dovetails perfectly with China's strategy of developing its inland western regions. Enhanced connectivity between China and Pakistan would alter the geo-economic landscape of the region. With such connectivity becoming effective, Pakistan could serve as a bridge for China's outreach to Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa. Adjoining border areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan can be converted into trade zones and logistic warehouses transporting goods and commodities. Early and timely completion of CPEC is, therefore, a strategic imperative

and should be a priority for both Pakistan and China. It is also imperative that both countries guard against any attempts to undermine the CPEC. False narratives about CPEC; its motive, its sustainability and transparency should be effectively and forcefully countered through a joint strategy by China and Pakistan. CPEC is not directed against any third country; in fact, it is for the collective improvement of the region. Pakistan's focus on geo-economics in its foreign policy is a paradigm fully in sync with China's vision of connectivity and regional cooperation. After steady completion of its early harvest phase, the CPEC is now entering into its second or next phase with a wider agenda of bilateral collaboration. A few considerations regarding CPEC can help address the bottlenecks or hurdles in the successful completion of projects.

1. With a view to ensure timely and quality implementation of CPEC's second phase, both Pakistan and China need to undertake a comprehensive review of its implementation status and address any bottlenecks on the way.
2. This review should include a media management strategy to counter-negative propaganda against CPEC.
3. Pakistan should conduct a dialogue with the United States to explain that CPEC is an economic project aimed at socio-economic betterment of Pakistan and the region.

4. On its part, Pakistan should urgently and earnestly address issues of capacity payment of Chinese companies, procedural bottlenecks, lack of coordination between federal and provincial authorities.

5. Pakistan can only increase its export base from industrialization. The work on SEZs need to be completed on fast track basis.

6. A cluster of vocational training institutes need to be setup with the help of China to improve the skill set of own work force.

7. Security mechanisms should be further reinforced for China's projects in Pakistan.

8. Pakistan should do aggressive marketing in China and in neighbouring countries.

9. With CARS, we need to reactivate mechanisms like Joint Commission offering them opportunities to trade through our ports of Karachi and Gwadar.

PAKISTAN'S FOCUS ON GEO-ECONOMICS IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY IS A PARADIGM FULLY IN SYNC WITH CHINA'S VISION OF CONNECTIVITY AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

CPEC is a harbinger of economic prosperity to Pakistan and a lever for its economic take-off. Pakistan needs to leverage both, its geography and CPEC, to realize its geo-economic ambitions and to become a part of mainstream connectivity ■



The writer is a former Ambassador of Pakistan to People's Republic of China.

Smog in Lahore

A Pressing Environmental Concern for Pakistan

By Nimra Shakeel

This year Lahore repeatedly topped no.1 as the most polluted city of Pakistan and on global charts it stood at no.2 amongst the most polluted cities across the globe. Air pollution and winters mainly plagued smog in Lahore but this year, it has reached to an extreme level. The word “smog” is the mixture of ‘smoke’ and ‘fog’. Winter pollution is caused by a combination of low diesel smoke and smoke from seasonal crops, which is exacerbated by lower temperatures. Due to rapid growth of urbanization and industrialization, air pollution worsened the environment in past few years. But this year is marked as the worst year plagued by the blanket of smog that is dangerous to health and is causing a rapid spread of variety of health-related issues such as irritation into eyes, nose, and throat.



With repeated long-term exposure, it may aggravate pre-existing heart and lung issues or even develop lung cancer or asthma in people. It also causes premature death: as experts have already



mentioned that the average life expectancy of the residents of Lahore is decreased by five years due to smog, as well as generating worries about the long-term negative impacts on public health. Locals of Lahore are facing difficulties in pursuing their routine chores and activities like attending schools and colleges, going to offices etc. So, government of Punjab gave them relaxation to attend the schools or offices on alternative days with 50% of attendance.

LOCALS OF LAHORE ARE FACING DIFFICULTIES IN PURSUING THEIR ROUTINE CHORES AND ACTIVITIES LIKE ATTENDING SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES, GOING TO OFFICES ETC. SO GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB GAVE THEM RELAXATION TO ATTEND THE SCHOOLS OR OFFICES ON ALTERNATIVE DAYS WITH 50% OF ATTENDANCE. IN THIS REGARD FIVE SPECIAL ANTI-SMOG SQUADS WERE FORMED TO CONTROL AIR POLLUTION AND TO PREVENT SMOG IN LAHORE

In this regard, five special Anti-Smog squads were formed to control air pollution and to prevent smog in Lahore. This anti-smog squad marks the grey areas in the sky and then inspects the factories that either they are violating the laws or not. But somehow keeping in view the current situation of Lahore, we can say that authorities have been sluggish to respond, blaming India for the haze or arguing that the estimated figures are overblown. The current state of affairs are utterly disheartening and the condition of smog is expected to worsen as the government has no rapid-action plan and the authorities have not taken into account the seriousness of the problem ■



The writer holds a Masters degree in Mass Communication from National University of Modern Languages Islamabad.

Lessons for Pakistan from China's Development in Basic Education

By Dr. Abdul Rauf

Basic education is defined as the primary and secondary education that aims to make a person responsible and well-informed citizen of a society. Basic education is fundamental to the creation of a prosperous society as it brings awareness, opens avenues for opportunities, helps in self-advancement and reduces inter-generational poverty. What one sees is a vicious cycle of poverty and lack of education whereas education can break the cycle of poverty and helps to reduce inequalities and other associated ills in a society. It is the basic education that develops one's personality and helps a person to gain self-confidence, independence, respect, learning and ability to express. It also helps in improving mental, social, and physical aspects and thus overall development of a personality. In short, first-hand knowledge and basic education acts as a foundation for the next generations and is responsible for the economic, social, and political growth and development of a society. Human capital is the

key to future success whereas education is the best investment in human capital. UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 is 'Quality Education', with the target of free and equal access to primary and secondary education. Realizing the importance of basic education, Chinese government has taken special measures to focus on the basic education which has important lessons for Pakistan.

HUMAN CAPITAL IS THE KEY TO FUTURE SUCCESS WHEREAS EDUCATION IS THE BEST INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL. UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL (SDG) 4 IS 'QUALITY EDUCATION', WITH THE TARGET OF FREE AND EQUAL ACCESS TO PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

As per Chinese Ministry of Education, 99 percent of the school-age children have received universal nine-year basic education that was made mandatory for all Chinese

children since Chinese government implemented a compulsory education law on 1st July 1986. Students over six years of age get free education at primary level (grade 1 to 6) and junior secondary schools (grade 7 to 9). There is no tuition fee, but parents have to pay small amount for books, food, transport and heating. Poor families get stipend to pay for these expenses. Children from 3-5 years of age can go to pre-school, play group or kindergarten. To improve accessibility, state enterprises, institutions, and other sectors of society in China are encouraged to establish their own schools. At present, China has the largest education system in the world as 10.78 million students took the National Higher Education Entrance Examination (Gao Kao) in June 2021. China is investing more than 4% of its total GDP on education. Regular improvements are also made in the school curriculum and overall quality of education.

Chinese government after achieving the desired capacity is now focusing on quality with the launching of Education Modernization 2035 plan as modernization of China is not possible without the remodelling of previous education models. Reforms

in education sector are aiming to overhaul rote-based education system with focus on developing skills required for modern economy. The focus is to develop young Chinese into creative and intelligent adults who can handle real-world problems.

Chinese government has realized that education standards cannot be improved without reviving teaching skills. Teaching is considered as a highly respected profession in China and continuous professional development programs for teachers and curriculum development are introduced. Prospective teachers while completing their education are attached with experienced teachers while they teach in school classrooms. Chinese government has developed innovative programs for the teacher training like the “Big Name Teacher Studio” program where the host-teacher with more experience and better performance mentors a group of promising young teachers and shares his or her knowledge through online interaction. With educational reforms and introduction of new curricula the workload of teachers has increased as they are expected to play the roles of educator, learner, innovator, facilitator, researcher, etc., besides undergoing their own continuous professional development.

To reduce the rural-urban gap, Chinese government is not just focusing on the schools in urban areas rather standard of schools in rural areas is also being improved. Besides availability of equal education opportunities in rural areas, this is also helping to reduce internal migration due to better education in urban areas which could cause increased pressure on urban infrastructure and resources. Teachers are put under rotation after five years’

term so that high-performing teachers are available to the rural areas as well.

In Pakistan rudimentary education is one of the most serious concern as the literacy rate of Pakistan is under 60%. In comparison ,99% of school age children in China are going to primary schools. Since China has made the nine-year basic education mandatory, we in Pakistan must realise the importance of education and implement free mandatory basic education till matriculation in Pakistan. Pakistan needs to focus on capacity and quality. In-line with the global average, the budget allocated for education should be brought to around 4% of GDP, which is presently 2.5%. Quality education, especially in rural area is a pressing issue which can be addressed primarily through teacher training and rotation of teachers between urban and rural areas.

WE CLAIM TO HAVE OUR LARGE NUMBER OF YOUTH AS OUR GREATEST POTENTIAL, BUT WE MUST REALISE THAT IF WE ARE UNABLE TO EDUCATE, TRAIN AND GIVE PROPER DIRECTION TO THE YOUTH THEN INSTEAD OF AN OPPORTUNITY, IT IS GOING TO BE A BURDEN ON THE COUNTRY

Teaching as a profession needs to be respected and this should be manifested through increase in the salaries. Much higher rates of school dropouts need to be curtailed and marginalised segments of society should be given support and incentives. Equal opportunities need to be provided to everyone, and special measures should be taken for educating girls. Root causes of our

low enrollment and higher drop-outs in primary education must be properly identified and effectively addressed. Private schools have much better standards but are quite expensive; the standard of public schools should be raised to compete with private schools. We claim that our youth is our greatest potential, but we must realise that if we are unable to educate, train and give proper direction to the youth then instead of an opportunity, this is going to be a burden on the country. Education can solve a number of our social and economic problems and play a significant role in solving the poverty issue as economic progress is directly linked with educational development.

As we observe from the Chinese experience, to achieve quality in education, a uniform national curriculum and standardised testing mechanism is required. The basic education must focus on personality development to make the students better human beings, better Muslims and better Pakistanis who can live in harmony with each other and can uplift the overall standards of the society. We need to take immediate steps to completely transform our rote-based education system into a system which can make our children better members of the society with innovative skills of the 21st century to contribute to the prosperity and development of the country so that it could move forward with pride ■



The writer holds PhD in Telecom Engineering from University of Sheffield, UK and is a faculty member at NUST.

AFGHAN PEACE AND LOOMING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

By Amina Khan



Since the Taliban takeover and subsequent US withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, circumstances have drastically evolved. In the absence of a negotiated settlement, it was clear that while a military takeover by the Taliban was expected, the manner and the speed at which the group took over was certainly not anticipated. Now that the Taliban are in power, even within the confines of their current interim set up, recognition for the government may not necessarily depend on inclusion, but whether they can deliver in terms of governance, human specifically women rights, political freedom, regional peace and stability and more importantly Counter Terrorism assurances.

Domestically, the Taliban has not only inherited weak institutions but a non-existent economy and now a looming humanitarian crisis - in short, the group is struggling as it attempts to consolidate its power, formulate policies towards Afghan institutions and ensure that a humanitarian catastrophe does not occur.

Hence the real test for the group has only just begun - which is by no means restricted to securing power, but is more about legitimacy and performance. With every passing day, Afghanistan is moving closer

towards a humanitarian crisis with its economy rapidly collapsing due to financial sanctions on the Taliban, which have paralyzed the banking system, affecting every aspect of the economy. While no country has recognized the political dispensation, the Taliban have been extensively engaging with the international community through Doha and directly with the regional countries, and it appears that at this point, the group may not be looking for recognition but engagement (which is de facto recognition), humanitarian and financial assistance. While the provision of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan by certain countries has been reassuring, it is not enough to sustain the Afghan population.

Hence in such dire circumstances, it is important for the international community to move away from politics and push towards a consolidated effort to ensure that Afghanistan does not collapse in to a humanitarian disaster. If the Taliban are not able to consolidate their position, and ensure some semblance of stability, the fear is not so much of a civil war emanating but rather of trans-national terrorist elements taking advantage of the situation and filling in the vacuum, after all since the Taliban assumed power in August 2021, there has been a major spike in attacks by the Islamic State Khorasan Province

(ISKP) and this sentiment has been echoed by the UN Special Representative for Afghanistan, that “the continuing deterioration of the Afghan threatens to heighten the risk of extremism.” Therefore, the biggest threats to Afghanistan are domestic constraints, such as the economy and humanitarian crisis but equally the concern that Afghanistan could fall prey to trans-national terrorist elements.

IT WAS HEARTENING TO SEE PAKISTAN HOSTING A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC) COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS ON THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN, CONVENED AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA AS OIC SUMMIT CHAIR, MARKING THE FIRST AND LARGEST INTERNATIONAL/ MULTILATERAL GATHERING ON AFGHANISTAN POST-TALIBAN TAKEOVER

Therefore, engagement is imperative - let us not forget the Taliban did not come into power by force but through the Doha agreement with the US and primarily on the premise that Al-Qaeda has been defeated and an assurance that the Taliban would not entertain any terrorist elements on its soil - yet by refusing to engage with the group, denying necessary economic assistance, and freezing assets, how is the group expected to perform and deny space to such

elements - these are important questions that need to be viewed through a broader lens and not limited to politics.

It is important for the international community to come to the forefront and ensure that the country does not collapse - and thus remain engaged with the Taliban by providing much needed humanitarian aid and economic assistance. Afghanistan should not be viewed as a regional issue but rather a global and collective responsibility that needs a consolidated approach.

In this regard, it was heartening to see Pakistan hosting a special session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers on the situation in Afghanistan, convened at the initiative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as OIC Summit Chair, marking the first and largest international-multilateral gathering on Afghanistan post-Taliban takeover.

Representatives from fifty-seven member states from the Muslim world, including attended, and participation from the US, China, France, Russia, UK, European Union, the World Bank and representatives of United Nations relief agencies was also observed. The meeting focused on finding solutions to the dire situation in Afghanistan. Secretary General of the OIC, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha called for promoting the role of the OIC Mission in Kabul, providing it with financial, human and logistical resources to enable it to deliver its full responsibility of coordinating humanitarian assistance and development aid operations within Afghanistan, urging member and non-member states and OIC institutions to provide humanitarian assistance through the OIC Mission in Kabul. The OIC moot also agreed upon the formation of a Humanitarian Trust Fund, under the aegis of the Islamic Development Bank, the launch of an Afghanistan Food

Security Programme as well as the appointment of Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs Ambassador Tariq Ali Bakheet as the OIC's Special Envoy on Afghanistan. While a number of countries agreed to provide much needed aid, Saudi Arabia announced to provide one billion riyals in aid to Afghanistan.

THE BIGGEST THREATS TO AFGHANISTAN ARE DOMESTIC CONSTRAINTS, SUCH AS THE ECONOMY AND HUMANITARIAN CRISIS BUT EQUALLY THE CONCERN THAT AFGHANISTAN COULD FALL PREY TO TRANSNATIONAL TERRORIST ELEMENTS

From the onset, Pakistan has been a staunch advocate of a peaceful solution to the conflict which has revolved around a negotiated settlement with the Taliban- it is unfortunate that it has taken more than two decades of bloodshed and wasted resources for the international community to realize this. Moreover, Pakistan has been at the forefront to avert a humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, and has made repeated calls to the international community not to 'abandon' the people of Afghanistan, provide humanitarian and economic assistance and engage with the political dispensation in Afghanistan to avert a collapse of the state. On its own, apart from already hosting over 3 million refugees, it has provided humanitarian assistance and pledged five billion rupees (\$28m) in assistance to Afghanistan. During the OIC session, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi while urging the OIC to help Afghanistan presented a six point proposal, which includes; creating a channel within OIC to send immediate humanitarian and financial support to Afghanistan, increase investment in education, health, technical skills for Afghan youth, a group of experts comprising OIC, UN and international financial institutions be established to

facilitate access to banking system and ease liquidity challenges faced by Afghan people, enhance food security of the Afghan people, invest in building capacity of Afghan institutions in countering terrorism and combating illicit drug trafficking, engage with Afghan authorities to help meet expectations of international community regarding inclusivity, ensure human most importantly women rights as well as combating terrorism.

While the OIC meeting is a much needed step in the right direction, and certainly reassuring, it is going to take much more to ensure that some semblance of stability returns to Afghanistan, where it can have a functioning economy. Instead of shifting the onus, principle stakeholders need to stop shifting the onus but rather assume responsibility and focus on Afghanistan as a shared responsibility - and in this case the onus is more on the two principle stakeholders, that is the US and the Taliban.

It must be reiterated that the Taliban did not come into power in isolation, but as a result of the US-Taliban deal, therefore Washington has a responsibility to fulfill by ensuring that the Afghan state does not fall. Similarly, now that the Taliban are the de facto representatives of the Afghan people, the group must realize that if they do not honour their pledges of reform, they will lose the support and recognition they so badly need from the international community, and more so from regional countries to legitimize their rule. Therefore, one only hopes that better sense prevails amongst the Taliban - where focus is on a future political set up that is inclusive, responsible, and accountable and lastly one that serves the Afghan people ■



The writer is the Director of Center for Aghanistan, Middle East and Africa at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.

Expansion of China's Aviation Industry & Gains for Pakistan



By Ali Haider Saleem

The aviation industry has continuously expanded and evolved in the last century. Demand for aviation related services is on the rise across sectors and the industry has benefited immensely from technological advancements. According to National Aviation Academy, there are three sectors of the aviation industry namely commercial, general and military. General aviation involves the use of aircraft for delivering specific services and also private transportation. Commercial drones, humanitarian aid, firefighting, emergency evacuation and law enforcement fall under this category. This component is poised to expand along with the growth of services sector in economies across the globe. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the significance of air transport in dealing with emergency situations and delivering essential supplies.

THE ADVENT OF AIR TRAVEL HAS HAD A HUGE IMPACT ON SOCIETIES. PREVIOUSLY, IT TOOK MONTHS TO TRAVEL OR DELIVER FROM ONE DESTINATION TO ANOTHER BUT NOW IT IS JUST A MATTER OF HOURS. AIR TRANSPORT HAS ALSO WIDENED THE POSSIBILITIES OF CULTURAL LINKAGES AND IS OPENING UP NEW MARKETS

The advent of air travel has had a huge impact on societies. Previously, it took months to travel or deliver from one destination to another but now it is just a matter of hours. Air transport has also widened the possibilities of cultural linkages and is opening up new markets. Movement of people is necessary to strengthen economic engagement between partnering countries and

air travel is the most convenient mode of transport between China and Pakistan. Without airplanes, globalization would never have taken place and as globalization gains momentum the demand for air travel and supporting services will continue to rise.

Given China's vast size, air travel was always going to be a necessity while the domestic and international turbulence also pushed Chinese leadership to expand the military component of the industry. The biggest name in China's aviation history is Feng Ru. He migrated to US in the late 19th century and set up an aviation factory after being inspired by the Wright brothers and America's industrial prowess. He built his first aircraft in 1909 and returned to China in 1911 with his expertise and creations. The Chinese leader at that time understood the importance of his work and backed him to develop China's aviation industry. Unfortunately, he died a year later during a demonstration flight at the age of 29. For his efforts and dedication, he was declared the "Father of Chinese aviation."

An aircraft manufacturing hangar was setup in 1910 in Beijing and three years later China's first aeronautical school was also established there. The China National Aviation Corporation was formed in 1929 and its pilots probed the air routes between China and rest of the world. The US entry in the 2nd World War proved beneficial for the CNAC as the Americans bolstered its capacity to counter the Japanese.

Many years after the formation of the People's Republic of China, the primary focus of the aviation industry remained centered towards military developments. Due to the economic and social circumstances, other components remained neglected. In fact, there were no direct flights between China and non-communist countries earlier.

In 1970s a major transition appeared in China's



aviation industry as well. The visit of US President Richard Nixon to China in 1972 in a Boeing 707 resulted in a fruitful partnership between the US aircraft manufacturer and the People's Republic of China. Shortly afterwards, China placed orders for Boeing's aircrafts marking a transition towards western fleet from the Soviet fleet. Boeing worked together with the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) to improve and expand the aviation infrastructure of the country as it would allow the US manufacture to deliver its airplanes rapidly. Boeing continued to support the development of Chinese aviation industry and also backed China's bid to become the member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Joining the WTO opened further opportunities for the aviation sector in China.

IN CHINA, THE RATE OF URBANIZATION INCREASED FROM 19.39 PER CENT IN 1980 TO 63.89 PER CENT IN 2020. IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS, CHINA IS EXPECTED TO OVERTAKE THE US AS THE LARGEST DOMESTIC AIR TRAVEL MARKET WHILE CHINESE AIRLINES WILL ACCOUNT FOR 20 PER CENT OF GLOBAL AIR TRAFFIC

During that period, the Chinese acquired technical and manufacturing expertise which helped in building indigenous passenger aircrafts. In 1980 the Shanghai Y-10 set off for its first flight which was a major accomplishment in Chinese industrial development and set the tone for future developments.

Further opening up of the economy and greater connectivity with the rest of the world spurred the aviation industry further. The demand for air travel increased manifold and local production continued to rise as well. The developments that have taken place in China since the late 1970s have raised global GDP and demand for air travel. Rising income levels and transition towards service based economy in China has also raised demand for air travel in the country.

Urbanization is also a key indicator of growth in air travel as people living in urban areas have better access and financial resources. In China, the rate of urbanization increased from 19.39 percent in 1980 to 63.89 percent in 2020. In the next few

years, China is expected to overtake the US as the largest domestic air travel market while Chinese airlines will account for 20 percent of global air traffic.

Likewise, the military component of China's aviation industry has rapidly grown in recent decades. Earlier, the operation and funding of the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) was constrained due to the Chinese political and military leadership's focus towards strengthening the ground forces. This meant that the PLAAF only had a supporting role in China's military strategy.

After the 1980s, the leadership recognized the need to modernize China's airpower and broaden PLAAF's capabilities. The idea of developing a 'strategic air force' was adopted in 2004 with the aim of preparing the PLAAF to contribute towards national security objectives within and beyond China's borders.

After increasing its capacity to operate in Taiwan Strait, the Chinese leadership understood that it had to further enhance PLAAF to secure China's strategic interests. The PLAAF fleet has been upgraded vastly and now consists of 4th and 5th generation fighter jets. In the 21st century, the PLAAF has made the most significant progress and is now the second largest air force in the world in terms of personnel and third largest in terms of weaponry. The United States Department of Defence Report 2020 notes that "the PLAAF is rapidly catching up to Western air forces across a broad range of capabilities and competencies." It also predicts that it will be a majority 4th generation force in the coming years.

AFTER THE 1980S, THE LEADERSHIP RECOGNIZED THE NEED TO MODERNIZE CHINA'S AIRPOWER AND BROADEN PLAAF'S CAPABILITIES

The expansion of PLAAF has bolstered Beijing's strategic options and has paved the way for China's growing role in regional and global affairs. The PLAAF's engagement with other air forces has also increased which has allowed China to win new partners. Moreover, technological advancement and innovation has propelled Chinese air force as a key player in the international arms trade and development arena.



For developing countries, Chinese air defence imports are more economical and they also do not come with binding conditions. However, China still needs to do plenty of work to match US in this area as many countries continue to use older American defence systems and weapons that are functioning smoothly. According to Jacob Parakilas, one factor that has kept Chinese arms sales relatively low is that they are unproven in battlefield. The recent success of JF-17 against Indian Air Force has certainly enhanced interest in Chinese manufactured battle planes. As a joint producer, Pakistan will also be able to expand its defence exports.

FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, CHINESE AIR DEFENCE IMPORTS ARE MORE ECONOMICAL AND THEY ALSO DO NOT COME WITH BINDING CONDITIONS. HOWEVER, CHINA STILL NEEDS TO DO PLENTY OF WORK TO MATCH US IN THIS AREA AS MANY COUNTRIES CONTINUE TO USE OLDER AMERICAN DEFENCE SYSTEMS AND WEAPONS THAT ARE FUNCTIONING SMOOTHLY

There has also been a significant rise in the third component of China's aviation industry. Rapid urbanization, the need for modern solutions and expansion of the services sector has spurred the development of air transport to facilitate provision of services. The development of drone technology is helping improve agricultural productivity in the country and many developing countries including Pakistan are seeking Chinese support to introduce the adaptation of drone technology in farming.

China is expected to become the largest passenger market by 2029 so it would require upgrading its infrastructure to manage the demand. In recent years, the Chinese government has relaxed regulations to attract foreign investment in its domestic aviation industry to make it more competitive globally and also to support its expansion.

In addition to commercial partnerships and infrastructure development, the BRI has also opened opportunities for partner countries to benefit from Chinese drone technology particularly in the agricultural sector. According to one Chinese producer, "drones are over 10 times more efficient than skilled manpower and they are cost-effective and environmentally friendly." The drone technology has enabled thousands of farmers in China to improve their monitoring and fertilizing activities. The drone revolution has also been supported by the fact that it is a safer option as it overcomes the problem of pesticide poisoning.

The global hike in food prices has been very distressing and to tackle such situations in the future, modern techniques will have to be implemented. China has emerged as a market leader in agricultural drone technology and many of the BRI countries that boast a sizeable agricultural sector would be eager to introduce Chinese technology.

For Pakistan, engagement with China in this sector is creating a wide range of economic opportunities and Pakistan must look to follow China's success in developing this vital and futuristic industry ■



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China's No-Coal-Plants Avenues for Renewable Energy Development in Pakistan

By Hira Usman

At the 76th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2021, the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, announced that "China will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad and will support developing countries in green and low carbon energy development." Restating the country's climate goals, President Xi claimed that China will make every effort to peak Carbon Dioxide emissions before 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality before 2060. While clarification is awaited on the plan to materialize the announcement, China has brought an environmentally positive opportunity for developing countries like Pakistan by planning to divert its overseas investments towards clean energy resources.

China is a global leader in renewable energy with the largest domestic and outbound investments in renewables around the world. According to the National Energy Administration of China, by the end of October 2021, the country's installed capacity of renewable power reached one billion kilowatts. In 2017, China's 13th five-year-plan on Energy Development declared the country's ambitious carbon reduction targets and aims for leading the world in renewable energy development. China's gradual focus on low-carbon technologies can also be observed in the country's renewed emphasis towards green development of foreign projects including the Belt and Road Initiative.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is the flagship project of the green Belt and Road Initiative and was formally launched in 2015. It holds significant importance for China in accessing the economic markets in Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East. The diverse projects under CPEC range from developing energy and transport infrastructure to operationalizing the Gwadar port and pursuing social development in Pakistan. Importantly, Power generation projects are a major part of CPEC portfolio. As of November 2021, four coal-fired power plants of a total 4,620 MW capacity and four wind and solar-powered plants of a total 700 MW capacity have been completed in Sindh and Punjab provinces - indicating substantial progress towards China-Pakistan strategic collaboration. The investments in renewable energy are especially vital for Pakistan in reducing its reliance on imported fossil fuels for power generation.

**PRESIDENT XI'S
ANNOUNCEMENT FOR
SUPPORTING DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES IN LOW-
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ON BUILDING ITS CAPACITY
ACROSS ALL VALUE CHAINS
OF THE RENEWABLE POWER
SECTOR**

Pakistan has actively been working to address the disastrous impacts of climate change. The country announced a moratorium on new imported-coal based power plants in 2021 and plans to increase renewables to 60 percent of its

energy mix by 2030. China, as a global leader of solar and wind technologies, can be strategically involved in enhancing Pakistan's clean energy generation through CPEC power and social development projects. According to World Bank, Pakistan's current electricity demand can be fulfilled by aptly utilizing only 0.071 percent of land area for solar power plants. Similarly, Pakistan has substantial wind-speed corridors in the South and Southwest of the country where only few of the CPEC wind power projects have been developed so far. Planning technological collaboration with China, the country with largest solar-module manufacturing companies and some of the largest wind turbine manufacturers, can hold the key for Pakistan's diversification of energy sector.

President Xi's announcement for supporting developing countries in low-carbon technologies development also presents an opportunity for Pakistan to work on building its capacity across all value chains of the renewable power sector- supply chain, manufacturing, battery storage, integration to the national grid, price regulations, and the additions to research and development sector through strategic transnational knowledge transfer. Therefore, China's recent announcement presents win-win situations for both China in achieving its climate ambitions in overseas investments, and for Pakistan in accelerating its green economic growth and climate resilience ■



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ISLAMABAD CONCLAVE 9TH- 10TH DECEMBER(2021)

Compiled and Edited by Uroosa Khan



'Peaceful and Prosperous South Asia'



Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a 2-day mega-event titled 'Islamabad Conclave' under the theme of "Peaceful and Prosperous South-Asia" on 9th and 10th December, 2021. Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan delivered the inaugural address at the Opening Session of Islamabad Conclave 2021 on December 9, 2021. In his remarks, he stated that Pakistan's peace overtures towards India have been considered a weakness by the Modi government. He went on to say that, Kashmir issue has kept the peace of South Asia hostage. We hope for India to have such a government that can resolve the conflict through logic and sanity. It is the only problem between India and Pakistan. Till last minute, Pakistan will try to resolve the conflict through dialogue. He was of the view that the RSS and the Hindutva

ideology is a tragedy for the Indians themselves and this has led to unprecedented marginalisation in the country. He commended the effort made by ISSI in promoting intellectual activities like the Islamabad Conclave 2021.

Mr. Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, commended the effort of the Institute for organizing this 2 day mega event. He shed light on the global and regional landscape and outlined Pakistan's vision for peace.

Foreign Minister further explained that globalization and multilateralism have been undercut by unilateralism and there is a return to nationalistic agendas.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, in his introductory remarks gave a briefing about the working of the Institute and the ambit of its activities. While highlighting the theme of the Islamabad Conclave, "A Peaceful and Prosperous South Asia," Ambassador



Chaudhry outlined the objectives of the Islamabad Conclave especially, for narrative building, global engagement, bridging the gaps and tripod security paradigm.

First Working Session- Quest for Peace & Prosperity in South Asia

The India Study Centre (ISC) at the ISSI hosted the first working session of Islamabad Conclave 2021 titled “Quest for Peace and Prosperity in South Asia,” on December 9, 2021. The Director ISC Dr. Saif Malik welcomed the guests and moderated the session. In his opening remarks, Dr. Malik stated that ISSI has organized a two-day conclave on highlighting the importance of “Peace and Prosperity in South Asia.” The latter houses one-fourth of the world’s population and it has diverse yet somehow similar ethnic, cultural, and religious settings. However, unfortunately, South Asia is one of the least integrated regions of the world. Dr. Malik stressed to resolve the unfinished business of the partition i.e., the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan.



Ambassador Riaz Khokhar, former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan was the keynote speaker at this session. In his remarks he stated that the South Asian countries are adjusting themselves to geo-political and geo-economic realities. Sadly, trust in the United Nations has been depleted as burning issues are pending in the UN. Seeking peace, development, and prosperity were the main component of Jinnah’s vision of foreign policy. Pakistan currently follows the trajectory of Jinnah, and it wants peace and prosperity in the region. Summing up he said that Pakistan must seek for peace but must not beg for it.

Dr. Nishchal N Pandey, Director, Center for South Asian Studies (CSAS), Kathmandu, Nepal was the first speaker of this session. In his remarks, he pointed out the challenges faced by South Asia. He said that the world’s three most geopolitical powerful players and leading military powers the US, China, and Russia are currently in a complex triangular relationship. There is the war of words; we do not know when this war of words will turn into a full-blown crisis. Mr. Pandey said that Covid-19

accelerated the economic woes of the region caused by frequent lockdowns. Some experts say that SAARC is dead; if it is dead, we need to give new life to it. Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Nepal are the top contributing countries in UN peacekeeping missions. Nevertheless, there is no peace in the region.

Second speaker of this session was Prof. Dr. Rupa Chanda, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore, and Director, Trade, Investment and Innovation Division, UNESCAP, Bangkok. In her remarks, she argued that South Asia is among the least integrated regions in the world, with intra-regional trade accounting for only 6.1% of total trade in 2015, compared to 27.4% in ASEAN. Although several integration frameworks are in place, progress in dismantling barriers and expanding trade and investment flows has been limited due to trade barriers, infrastructural deficits and connectivity constraints which raise trade costs, lack of trade facilitation measures, poor supply capacity, asymmetries among countries, and political differences. There is scope to expand trade and related flows of capital and persons in segments such as tourism, healthcare, education, IT and IT-enabled services, business, and professional services.

The third and last speaker of this session was Ms. Laura Schuurman, Independent writer and researcher. In her remarks, she stated that the Fall of Kabul on August 15, 2021, to the Taliban forces did put enormous pressure on the already tense geopolitical environment confronting Pakistan. She said that Pakistan and India are in a state of constant conflict over the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir since their independence in 1947. Ms. Laura argued that the absence of sustainable dialogue between the two nuclear-armed archrivals brought them close to a full-scale war in February 2019 after the unfortunate Pulwama incident. She stressed that there should be dialogue between India and Pakistan, and Kashmiris should be made part of such endeavors.

Second Working Session- Strategic Stability in South Asia

The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at ISSI hosted the second working session of Islamabad Conclave under the theme titled “Strategic Stability in South Asia” on December 9, 2021. In his opening remarks, Mr. Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC, said that strategic stability in South Asia is under stress as new security challenges have emerged from India’s actions and behaviour. It is modernizing its nuclear weapons programme and shifting its focus on a nuclear warfighting doctrine, as well as introducing technologies like hypersonic missiles in the region that are further destabilizing South Asia.



The keynote speaker at this session was Lt General (Retd) Mazhar Jamil, former DG SPD/Advisor National Command Authority (NCA), Pakistan. In his remarks, he said that there are many elements that affect strategic stability in South Asia including dynamics of political instability and strategic trilemma. He emphasized strategic stability cannot be achieved through the Cold War mentality and pursuit of risky doctrines like the Cold Start. He asserted that Pakistan would have to maintain deterrence stability while trying to pursue dispute resolution and conflict resolution.

The first speaker of this session was Dr. Walter C Ladwig III, Associate Professor in International Relations at King's College London. He spoke on "Nuclear Doctrinal Shifts and Force Postures in South Asia." In his remarks, he said that nuclear architecture is very complicated in South Asia since there are two nuclear dyads - India and China, and India and Pakistan. He said that tactical nuclear weapons, ambiguous nuclear red lines, shaky commitment to No First Use, dual-use missiles paint a pessimistic outlook for strategic stability in South Asia.

The second speaker of this session was Mr. Li Chijiang, Vice President and Secretary-General, China Arms Control and Disarmament Association (CACDA), China. He spoke on "Strategic Stability in South Asia: A Chinese Perspective." In his remarks, he said that Strategic Stability is linked to relations between the three main countries China, Pakistan and India. There is a strategic imbalance between India and Pakistan. There is a need to promote confidence-building measures (CBMs) to promote strategic stability.

The third speaker at this session was Dr. Lora Saalman, Associate Senior Fellow, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). She spoke on "Toward Strategic Stability: Nuclear Challenges and CBMs in South Asia." She stated that nuclear transparency and CBMs in South Asia

have a lengthy but fraught history that has contributed to 'CBM fatigue.' SIPRI has made efforts to reinvigorate CBMs through engaging a diverse group of military, nuclear, political and regional experts from China, India, Pakistan, Russia and the US and to expand the range of CBM options such as India and China nuclear dialogue, India and Pakistan agreement on notification of nuclear accidents at sea etc.

The fourth and last speaker of this session was Major General (Retd) Ausaf Ali, Advisor, SPD, Pakistan and he spoke on "Emerging Technologies & their Impact on Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia." In his remarks he said that India has embarked upon acquiring and imbibing new emerging technologies like hypersonic missiles, Artificial Intelligence (AI), directed energy weapons, and Anti Satellite (ASAT) capability. The introduction of innovative technologies will directly as well as indirectly impact strategic deterrence in South Asia.

Third working session- Afghanistan: Road to Durable Peace

The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted the third working session of the Islamabad Conclave titled, 'Afghanistan: Road to Durable Peace.' Director CAMEA, Ms. Amina Khan, moderated the session and the keynote speaker at the occasion was Ambassador Mohammad Sadiq, Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan.



In her introductory remarks, Ms. Amina Khan stated that since the Taliban takeover and subsequent US withdrawal, circumstances in Afghanistan have drastically evolved. In the absence of a negotiated settlement, it was clear that while a takeover by the Taliban was expected, the manner and the speed in which the group did so was certainly not anticipated. Even within the confines of the current interim set up, the real test for the Taliban has only just begun - which is by no means limited to securing power, but revolves around addressing questions regarding governance, political

freedom, human rights, regional peace and stability and more importantly addressing issues pertaining to CT assurances will determine their rule. Therefore, it is time to view Afghanistan as a shared and collective responsibility.

Ambassador Mohammad Sadiq, while giving his keynote address was of the view that Afghanistan has undergone tremendous transformation and it is not related to the takeover of August 15th, 2021. This change has materialized in the last twenty years, as a huge youth populace lives in Afghanistan. He went on to say that since Afghanistan is a multiethnic society, power sharing does not come naturally and inclusivity is also a big issue. He further remarked that transit trade has come to a standstill in Afghanistan and the economy is on the verge of a collapse. Ambassador Sadiq also said that international community needs to think about all the challenges.

The first speaker of this session Ms. Tammana Salikuddin spoke on 'Challenges to Peace & Stability in Afghanistan'. In her remarks, she stated that we may have near term peace and stability in Afghanistan as there is no ongoing war in the country. The Taliban regime remains unacceptable in the US she stated. Talking about the humanitarian crisis, she said that there are growing concerns regarding this and while engagement is limited, people in the US want to help the people of Afghanistan. She went on to say that the experience of twenty years and the current stand on inclusivity is viewed as highly problematic in the US. The challenges of internal divisions within the Taliban as well as the danger of external spoilers like the ISKP remain a big challenge she stated.

The second speaker of this session, Dr. Elizabeth Threlkeld, spoke on the subtheme, 'Role of International Community'. In her remarks, she was of the view that on the question of political will, the threat of a worst outcome needs to be considered by the international community. She also talked about the humanitarian crisis and said that if we continue like this then the situation in Afghanistan might spillover to total devastation. Threat of a worse outcome and its implications for international community need to be addressed more articulately. Catastrophe and chaos is impending in Afghanistan and providing economic aid alone will not address the challenge, therefore a workable compromise should be agreed on.

The 3rd speaker Dr. Sultan Barakat, spoke on the subtheme, 'Role of Regional Players'. He said that after two decades, the large scale of violence that used to exist in the country has come to an end. The world is adopting the policy of wait and see in Afghanistan, but the people of Afghanistan are facing

a different situation and the country is at the verge of a humanitarian crisis. He opined that education and food security are the major concerns, which should be addressed immediately, and conclusively all regional countries should engage to help the Taliban to move forward.

The fourth speaker of this session Ambassador Jawed Ludin, spoke on the subtheme, 'Pak-Afghan Bilateral Relationship'. In his remarks, he said that relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have faced several challenges during the past two decades. However, at this stage both countries are at the defining moment and the relations can be reset in light of the new emerging realities. He stated that now the Taliban are a reality in Afghanistan but at this stage, the real victory will be dealing with the looming humanitarian crisis. If Taliban fail to deliver on their commitments, the country will become a safe haven for terrorist organizations like the ISKP.

Fourth Working Session- Development through Connectivity

The China-Pakistan Study Centre at ISSI hosted the fourth working session of Islamabad Conclave under the theme of "Development through Connectivity" on December 10, 2021.



The session was moderated by Director CPSC, Dr. Talat Shabbir and the keynote speaker at the occasion was Ambassador Masood Khalid, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to China. In his opening remarks, Director CPSC, Dr. Talat Shabbir said that the contemporary world is undergoing a huge transformation and geo-economics is the dominant theme of international politics. He pointed out the four vital elements of development through connectivity and emphasized upon Pakistan's importance as a strategic gateway to the regional development and prosperity.

Ambassador Masood Khalid in his keynote address highlighted the bottlenecks of infrastructural development in the developing regions such as Asia

and he welcomed China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in this context. He said that, through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Pakistan can transform into a regional trade and energy hub, and a key player in peace and stability of South Asia and the surrounding regions.

The first speaker of this session was Professor Lin Mingwang, Professor and Deputy Director of the Center for South Asian Studies, Fudan University. He spoke on the sub-theme 'Transport and Energy Infrastructure: A Catalyst for Connectivity.' In his remarks, he stated that China's exceptional economic success revolves around increasing infrastructural connectivity. BRI in this regard, is the timely venture for building shared future of development and progress with its neighboring countries and the regions.

The second speaker of this session was Mr. Sanjar Valiev, Director of the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. He spoke on the sub-theme 'Ports and Maritime Connectivity: Synergising Development & Security'. In his remarks, Mr. Valiev highlighted the prospects of a possible conjugation of the "Trans-Afghan Corridor" with CPEC. It is very important to pay attention to formation of transport corridors connecting with the infrastructure of Pakistani seaports. This strategic direction of cooperation is the basis for long-term economic growth. Pakistan as a gateway to CARs should explore the possibilities of untapped cluster trade routes.

The third speaker of this session was Professor Akbota Zholdasbekova Vice Rector for International Cooperation at the Eurasian National University, Kazakhstan. Prof. Zholdasbekova spoke on the sub-theme titled, 'South-Central Asia Connectivity through Pakistan'. She appreciated the host of initiatives, particularly BRI, that are being taken in South and Central Asia and on the Eurasian landmass to strengthen connectivity and commercial cooperation. She emphasized that Pakistan can enhance the regional connectivity linkages and Pakistan-Afghanistan-Uzbekistan railway project, in particular, raises hopes to enhance economic activities and strengthen regional connectivity.

The fourth speaker of this session was Professor Jin Canrong, Professor and Associate Dean of School of International Studies at Renmin University. Professor Canrong spoke on the sub-theme, 'Commerce and Industry: Pivot to Geo-economics'. In his remarks, he elaborated upon how China managed to own the largest manufacturing industry in the world and its GDP is 30% of the total world. He was of the view that the current age is the age of geo-economics and, by

investing into commerce and industry; the nations can achieve phenomenal outcomes.

Fifth Working Session-Addressing Pakistan's Non-Traditional Security Challenges

The Centre for Strategic Perspectives at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted the fifth working session of the Islamabad Conclave titled, "Addressing Pakistan's Non-Traditional Security Challenges." The session was moderated by Director CSP, Dr. Neelum Nigar and the keynote speaker at the occasion was Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel, Chairperson BoG Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).



In her opening remarks, Dr. Neelum Nigar stated that the global security environment has drastically changed over the last two decades as the security challenges now are increasing from multiple non-traditional realms primarily being non-military in nature. The non-traditional security has now assumed utmost importance in the overall national security paradigm. She was of the view that the NTS has proved itself as a threat irrespective of national boundaries as the concept of security is no longer the state but people and their survival and well-being.

Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel in his keynote address stated that impact of climate change such as erosion of the glaciers feeding Pakistan's rivers, disruption of the pattern of the monsoon winds, which will cause floods or droughts, and higher temperature, are likely to reduce the quantity and worsen the quality of Pakistan's water resources. Being an arid dominated country, irrigation is indispensable for Pakistan's agriculture sector as it is the backbone of Pakistan's economy. He went on to say that in Pakistan, many policies about Climate Change have been postulated but their effective implementation needs to take place. During his remarks he stressed that Pakistan must recognize the climate crisis as threat to its national security and make efforts to protect its domestic and external peace and security.

The first speaker of this session, Ms. Florence Rolle, Country Representative in Pakistan for Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

shared her views on, 'The climate change and its impact on agriculture, food and water security'. In her remarks, she stated that there is a strong linkage between the three as water determines food security and nutrition, which are important life blocks of eco-system. During her talk she highlighted two SDGs; SDG 2, ending hunger and SDG 6 sanitation. The global situation regarding food hunger and sanitation is very bleak and has deteriorated and remains unoptimistic. Moreover, there is an alarming increase in total demand for food globally that stands in contrast to the deteriorating situation of water resources around the world and Pakistan stands in the middle of the situation.

The second speaker of this session, Dr. Steffen Kudella, Resident Representative Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) during his remarks underlined the importance of strengthening of human security to deal with the non-traditional challenges. He stated that the political paradigm of human security questions traditional security concepts: it does not focus on the protection of the nation state as a main reference point for the critical observer, but on the protection of the individual human being. He highlighted that the meaning of human security, as it is mostly understood today, is highly dependent on non-traditional security analysis.

The third speaker of this session, Dr. Ning Shengnan, Senior Research Fellow, China Institute of International Studies (CIIS) in her remarks spoke about the geo-economic salience of Pakistan. She stated that Pakistan has great potential of geo-economics as it is at the geographical location that connects the East and the West. Pakistan lies at the juncture of South and Central Asia, especially guarding the transport hub between Indian Ocean and Central Asian countries. During her remarks Dr. Shengnan highlighted the economic performance of Pakistan; during the 2020-2021 pandemic, while other economies struggling in recession; Pakistan's GDP grows by an outstanding 3.94 percent and achieved current account surplus and accumulated a four-year high foreign exchange reserves whilst gaining an additional 29 percent growth in workers' remittances from abroad. While talking about the BRI initiative she was of the view that BRI could help in realizing Pakistan's geo-economic potential as the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) contributes in activating Pakistan's potential of a trading nation along the most important trade routes.

Dr. Adil Najam Inaugural Dean, of the Pardee School of Global Studies at Boston University while making an intervention shed light on the idea of climate change and how it is affecting different nations in different ways. He stressed that water stands at the middle of the climate change crisis whether it is the issue of drought, mass flooding, rain, glacier melts including extreme events.

He was of the view that the distinction that is made between traditional and non-traditional security should be eliminated as both translate into existential crisis.

Concluding Session of the Islamabad Conclave-2021

The Honourable President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi, was the Chief Guest for the concluding session of Islamabad Conclave 2021 on December 10, 2021.



Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, presented the conclusions of 5 working sessions to President of Pakistan. He briefed the President about the over-arching objectives of the conclave. He highlighted that South Asia hosts the largest youth bulge in the world and still is the least integrated region of the world. Through focusing on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs), India and Pakistan can help maintain strategic balance, peace and stability in South Asia. He further added that the world must engage constructively with the new political reality in Afghanistan to work out a mechanism of humanitarian and development support. Connectivity has emerged as a defining feature of the global and regional economies. The CPEC, a flagship project of BRI, is a prime example of "Development through Connectivity." Highlighting the conclusions from the last session, Ambassador Chaudhry stressed the need of recognizing the climate crisis as a threat to Pakistan's national security. Therefore, the pursuance of objectives of human security, economic security and traditional security for Pakistan are extremely important.



In his concluding address, while appreciating the initiative of the Islamabad Conclave, the honourable President, Mr. Arif Alvi said that it is a great step towards bridging the gap between think tanks and decision-makers. As long as the stakes of selective nations drive the agenda of international organizations, achieving an international order based on the principle of morality will remain impossible. With the growing militarization of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, robotics and cyber, the new world order has been dehumanized.

The event was attended and received well by practitioners, academia, and policymakers ■

Safeguarding the Online User A ROADMAP TO DIGITAL SECURITY

By Misbah Mukhtar

The age of the internet offers its own benefits and challenges. It promises increased connectivity and information sharing. However, the recent Facebook Papers have highlighted the dark side of the internet. Data is the most important asset for any online platform. The advent of data economies has allowed big companies like; Google, Facebook, Amazon etc. to build their own empires by collecting user data. These tech giants are acting with impunity in the digital domain, free from constraints of law and scrutiny. Facebook Papers are just one example to indicate how these tech platforms are profiting by increasing their audience while completely ignoring the content contributing towards hate speech and misinformation. The whistle-blowers in the past have also indicated huge data leaks where user data

was shared with third party sources without their consent. The entire Cambridge Analytica scandal was a befitting example in this regard where the data of millions of internet users was collected without their consent with an ulterior motive to target them with political advertisement to attain desired outcome for certain political parties. It raises serious questions about the nature of human autonomy while living under the current logic of commodification of human data, where user data is not only stored and collected without their consent but is also sold and commodified for earning profits in the digital realm. In this milieu, every person using the internet becomes a customer, whose data needs protection and safety from being used without their consent.

Privacy pertains primarily to the right of an individual to be free from intrusion of their freedom and data privacy then becomes their right to be in control of how personal information is collected and used. It essentially warrants safeguard from uninvited surveillance. Data privacy is all about how user data

is collected, shared and used. It includes the appropriate handling and managing, storing and sharing of data in light of the consent, notice and regulatory obligations attached to it.

Data privacy is often confused with data security, the protection of data from external attackers and those with malicious intentions. However, data privacy only encompasses how data is collected, shared and used. It is therefore critical to address data privacy for the safety of life in today's society.

THE AGE OF THE INTERNET OFFERS ITS OWN BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES. IT PROMISES INCREASED CONNECTIVITY AND INFORMATION SHARING. HOWEVER, THE RECENT FACEBOOK PAPERS HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE DARK SIDE OF THE INTERNET

Nations around the world have taken varying approaches to tackle data privacy. Some are further in their progression of regulations and laws than others. Pakistan stands with a number of other countries in its limited action in addressing data privacy. It was only last year in Pakistan that the data of 115 million mobile users was allegedly leaked; sharing Personally Identifiable Information (PII) about them with third parties. According to Rewterz, a specialized cyber security services in Pakistan, the data was available on the dark net for sale.



There appears to be a lack of political will to tackle this issue, but the real question is, could the momentum be shifting as we enter the third decade of this century?

Historically, Pakistan has lacked specific laws in relation to data protection. The 1973 constitution included clauses in general privacy and protection with Article 14(1) stating: "The dignity of anybody and, subject to law, the privacy of home, shall be inviolable." This Article encompasses some aspects of privacy but the constitution does not include any measure to directly address data privacy and protection issues.

In Pakistan, certain regulations have been functional in service related institutions like banks for user data protection. Moreover, Cyber Security Council Bill 2014, the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) of 2016 and Pakistan Personal Data Protection Bill (PPDPN) 2020, are a few steps towards a digitally secure Pakistan by ensuring data safety and privacy.

It presents us with the question about privacy and to what extent it can be safeguarded in the digital realm? Saving user data is an essential component of user privacy because in the digital age humans have their 'virtual self' with their virtual past, present and future. It is, therefore, imperative for the states to ensure the safety of that 'virtual self' by protecting user data.

In this milieu, following few steps could be instrumental in altering the digital landscape of the country and the globe by providing optimum digital security to the online user:

- ◆ Entire cyberspace is a lawless entity, and it is essential to bring it under the scrutiny of law. Therefore, laws should be devised in parliament to ensure safety and security of user data online.

- ◆ Mechanisms should be developed to prohibit any misuse of online data.

- ◆ A special wing should be dedicated in the cybercrime unit of FIA to deal with the user data theft.

- ◆ The data of users should not be sold by digital platforms. Each website should have "do not sell my data" option at their website, so people could opt out of the option of allowing their information to be sold to third parties.

- ◆ Each website must have a "privacy" hyperlink attached to their home page explaining:

- ◆ The kind of information they gather of users online: their names, residential addresses, phone numbers, location etc.

- ◆ How that information is used or shared.

- ◆ Indicate any changes or updates in the privacy policy of the website and the date of its implementation.

- ◆ For how long the data is stored on/by the website.

- ◆ How can users get hold of their data/ means to contact the website?

- ◆ Being in the digital south, many people in Pakistan are not fully cognizant of how their data is used online. Efforts should be made about raising awareness about data protection and about helping people to understand the significance of privacy and protection of their online data.

- ◆ Only limited people should be allowed access to online user data to ensure its safety and security.

- ◆ Online platforms should only store vital data.

- ◆ People should have a right to protest or complain to the relevant data protection authorities in case of:

- ◆ Breach of a person's consent of data protection

- ◆ Provision of misleading or false information to any party online

- ◆ Or any matter related to personal data protection

- ◆ People should have a right to be forgotten in the online world. It means that if the user deems it appropriate, their online data should be erased. For example, if the data is unlawfully obtained or gathered without the consent of the user, people should be allowed the right to be forgotten by permanently erasing that online data.

PAKISTAN STANDS WITH A NUMBER OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN ITS LIMITED ACTION IN ADDRESSING DATA PRIVACY. IT WAS ONLY LAST YEAR IN PAKISTAN THAT THE DATA OF 115 MILLION MOBILE USERS WAS ALLEGEDLY LEAKED; SHARING PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION (PII) ABOUT THEM WITH THIRD PARTIES

- ◆ People should also have the right to withdraw consent if they have once granted it while using any online platform

- ◆ Right to access data: Regulators should make the access to data feasible for the user ■



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REGIONAL APPROACH TO DEAL WITH AFGHAN CRISES

By Muhammad Iqbal



A comprehensive regional approach is required to address human catastrophe and security threat emanating from Afghanistan. It has now been around four months of Taliban rule in Afghanistan, but the situation there is far from stable. The war has seemingly ended but the country is once again becoming the hub of transnational terrorist organizations. The lack of political consensus and Taliban's exclusive political approach to run Afghanistan is raising strong resentment among other ethnic groups who have a long history of animosity with the Afghan Taliban.

The worst is the international sanctions and fragile economic conditions in Afghanistan that brought the country at the brink of horrific human catastrophe. According to a UN Humanitarian Aid report, 22 million out of 39 million of total Afghan population are vulnerable to acute food insecurity from November until March. Another report released by the UN health agency said that nearly 3.2 million children are likely to suffer from acute malnutrition in Afghanistan by the end of 2021 out of which one million are at the risk of losing their lives. Reports after reports present a gloomy picture of Afghanistan.

In this regard, Pakistan, Russia, China, Iran and CARs have engaged other regional players and are jointly finding a viable solution to tackle the Afghan dogma. Regional efforts have already been commenced, the most active one known as Troika plus, to build regional consensus in order to tackle the threats of militancy

emanating from the Taliban ruled Afghanistan which could once again be a source of insecurity and instability for the whole region. So far little has been done under the ambit of regional initiatives.

ACCORDING TO A UN HUMANITARIAN AID REPORT, 22 MILLION OUT OF 39 MILLION OF TOTAL AFGHAN POPULATION ARE VULNERABLE TO ACUTE FOOD INSECURITY FROM NOVEMBER 2021 UNTIL MARCH 2022 SEASON

The regional countries need to come up with a mechanism to prevent Afghanistan to be, a hub of transnational terrorist activities. After their swift victory on Kabul, the Taliban said it loud and clear that no one is entitled to use their soil to harm others. Taliban have also agreed in Doha peace agreement signed between the Taliban and the US to disconnect themselves from Al-Qaeda and other banned groups. The question here arises, is it possible for the Taliban to keep a check on the transnational terrorist organizations that have a presence on Afghan soil? The Taliban's swift advance over Kabul mounted the fear of Afghanistan's immediate neighbours about the revival of a fresh layer of extremism and militancy.

The ever-changing situation in Afghanistan is not only a major transition in Afghanistan rather Pakistan will also face the far-reaching consequences of it especially if the Taliban restored its former Islamic Emirate in Afghanistan. The rise of TTA in Kabul would of course

bolster the morale of the banned TTP to regroup and carry out activities in Pakistan. As it is widely believed that the two violent groups are two sides of the same coin, the TTP would receive overwhelming support to re-integrate and re-emerge in Pakistan if the Afghan Taliban restore emirate without any negotiated political settlement. After the fall of Kabul in the hands of Taliban, the surge in terrorist activities has also been reportedly carried out by the Pakistani Taliban in a different area of Pakistan in the last two months. Pakistan's latest negotiations with the TTP where Afghan Taliban played the role of mediator ended with no fruitful conclusion and TTP's refusal of extension to ceasefire implies how the rise of the Taliban's Islamic emirate in Afghanistan carries grave consequences for the security of Pakistan.

In recent times, the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, met a high-level Afghan Taliban delegation to inform them about Chinese concerns related to Afghanistan. The primary concern that drives the Chinese fear is the Taliban occupation of Kabul by force and their strict implementation of their conservative ideology in the state. The rise of the Taliban as a victorious force might be a moment of celebration for the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) to leverage its relations with the Taliban to extend its support to Uyghur Muslims living in Xinjiang. Despite all this, Taliban's top political leader, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar's commitment that they will never allow any force in Afghanistan to engage in acts detrimental to China, Beijing appears to not rely merely on solaces. China is playing a proactive role in the efforts initiated under the banner of the troika to abandon Afghanistan once again to be the base of terrorist organizations. Beijing has also shown its willingness to encourage all Afghan warring parties to sort out the four-decade-old hostility with a broader negotiated political settlement.

Russia's eastern border is encircled by some of the Muslim majority states. Therefore, the primary concern that drives the Kremlin fear is the emergence of radical groups in Afghanistan. The history of relations between Russia and Islamic radical groups are replete with animosity dating back to the 1980s. Russia fears that the restoration of former Islamic Emirates in Afghanistan would inflict radicalization and militancy in its Muslim neighbours. Kremlin is also worried that the new Taliban regime would also spread their way of violent occupation, of power and ideology to the Central Asian States and if that becomes a reality, it would surely destabilize the region. Any instability in the Central Asia states would be a nightmare and would create serious security challenges for Russia.

The fall of Kabul has diverted all the attention towards the composition of a new regime in Kabul. If no consensus is reached between the Taliban and other

factions, Afghanistan might once again indulge in another protracted civil war. Several key stakeholders, who fled Afghanistan after the Taliban's victory, have to respond to the new developments taking place in Kabul. The ethnic communities of Afghanistan, especially, Tajik, Uzbeks and Hazaras, remained strongest opponents to Taliban's rule, and yet have to clarify their stance over the matter of Taliban's entrance into Kabul forcefully and toppled their coalition government. The cloud of another protracted civil war between the Taliban and the former Northern alliance is also looming over Afghanistan. Regional states especially the troika members need to intervene in the matter and settle it through a broader consensus otherwise it would have far greater consequences for the security of the whole region.

THE WORLD MUST KEEP PRESSURE ON THE NEXT AFGHAN GOVERNMENT AND ASSIST IT TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF MILITANCY AND ETHNIC TENSIONS IN AFGHANISTAN. THE COLLECTIVE REGIONAL RESPONSE APPEARS TO BE THE LAST HOPE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUES OF TERRORISM AND HUMAN CRISIS IN WAR RAVAGED AFGHANISTAN

The role of these regional players is crucial as the three regional members of the group have relations, more or less, with all major factions of Afghanistan to break down the stalemate, reach an inclusive political setup in Afghanistan, and persuade Taliban to disconnect itself from militant groups. The coherence of interest of regional states amidst of emerging power vacuum in Afghanistan has further increased the importance of regional response to the Afghan dogma. The regional states need to dedicate a special cell that closely looks on Afghan matters, build consensus among each other and come up with suitable policy options.

Despite its troop's withdrawal from Afghanistan, the US has still a crucial role to play in the intra-Afghan peace process. Besides, the US is the most important player to engage the Taliban and can play a major role to address the upcoming human catastrophe in Afghanistan. The world must keep pressure on the next Afghan government and assist it to address the issue of militancy and ethnic tensions in Afghanistan. A collective regional response appears to be the last hope to address the issues of terrorism and human crisis in war ravaged Afghanistan ■



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China and Pakistan must color the Economy Blue

By Majyd Aziz

Pakistan's policymakers as well as leaders of business associations never get tired of repeating the mantra that Pakistan is rich in natural resources and is this or that number in this or that commodity. Two valuable resources were paid lip-service by successive governments because the focus has always been on around ten exportable items. There are at least two potent resources that can scale up the exports, increase employment, enhance the environment, and bring economic prosperity for people living in the periphery of these resources. These are minerals and the blue economy. Pakistan has 93 minerals as well as over 1000 km of coastline. Foreign investors are still tip-toeing when it comes to investment in these resources. Domestic investment is shy of seriously venturing into these fields for various reasons. Entrepreneurs generally take business risks, albeit calculated, but do not have a strong presence in these two sectors.

Taking blue economy as a profitable sector of investment, and being comparatively uncomplicated to handle, it is then incumbent upon the governments, both federal and provincial, to bring about a fundamental change in policies to jumpstart the process of investment in, and promotion of, the bounties of nature. There is an immediate need to join hands with China who can spearhead this initiative. It goes without saying that China is already

an important part of blue economy in Pakistan as it is investing in and operating the Gwadar Port. Hence, the footprints of China are present and it is time to take this to the next level. Pakistan is well-placed to inter-connect the infrastructure of CPEC with a functional maritime corridor. This article is focused on the port environment and the fisheries sector. Other sectors of the marine and coastal ecosystems in the blue economy, that have an annual global turnover estimated to be around US\$ 5 to 6 trillion, such as ship and boat-building, aqua sports, tourist sea resorts, energy production, 'blue carbon', and more importantly, massive employment opportunities, are not specifically highlighted. Being a signatory of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-14), Pakistan has to venture on the path of development of the blue economy.

THE FOOTPRINTS OF CHINA ARE PRESENT AND IT IS TIME TO TAKE THIS TO THE NEXT LEVEL. PAKISTAN IS WELL-PLACED TO INTER-CONNECT THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF CPEC WITH A FUNCTIONAL MARITIME CORRIDOR

Karachi Port is chock-a-full with all berths fully occupied 24/7, and ships waiting at Outer Anchorage incur heavy demurrage (that have to be paid in scarce US dollars) plus the precious time factor. Port Qasim is also brimming with intensive activity.

Although Gwadar Port has still not attracted desired traffic, the future is encouraging. However, there should also be a laid-down policy to develop smaller ports, such as expansion and modernization of the Jiwani port in Balochistan. Pakistan should make a paradigm shift and announce a policy to designate the Jiwani port as a private-sector owned and operated entity or under Private-Public Partnership. A mini-Gwadar could be replicated that would include a Special Economic Zone, warehouses, residential and commercial complexes, social infrastructure, and provision of captive power, gas and water plants. The planned Port at Keti Bandar in Sindh, with its huge potential of wind energy, marine life and employment opportunities, is part of CPEC. At present, the possibility of construction of this port is unlikely due to certain concerns, mainly national security compulsions.

Fisheries sector in Pakistan accounts for less than one percent of the GDP, but it still plays a crucial role in developing the economy of Pakistan by providing employment to a significant number of people residing in impoverished societies and backward regions of Balochistan and Sindh. In Pakistan, fish is largely caught from marine and inland sources along the coastal belts of Sindh and Balochistan, but lately aquaculture farming seems to have gained tremendous popularity among local investors of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). The fishing industry is characterized by three main

methods of capture and production: marine, inland and aquaculture. Among these, the majority of catch is derived from marine and inland fisheries that are conducted along the coasts of Sindh and Balochistan and in parts of Punjab along the 3,180 km Indus River.

China bagged the top spot as Pakistan's largest fish market, swooping up 22 percent of total fish exports. It has therefore become absolutely crucial that the Phase II of China-Pak Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA) is executed forcefully. Despite the opportunities available by the removal and reduction of trade barriers in several fishery categories, the ability of Pakistan to expand exports to China primarily depends on the domestic industry's existing productive capabilities.

BEING A SIGNATORY OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG-14), PAKISTAN HAS TO VENTURE ON THE PATH OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE BLUE ECONOMY

The Fishing Industry employs roughly 130,000 full-timers and 75,000 part time employees in 4 major fishing harbors with 90 percent of the catch emanating from Karachi Fish Harbor (The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2018 - FAO). There are 30 functional fish processing units, out of which 25 alone are located in Karachi. According to World Wildlife Fund, an estimated 60% of workers are surviving below the poverty line.

The exports of fish and fish preparations increased by 2.6 percent during the first eleven months of fiscal year 2021 as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The seafood exports during July-May (2020-21) were recorded at \$383.088 million against the exports of \$373.382 million in July-May (2019-20), showing growth of around 2.6 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Pakistan must take maximum advantage of

bilateral trade relations with China in order to upscale the fisheries sector and enable exports of at least US\$ two billion within a defined time frame.

In terms of quantity, Pakistan exported 171,206 metric tons of seafood during the period under review against the exports of 161.080 metric tons in corresponding period of last year. According to the Economic Survey FY21, Pakistan's main buyers of fish products are China, Thailand, Malaysia, the Middle East, Sri Lanka and Japan. Pakistan has been exporting seafood at an average unit price (AUP) of less than US\$ 2.50 per kg from FY2018 to FY2021 as compared to AUP of US\$ 5 to 8 per kg earned by regional competitors. The global AUP is around US\$ 5 per kg.

On regional standards, Pakistan severely lags behind prominent South Asian competitors like India and Bangladesh in terms of value of fish exported.

The Economic Council of Employers Federation of Pakistan has identified several key factors that help identify this mire state. These include persistent use of conventional fishing methods, unmonitored overfishing by large industrial trawlers, dilapidated fish storage and processing infrastructure at harbors, and failed coordination between federal and provincial fisheries authorities. The decision makers are deprived of an updated fisheries database while domestic fish farmers lack access to credit and capital investment that often makes them subservient to affluent fish farmers who impose stringent conditionalities on permission to fish in their acquired areas. The workforce is unskilled due to presence of very few vocational training centers for fishermen and, on the global front, poor compliance of international health and safety measures has rendered Pakistan's fish exports uncompetitive both in terms of price and quality.

PAKISTAN MUST TAKE MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE OF BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS WITH CHINA IN ORDER TO UPSCALE THE FISHERIES SECTOR AND ENABLE EXPORTS OF AT LEAST US\$ TWO BILLION WITHIN A DEFINED TIME FRAME

After interviewing various stakeholders that catch, produce, process and export fish in Pakistan, the EC-EFP has recommended a broad long-term vision for the fishing industry in the shape of a comprehensive and coherent policy framework. These eleven "call for action" areas are

- ◆ Financing Fish Export Development Schemes
- ◆ Building capacity of educational institutes to improve skills of workforce
- ◆ Sanitary measures
- ◆ Sustainable catching practices
- ◆ National Action Plan to regulate fishing
- ◆ Structuring database and aligning research to meet consumer demand
- ◆ Upgrading Post-Harvest facilities and infrastructure
- ◆ Easing licensing for export quality Tuna (HS303) processing in Pakistan
- ◆ Creating stronger international coordination between fisheries authorities and Getting Ahead in Competition
- ◆ Strategic Environmental Assessment to spur aqua-culture and
- ◆ Technology up-gradation through Blue Revolution.

The encouraging factor is that blue economy is gradually becoming an active item on the national agenda. In Al-Quran, Chapter Ar-Rehman 55:22/23, Almighty Allah says, "Out of both 'waters' come forth pearls and coral. Then which of your Lord's favors will you deny?" (Translation by Dr Mustafa Khattab, The Clear Quran) ■



The writer is former President Employers Federation of Pakistan.

Solution lies in boosting Brainpower, not the Muscle Power

By Dr. Ghulam Murtaza Khuhro



The scientific and technological evolutionary process in human history leapfrogged unprecedentedly in the late 18th century and quickly started transforming the economies and societies across the world with varying effects and outcomes. During the 3rd decade of the 19th century, it gave birth to the first modern social machine and technology of its kind: the train and the railways. The train circumvented the discrimination of almost all kinds as it was open to anyone whosoever could buy the ticket for any class of the train. But unfortunately, soon, the first Industrial Revolution was hijacked by the profit-mongers creating an extremely cruel system of inequality. The profit-centric new system threw out the absolute majority of the

people bestowed with great brainpower potential from the processes and environment of multi-faceted development. The majority of the masses were increasingly isolated from the mainstream transformative process. Had the common people been proportionately part of the scientific, technological, and economic development process, the majority of them could have been a great asset to the human civilization and could have been able to speed up the process of the series of the Industrial Revolutions. Not only the disastrous and destructive World Wars could have been avoided but also human beings could have been living in much-advanced societies and economies than we are living now. Unfortunately, profit-centric groups, classes, and their allies could not think of better options due to their

blindfolded and myopic approach and that led the whole world into a system of inequality and disarray. Yet, science and technology as a joint force did not give up.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, satellite television made a big breakthrough to globalize information and knowledge, which started stimulating the dormant brainpower across the globe. 1st Industrial Revolution took place in late 18th century in the UK, and the 2nd Industrial Revolution in the 1970s in the US.

BY THE LATE 1970S AND EARLY 1980S, SATELLITE TELEVISION MADE A BIG BREAKTHROUGH TO GLOBALIZE INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE, WHICH STARTED STIMULATING THE DORMANT BRAINPOWER ACROSS THE GLOBE

It initiated a series of ongoing process of innovations thereafter and boosted the globalization of goods. Satellite television was the major innovation in the system of communication that started globalizing the information and knowledge all over the world. Nevertheless, it was the commercially available internet during the mid-1990s that ushered in a qualitatively new and unprecedented phase of globalization, which neither the authors of WTO nor the anti-globalization campaigners could ever envisage. First time ever in the history of human beings' science and technology with its new and extremely powerful

tool, Internet defeated its hijackers conclusively. Hijackers of sci-tech forces prevented them to develop an inclusive system of development in all fields of life during the 19th century and thereafter but in the post-internet period, such hijackers were thrown out to roam into the wild wilderness. Not only they have been defeated but also, they are still clueless as to how to help survive the profit centric anti-people system of capitalism. The internet gave birth to search engines and email communication during the 1990s. During the 2000s, its second generation and broadband with the help of the globalization of 'Information, Knowledge, Research, Innovation, and Development' started generating a new force that can be called 'sci-tech-human power complex'. Science and technology galvanized the dormant brainpower of human beings across the globe, and the resulting 'brain-power' became its new and powerful partner to kick off new breakthroughs.

Both science and technology as a single force and unfolding brainpower started electrifying each other. Brainpower stopped to remain captive of big business and developed capitalist countries. It started to develop and emerge everywhere i.e., wherever the influence of satellite television, internet, smartphone, social media, and the apps set their footprint. It is because of this phenomenon that already developed capitalist countries started slowing down during the 1990s particularly during the 2000s and onwards. The most obvious case in point is that of Japan. The growth of Japan during the 1960s, 1970s, and even during the 1980s was unparalleled and it was showcased as a great model of capitalist development. Yet Japan started slowing down during the 1990s and then it almost stopped growing after the mid-2000s. Its current GDP in

nominal dollar terms is around 5 trillion, which is not more than its GDP in the late 2000s. It is not only Japan but almost all the developed capitalist countries now facing different forms of economic stagnation without knowing how to actually deal with it. Hence, it is understandable that they have turned their back on to the religion of free trade and globalization and have tied the knot with protectionism and anti-globalization. Now, trade is no better for all. They created a system of inequality and backwardness in the dependent and colonized countries, which not only proved counterproductive for them but also gave birth to inter alia, sinking ships and boats in the Mediterranean. On the other hand, it is because of this new sci-tech-human power nexus which in the presence of conducive policy and organizational support, helped China to become the number one economy in purchasing power parity terms.

UNQUESTIONABLY, RULE OF LAW, EFFECTIVE DEMOCRACIES, INCLUSIVE ECONOMY, LEVEL PLAYING FIELD, AND JUSTICE FOR ALL WITHOUT ANY DISCRIMINATION ARE PRE-REQUISITES TO BENEFIT FROM THE ONGOING SCITECH-HUMAN POWER COMPLEX REVOLUTION

Per capita of China in 1980 was less than many African countries, however, it has lifted more than 800 million of its people out of abject poverty within 31 years or so i.e., between 1990 and 2021. This year, it has declared itself as a moderately prosperous country. Large-scale production of various products and technologies including smartphones by China and other countries have

also increased the affordability and accessibility of these technologies to common people across the globe. Economic and social dynamism in many other developing countries can be also explained in view of the above rationale. The sci-tech-human power complex has been increasingly unfolding itself at an exponential rate. 3G and 4G made the internet available on smartphones and other mobile gadgets. Their impact is apparent and overwhelmingly palpable. This sci-techhuman power nexus has produced the four greatest revolutionary forces history has ever experienced i.e science, technology, globalization, and brainpower. Certainly, the 5G, Starlink of Elon Musk, virtual and mixed reality technologies, GPT3, Metaverse, Brain-computer interface, biotechnologies, etc. are going to gear up the process of globalization of information, knowledge, research and innovation to an unimaginable scale. It is, therefore, mandatory for all policy-makers, all institutions, and the citizens to focus on the brainpower development to accelerate the transformation process to achieve in a decade or so what we have never been able to achieve during the whole history of mankind. Unquestionably, rule of law, effective democracies, inclusive economy, level playing field, and justice for all without any discrimination are pre-requisites to benefit from the ongoing SciTech-human power complex revolution. Now is the time, to adopt the path of human centric policies and development to defeat backwardness and inequality and to achieve progress, happiness, and prosperity ■



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IN A LABYRINTH OF NIGHTMARES

By Arhama Siddiqa

Today, Israel by design is the sole governing authority over Palestinians from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. It's policies of repression towards the Palestinian people undeniably constitute apartheid. Of course, imperialistic components exclude the settlers who peacefully reside in (forcefully) confiscated houses.

Repeated admonishments by the United Nations only seem to have spurred the Israeli leadership into carrying out its activities with much more vigour. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the behaviour of the new Israeli government – elected in June 2021 – under Naftali Bennett is even more extreme than its predecessor.

If there is a hell on earth, it is the lives of children in Gaza today.

These words of United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres perfectly encapsulate the present living conditions of Palestinian children.



Stories of fear, surrender, and survival continue to arise from the beleaguered territory. Most recently, Palestinian school kids have become the latest target of both Israeli troops and settlers. They often curse and beat students to prevent them from reaching school, fire tear gas in the classrooms, and humiliate teachers. This year, a Framework for Cooperation was also signed between the US and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) which stipulated that subject to strict clauses, the US would resume funding the UN agency. The conditions included intervention in the school curricula of UNRWA- run schools, especially on matters related to religion and geography, as well as screening the map of Palestine. Dissent peaceful or otherwise is immediately branded terrorism.



Before the wave of bloodshed the world witnessed in May 2021, one in three Palestinian children required psychosocial support – a number which has undoubtedly increased significantly in the backdrop of recent history. According to a study published in 2020, almost 90% of citizens in the Gaza Strip had experienced personal trauma while more than 80% had been witness to an ordeal. The study went on to reveal that almost 42% of children were suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

While experts on conflict and trauma believe that children (on either side of the war) will experience adversative mental health effects since more than 40% of the population in Gaza are children below the age of 14, and are relatively more exposed to attacks and casualties, they are far more vulnerable to mental distress. Moreover, specialists have also pointed out that getting mental health care in Gaza is virtually impossible.

Across the world, one in six children is living in areas marred by conflict. In the past 20 years, children are more at risk in conflict now than at any other time in history. Those that survive have had their futures cut short.

According to the Human rights NGO, Defense for Children International-Palestine, since 2000, 2,198 Palestinian children have been killed as a result of Israeli military and settler presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. At least 86 Palestinian children have been killed since January, making 2021 the deadliest year on record for Palestinian children since 2014.

These are not just numbers, these are girls and boys, like any other in the world. The difference being that where a normal childhood is marked by milestones, theirs is marked by trauma. These children of war will forever carry scars (both physical and mental) of apartheid, genocide and systematic racism. They have been deprived of the simple right to live in safety.

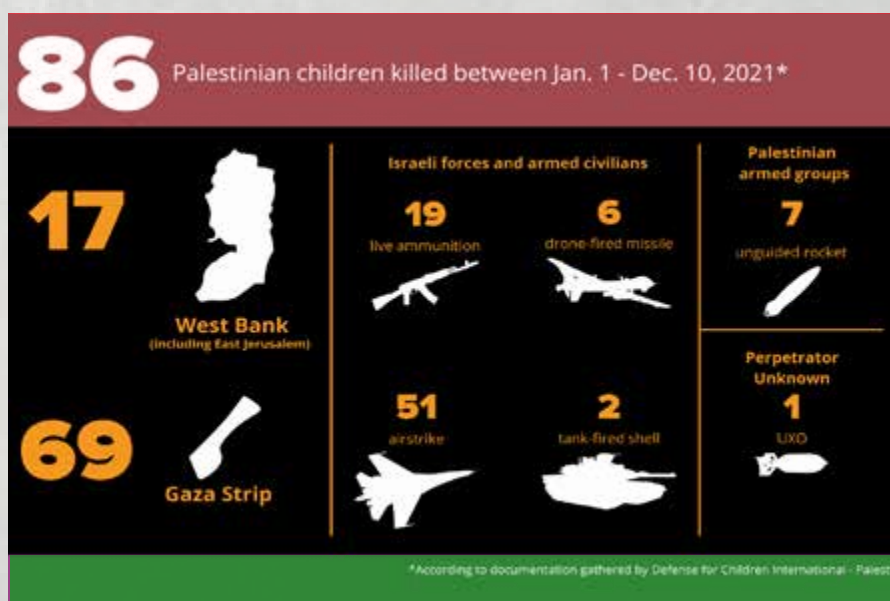
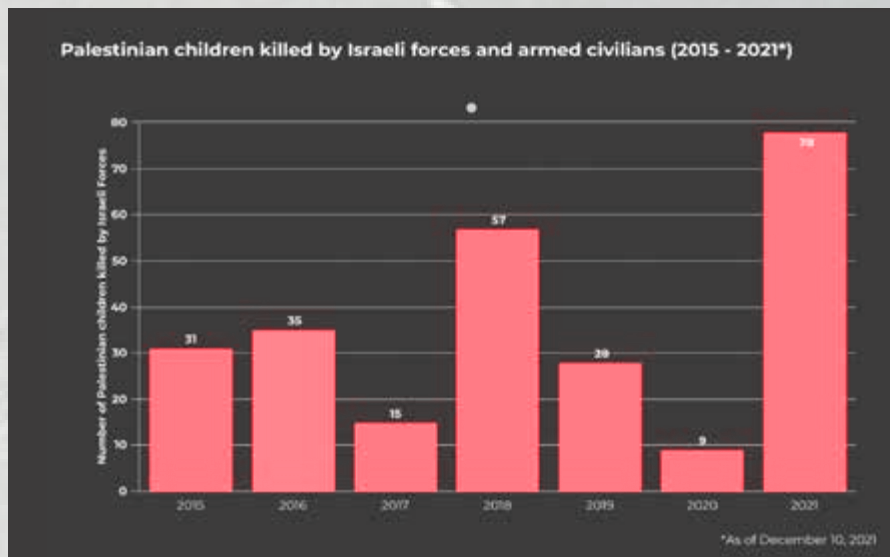
Protection of children has been given due ordinance in various internal law statutes such as the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924, Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on November 20, 1959, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to name a few.

Three things are key if these children are to have even a stab at a normal future. Firstly, international laws and standards need to be upheld, violators need to be held accountable and shattered lives need to be rebuilt without a dawdle.

Another year is coming to a close with no end to the Palestinian struggle in sight. The wings of global support for Sheikh Jarrah witnessed in May 2021 have long receded.

In essence, the Palestinian occupation is defenceless against the barbs created by ignorance and inaction. As social media activism dies down, it is incumbent upon all of us to not forget how the violence we all witnessed jarred the very core of humanity.

Unless the root causes of the conflict are addressed, the world will keep witnessing the birth of generations that are increasingly anxious, angry and filled with fear. Else, we are all equally culpable of wrecking precious lives whether we are firing the bullets or standing by in silence ■



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Korean tide

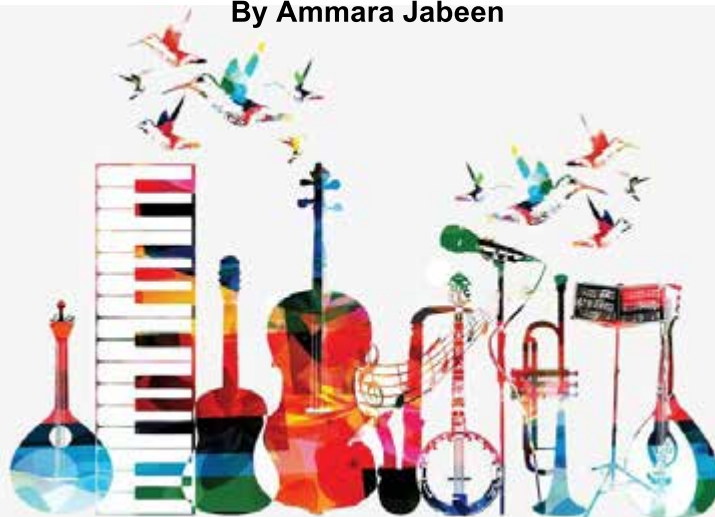
THE RISE OF KOREAN POP-CULTURE

By Ammara Jabeen

It is not just science and technology where South Korea shines its light bright. The sphere of its radiance is far bigger and captivating. In fact, a new civilizational era seems to be dawning with the widespread popularity of Korean-pop culture.

The global charm of K-pop has dimmed the light of music industry of the US and Europe - once the house of global music icons. Now, it is the South Korean teenage-boy band that wears the crown of global music icon. The Bangtan Boys, aka BTS, tops the music charts all across the globe. May it be the kids or the adults; everyone stands spellbound by the magic of BTS. Everyone is dancing to their hip-hop tunes. My kids and I are equally passionate about this young-boys' music band.

THE GLOBAL CHARM OF K-POP HAS DIMMED THE LIGHT OF MUSIC INDUSTRY OF THE US AND EUROPE — ONCE THE HOUSE OF GLOBAL MUSIC ICONS. NOW, IT IS THE SOUTH KOREAN TEENAGE-BOY BAND THAT WEARS THE CROWN OF GLOBAL MUSIC ICON. THE BANGTAN BOYS, AKA BTS, TOPS THE MUSIC CHARTS ALL ACROSS THE GLOBE



BTS has become a global phenomenon now. For many, it has become a million-dollar question how these young boys have managed to break all the world records. The list of awards they won goes on and on. They have been consistently winning American Music awards for the categories of "favourite social artist", "artist of the year", and "favourite song." They have reached to the corridors of the United Nations and are branding their country in the best manner possible.

One of the reasons for my personal liking is my 5-year stay in Seoul. My love for this wonderland

started back then. My experience of living in Seoul was wonderful. I still am a big fan of South Korea. That time is etched on my mind as the beautiful episodes of interaction with the Korean people and their culture. It is a beautiful memory of living in a wonderland that will continue to stay like that forever.

I fell in love with the Korean drama during this memorable period. "The Heaven's Fate" still stands among my top favourite dramas. I had watched it about twelve years ago but the way the story builds up gradually and the marvel of acting skills of its cast still grips my imagination.



These two secret ingredients make a piece of art truly magical. To my mind, the Korean dramas comprise of both the flawless acting skills and the art of effortless narration. The audience is impressed and obsessed by close-to-reality

acting skills in these dramas. These are the main features of Korean dramas that earned their recognition worldwide. Here I would like to share a bit about my heart-favourite drama, "The King and I." The way tug of heart and mind has been depicted in it is amazing. It is the best projection of human negation of emotions and feelings.



Whenever I become nostalgic and watch this drama, I can feel my heart beating in sync with the actors of this legendary tale. Such is the effect of South Korean drama upon me and maybe other K-pop culture fans might feel the same. "Legend of the Blue Sea", "Heirs", "My Love from the Stars" are my preferred-picks of all times. But I have to admit that my favourite pick these days is, "The Ghost" which has left me spellbound.

KOREAN POP MUSIC, FILM AND DRAMA HAS SET IN MOTION A NEW BRAND OF POP CULTURE WHICH HAS TAKEN CENTRAL POSITION IN GLOBAL STAGE OF ARTS AND MUSIC

Another Korean drama, "The Empress Ki" hit the Pakistani



screens in 2017 and has left its audience captivated. This drama is a remarkable story of a woman navigating her way through her careless teenage, tormenting love triangle, and reaching to the highest echelons of power. It is not just a romantic tale or a formula political story. It has much more substance than that.

The Empress Ki is the story of resilience of a woman who over the years of her life changes her manner and attitude towards everything. The audience closely observe major transitions in her life and how



she navigates carefully through different phases of her life. She is the woman who holds much more to her credit alongside the feminine charm and passion for her love.

Adding to the list of dramas and films, "Pinocchio" excellently depicts the dark side of media. Every society has its good and bad side, same goes for the Korean society. In Pinocchio, the flip side of the Korean society has been accurately portrayed. In the glitz and glams of K-pop era, the Korean



drama industry never fails to present a wholesome picture of Korean society. In a nutshell it could be said that Korean pop music, film and drama has set in motion a new brand of pop culture which has taken central position in global stage of arts and music.

At the moment, Korean brand of pop culture is a strong rival to the western pop culture and maybe in the decades to come its popularity might even overshadow the western arts and film. This ever-growing popularity of K-Pop can aid in lime lighting South Korean culture, people and society ever than before and can contribute in dismantling exploitative power structures which have always glorified west and have given the centre stage to the western arts and culture.

Korean pop-culture is playing an effective part in amplifying the voices of the unheard and underrepresented and in the years to come, it might become the ambassador of bringing forth Asian voices in the form of culture, civilization and traditions at the global spotlight ■



The writer is a freelance columnist and holds a Masters degree in Education and Urdu Literature from Punjab University.

Digital Yuan

Sovereign Digital Currency

By Huma Arshad

China is the hub of creating new technologies and ideas which are shaping the world rapidly. The Song dynasty was rated as the first one to introduce paper money to the world and today, China is again at the global forefront in the pathway of developing digital currency. China is gradually moving towards its digital currency, Yuan currency. China began its research on the digital yuan in 2014, soon after the price of Bitcoin surged from \$13.40 to more than \$1,000, raising the risk that digital currencies could impact Beijing's control of monetary policy. It began technical testing with Hong Kong for cross-border payments and is currently working with Thailand and the United Arab Emirates on real-time foreign exchange settlements. The government of China runs this pilot project in the city of Suzhou. In the city located adjacent to Shanghai in eastern China, 181,000 consumers were given ¥55 (£6) of free money in digital wallets to spend at participating outlets in the Double Fifth Shopping Festival in May 2021. An application has also been introduced which gives them a wallet and by using that wallet in many stores they get discount. The digital currency is distributed to consumers by the central bank

via six major commercial banks, through a wallet app. Users can make payments by scanning QR codes or using wearable devices, including physical wallets that are embedded with digital yuan chips developed by Postal Saving Bank of China. This is one of the six banks that are authorized to do the transactions of digital yuan. The People's Bank of China is targeting 500,000 consumers in a total of 11 Chinese regions. This digital yuan (e-CNY) electronic - Chinese yuan renminbi will completely replace physical cash in the future.

DIGITAL YUAN IS A TAMPER-PROOF LEDGER TECHNOLOGY THAT CONSISTS OF DIGITAL COINS LIKE ANY OTHER CRYPTOCURRENCY SIMILAR TO BITCOIN AND ETHEREUM

This digital yuan is another form of normal Chinese currency deployed on a blockchain. Digital yuan is a tamper-proof ledger technology that consists of digital coins like any other cryptocurrency similar to bitcoin and ethereum. The People's Bank has the authority to allow who can use it. All the steps are taken to increase the prospect of China becoming the first country to put its currency fully on a permissioned blockchain and it will be possible by 2022 in different stages. The main advantage of the digital yuan which

makes it more attractive for rural users is that it can be used without an internet connection and people can transact with it even if they are not connected to the internet. They just have to tap two digital -yuan-enabled phones together. We all are aware that the US economy has a hold on the world's payment rails, categorically in the case of cross-border transactions. Like, the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) the largest cross-border payment clearinghouse in the world has to obey unilateral US sanctions. Such sanctions not only hinder trade but damage other countries' economies. To challenge the dollar's hegemony and internationalize its currency, China has introduced the digital yuan to answer this outdated system of the dollar as the apex currency. It would provide options for people in poor countries to transfer money internationally. Even limited international usage could soften the bite of US sanctions, which increasingly are used against Chinese companies or individuals. Digitized money looks like a potential macro-economic dream tool for the government, usable to track people's spending in real-time, speed relief to disaster victims, or flag criminal activity.

The money itself is programmable. The government has tested expiration dates to encourage users to spend it quickly, for times when the economy needs a jump start. Other countries in the world are moving gradually but slowly on central bank digital currencies. As they are conscious about privacy

rights when all transactions will be publicly visible on the blockchain, and its effect on the retail bank. The digital yuan raises many questions regarding global financial stability and simultaneously the question for the world's other major economies is how to respond. The digital yuan already has the status of legal tender. Payments using it are fundamentally different from those on payment platforms like Alipay or WeChat (or indeed PayPal in the west). Such services may settle transactions very quickly for customers, but behind the scenes are ledgers of large numbers of transactions between the banks of the buyers and sellers. The digital yuan bypasses the need for these banks. There is no service fee, unlike these payment alternatives, and in theory, the speed of payments can be even faster. Unlike cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin, the currency is also backed by a government. This means that the issuance of digital yuan is the same as the issuance of cash in circulation, making it just as secure. It gives the government better control over the money supply since unlike with cash, officials can see all the transactions taking place at any given time.

As China develops the Belt and Road Initiative, we could anticipate that it could begin to call for cross-border exchanges and debt payments to occur through their DCEP (Digital Currency Electronic payment) system. Longer-term, the true test of internationalizing yuan is whether the yuan will be used to settle a bilateral debt between China

and borrower countries. Serious progress in this project will be if the PBoC continues to make arrangements with other central banks for digital currency exchange. With the ease of all BRI partners being on the same platform and maximizing the same currency, this shift could feel very natural and be to the benefit of those countries wishing to avoid the dollar. For reference to the expanding relevance of these relationships, around 140 countries have already signed the Memoranda of Understanding with China.

CHINA IS PLANNING TO USE THE DIGITAL YUAN IN ITS BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE TO TRY TO MAXIMIZE ITS USE AS A PRESERVED CURRENCY, CHINA IS AIMING TO DOUBLE ITS EFFORTS TO ENHANCE THE DIGITAL YUAN USAGE IN COUNTRIES THAT SIGNED UP FOR THE INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN ON A LARGE SCALE

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is also turning towards digital yuan

through its partnership with Iran and Venezuela. As China speeds up its digital yuan development program and begins to see success at a domestic level, other European countries may call on it for help in developing their programs. Since the BRI plans to be extended to Europe, this idea does not seem so far off. In a modernized world, interconnected technical systems for trade and finance will be deemed critical to development. China is planning to use the digital yuan in its Belt and Road Initiative to try to maximize its use as a preserved currency, China is aiming to double its efforts to enhance the digital yuan usage in countries that signed up for the infrastructure plan on a large scale ■



The writer is a columnist and holds a Masters degree in Project Management from Iqra University, Karachi.



CONFUCIANISM KEY TO CHINA'S SUCCESS

By Muhammad Asim Khan

A nation is driven by its culture, history, values, traditions and political ambitions that are defined in its national manifesto. The Chinese nation is no different. China is one of the most ancient civilizations of the world that stands today. There is a strong sense of patriotism and nationalism among the Chinese people when it comes to their country. They are seen as proud yet very sensitive people. Their community is always united as a solid entity wherever they are. Culture, language, nationhood and the red flag with yellow stars unites the Chinese nation. Self-devotion and hard work are the two most important things that the Chinese nation is known for. The teachings of Confucius, the ancient Chinese philosopher has great influence on the Chinese culture and Chinese national identity as a whole. It is the philosophy of Confucius that has driven the Chinese nation to the heights that it has achieved today in geo-politics, diplomacy, economy and national welfare.

A nation can also be defined by its culture and the values it stands by. The cultural values of any nation have a great influence over its

national psychology and national identity. China presents a very unique and distinguished culture. One must keep in mind that a community's culture and values reflects upon the overall image of the nation. The Chinese culture is greatly influenced by the teachings of the great Confucius. Some of the important aspects of the Chinese traditional values derived from Confucianism includes harmony, benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom, honesty, loyalty, and filial piety.

THE CHINESE NATION IS NO DIFFERENT. CHINA IS ONE OF THE MOST ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS OF THE WORLD THAT STANDS TODAY. THERE IS A STRONG SENSE OF PATRIOTISM AND NATIONALISM AMONG THE CHINESE PEOPLE WHEN IT COMES TO THEIR COUNTRY

Harmony is a very important aspect of the Chinese tradition. It means to keep a balance between things. Harmony allows the Chinese nation to properly coordinate things with one another in order to prevent chaos. According to the ancient Chinese philosophy of Confucianism, benevolence is a core

value. It explains the importance of families, blood relations, friendships and social relationships between human beings. No wonder why family is held in high esteem in the Chinese culture. Another important aspect of the Chinese culture is righteousness, it refers to correctness and justice being prevailed. The Chinese tradition is based on equality and justice. Every member of the society is equal to the other and there is no space of favouritism in Chinese system, which is the key to their success.

Traditional Chinese culture also stresses a great deal upon courtesy. It merely refers to being modest and prudent. It helps the Chinese nation to be very cautious of any matter and to be far-sighted and to plan for long term benefits for the Chinese nation in the future. Courtesy also promotes respecting laws and preventing misconduct. Confucius stressed the Chinese people to practice courtesy in their daily life. Wisdom tells us the difference between good and evil. Confucius said "wisdom means to understand others". According to him people should not only have a loving heart but they should also have wisdom

to distinguish between right and wrong. The Chinese people also value honesty. Confucius immensely stresses on the promotion of honesty, which means credibility, trustworthiness and integrity. Many Chinese businessmen have emphasized on honesty as one of the core business ethics.

Another important element in the Chinese tradition is loyalty. Loyalty refers to services the citizens owe to their motherland. This element stresses upon the protection of their country in case of any war or a foreign invasion. The Chinese people must exert all efforts to defend their country and in order to protect their friends and family.

Filial piety is the last element of the Chinese culture and Confucianism. It refers to virtue of respect to parents, elders and ancestors. Practice of filial piety also ensures the formation of a good society. The Chinese society gives grave importance to Filial piety, one example is that; people who have travelled to China for business trips surely noticed it and found it odd how the Chinese people present their business cards. It is said that they give their name cards or business cards to others with both hands. Giving something with both hands shows that the other person is superior or elder. It is merely a gesture but it tells us with how much respect the Chinese people treat others with.

Another interesting fact about the Chinese nation is that planting trees

and vegetables is also something that their culture promotes, as it is an agricultural country. Every Chinese house has a small fertile green area on which plants or vegetables are grown. This distinctive practice shows us that the Chinese culture teaches them to be self-sufficient and independent, something that every nation in the world dreams of.

COMMUNISM DRIVES CHINA'S POLITICAL MANIFESTO. IT STANDS BY ITS COMMUNIST PRINCIPLES WHICH IS THAT THE CHINESE STATE MUST PROVIDE ALL THE BASIC NECESSITIES TO ITS PEOPLE. IT IS THE DUTY OF THE STATE TO PROVIDE JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND WELFARE TO ITS CITIZENS

In context of political identity, the People's Republic of China adopts a communist political system. Communism drives China's political manifesto. It stands by its communist principles which is that the Chinese state must provide all the basic necessities to its people. It is the duty of the state to provide justice, equality and welfare to its citizens. The former president of China Hu Jintao stated that; "the basic contents of the socialist care value system comprise of the guiding ideology of Marxism, the common ideal of the socialism with Chinese characteristics, the national spirit with patriotism as one of the main principle, the spirit of the times with reform and innovation, and the socialist concept of honour and disgrace. We should persist in integrating the socialist core values system into the entire process of national education and the building of a spiritual civilization and having it run through the various aspects of the modernization drive."

According to some experts the success of China's communist political system is based on the adoption of some capitalist

elements in its economic system. The Chinese economy comprises of a hybrid framework. It is the perfect blend between communism and capitalism which makes it very unique and successful. This extraordinary blend between the two systems is the perfect example of Confucius harmony. Keeping it all balanced with one and other to achieve ever yielding results in the end.

Teachings of Confucius have such as influence over the Chinese nation that Confucianism is even reflected in the formation and practices of Chinese foreign policy and diplomatic framework. According to Confucius, "The gentleman aims at harmony, and not at uniformity." It means that one must not blindly follow others instead he should seek harmonious co-existence with them. These ideas have historically been adopted and applied by the Chinese government in diplomacy and foreign policy.

Principles of seeking harmony and peaceful co-existence can be defined in five points that were introduced by the Chinese leadership in 1950s. These five principles include sovereignty and mutual respect for one's territorial integrity, policy of non-interference in one's internal matters, mutual non-aggression, mutual benefits and equality. All of the above principles dictate the formation of modern Chinese foreign policy. This tells us that the ancient Chinese philosophy of Confucius is still relevant to this very day and that it is the key to China's success in all walks of life including morality, culture, national identity, economy, politics and diplomacy ■



The writer holds a Masters degree in Mass communication from National University of Modern Language Islamabad.

Chinese Egg Tarts

By Zainab Sajid

*“Without desserts, we miss more than food; we miss being a part of special events.”
- Nicolette M. Dumke.*



It is slightly desolating to go over a restaurant’s menu only to realize there is no dessert section. More often than not, it happens to be a “Chinese” restaurant. Pakistani restaurateurs have adopted and modified many Chinese starters and main courses but never desserts.

As a believer in dessert supremacy, I bring you a simple, sophisticated, and highly addictive recipe namely Hong Kong egg tarts - a flaky pastry filled with slightly sweetened egg custard. It is a perfect dish to get you hooked on Chinese desserts; it’s like a puff pastry married to our national high-tea sweetheart caramel egg pudding.

Chinese egg tarts or daahn tāat originated in Canton in the late 1920s. These sweets are traditionally a snack and make a nifty dim sum dish. Dim sum roughly means ‘heart touching’ or ‘one cup, two pieces’ indicating how they should be enjoyed, with tea.

Dim sum are small plates comprising of various dishes usually shared among people accompanied by tea. This practice of having tea with a side of sweet or savoury dim sum is reminiscent of our customary desi arrangement of afternoon tea- chai with all the impending lawazmaat (accoutrements) namely samosa, nimko, biscuits or rusks.

In this aspect, the name dim sum is well-suited for similar bite sized goodies that a cup of freshly brewed tea with a snack or two on the side is refreshing yet brings a sense of warmth, love, and togetherness. This dessert is easy to assemble and is great for serving at a tea party. A little discretion though, it is highly likely that these tarts will be gone minutes after coming out from the oven so make sure to keep some aside.

Ingredients:

- Frozen puff- pastry - 1 box/ 7 small sheets
- Milk - ½ cup
- Water - 4 tbsp
- Eggs - 2
- Sugar - 4 tbsp
- Vanilla flavouring - a few drops

Instructions:

1. In a pan, combine water and sugar. Heat on a low flame until the sugar is completely dissolved. Leave it to cool for about 20 minutes.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk eggs, milk and vanilla together.
3. Whisk in the sugar syrup to the egg mixture.
4. Strain the mixture through a sieve to catch any egg bits. This results in a smooth, creamy egg custard.
5. Roll out the defrosted pastry sheets and cut rounds using a cookie cutter or any jar lid.
6. The size of the cut rounds must be an inch bigger than the size of tart moulds or muffin tray. Ideally, these moulds should be 2 inches in diameter, although small ones work as well.
7. Oil the moulds and line them with the cut-out dough pieces.
8. Fill the dough shells with the custard mixture leaving 1 cm space above. This is to avoid over-spilling custard while baking.
9. Bake the tarts in preheated oven in the middle rack at 220° C for 15 minutes. Reduce the temperature to 180° C and let the egg tarts bake for 10-15 more minutes until a toothpick comes out clean. Note: Keep a close eye on the tarts since the temperature varies from oven to oven, the respective baking time also changes.
10. Let the tarts cool for 10 minutes before indulging in them. They are best served fresh out of the oven but are equally enjoyable the next day.



The writer is an anthropology graduate from LUMS and is working in the field of food anthropology. She maintains a food blog on Instagram, [fooddays_withzainab](#).



September 27, 2021: Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad & Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS) organized a joint webinar titled “China-Pakistan Relations in Changing Geopolitical Environment & Its Role in Regional Security & Stability”.



September 16, 2021: Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad had a Panel Discussion on “Conversations on the Evolving Situation in Afghanistan: Europe’s Role in Afghanistan”.



September 22, 2021: China-Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad organized a book launch event titled, “Hundred Years of the Communist Party of China authored” by Sultan Mahmood Hali.



September 24, 2021- The Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin visited the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. The visit was hosted by China-Pakistan Study Centre at ISSI.



October 4, 2021: China-Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a 115-member delegation of ongoing course from Naval War College, Lahore. Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC & Ms. Amina Khan, Director. CAMEA briefed the delegates.



October 5, 2021: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives at ISSI hosted a web-based panel discussion titled “Pakistan & SDGs Targets”. The panelists included: Dr. Lubna Naz; Mr. Nadeem Ahmed; Mr. Amir Hussain; and Ahmed Naeem Salik.



October 6, 2021: The Human Security Institute in collaboration with China Pakistan Study Centre at ISSI hosted a panel discussion on “Freedom from want through business and entrepreneurship: Takeaways from China”.



October 12, 2021: China Pakistan Study Centre at ISSI has launched the special edition of PIVOT magazine titled “70 years of Pakistan-China Partnership”.



October 22, 2021: China Pakistan Study Centre at ISSI organized a Public Talk titled “Pakistan-Kazakhstan Relations: Cooperation in Regional Peace and Stability”. Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin, was the Guest Speaker for the event.



October 28, 2021: The China Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a delegation of the National Youth Parliament.



November 2, 2021: China-Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad organised a book launch of “Diplomatic Footprints” authored by Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, DG ISSI.



November 3, 2021: Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad represented by its DG, Amb. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry & Europe-Asia Studies represented by Amb. Gheorghe SAVUICA, President IRSEA signed an MoU. The MoU was facilitated by the Centre for Strategic Perspectives at ISSI.



November 4, 2021: China Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a 5-member delegation of South Korea's Ministry of National Defence. Views were exchanged on various aspects of Pakistan & South Korea relations & regional development.



November 5, 2021- Silje Marie Andersen, Political Secretary at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Islamabad, visited the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. The visit was hosted by China-Pakistan Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.



November 16, 2021: India Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a book launch titled: Tormented Truth 1971 & Beyond by S.M Hali.



November 23, 2021: Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a Book Launch of Zahid Hussain 's book, No - Win War.



November 24, 2021: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad in collaboration with Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security, South Korea hosted a Policy Dialogue on "The Afghan Situation & the Regional plans for Peace-building".



December 3, 2021: Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad had an In-House Meeting with H.E Mohammad Ali Hosseini, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan.



December 9, 2021: Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan attended the inaugural plenary of Islamabad Conclave 2021 titled “A Peaceful and Prosperous South Asia” was organized by the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.



December 9, 2021: Some clicks from the Working Session 1 titled ‘Quest for Peace & Prosperity in South Asia’ organized by India Study Centre, Working Session 2 titled, “Strategic Stability in South Asia” was organized by Arms Control & Disarmament Centre and Working Session 3 titled, “Afghanistan: Road to Durable Peace” organized by Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa.



December 10, 2021: Some clicks from the Working Session 4 titled ‘Development through Connectivity’ organized by China Pakistan Study Centre and Working Session 5 titled, “Pakistan’s Non-Traditional Security Challenges” was organized by Centre for Strategic Perspectives at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.



December 10, 2021: President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi attended the Concluding Session of Islamabad Conclave 2021 titled “A Peaceful and Prosperous South Asia” organized by the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad..



December 16 2021: Arms Control & Disarmament Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a roundtable session on “National Security Policy”. It was moderated by Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC at ISSI. Dr. Moeed Yusuf, National Security Adviser (NSA) headed the discussion.



December 21 2021: Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a roundtable in-house discussion on OIC & Afghanistan.



Indonesian companies keen to invest in SEZs under CPEC

Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan Adam Tugio says a number of Indonesian companies are keen to invest in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) being established under the umbrella of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. Expressing his views during an exclusive interview with News and Current Affairs Channel of Radio Pakistan, he said CPEC projects will emerge as a game changer for entire region through connectivity up to Central Asia and Western China. He said there is a need to enhance political and economic relations between the two countries at all level to increase current trade volume of over two point five six billion dollars. Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan Adam Tugio says a number of Indonesian companies are keen to invest in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) being established under the umbrella of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

Radio Pakistan, December 11, 2021

China vows close ties with World Bank

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on December 13 pledged that China is willing to maintain “close cooperation” with the World Bank, saying that the country remains committed to taking “concrete actions” to support multilateralism and global development. Li made the remarks in Beijing while meeting via video link with World Bank president David Malpass. Beijing supports the negotiations on the 20th replenishment process of the International Development Association and will play an “active and constructive role” in the process, Li added. The World Bank looks forward to further “sustainable cooperation” with China in the areas of loans, poverty reduction and climate change, and will strengthen its partnership with it, he said. Malpass expressed appreciation to China for its support for the International Development Association replenishment..



The Phnom Penh Post, December 14, 2021



World's first nuclear power plant using 4th generation high-temperature gas reactor officially enters operation in E China's Shandong

The world's first nuclear power plant which contains a pebble bed reactor (PBR), the fourth generation of high-temperature gas reactor (HTGR), has officially entered operation in East China's Shandong Province, the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) announced via its official WeChat account on December 20, 2021.

There are a very few countries which have mastered HTGR technology, and the launch of HTGR nuclear power plant in Rongcheng, Shandong Province marks the country consolidating its role as a world leader in nuclear power.

CNNC noted that it will strengthen its partnership with Tsinghua University to enhance the research and development of the HTGR with a view to commercializing new power generation technology.

Global Times, December 20, 2021

China unveils first images taken by satellite SDGSAT-1

A group of images taken by Chinese satellite SDGSAT-1 to help meet UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was unveiled in Beijing on December 20, 2021. It was the first time images from the satellite were released since its launch on November 5 from Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center, north China's Shanxi Province. SDGSAT-1 used three different imagers to take remote sensing pictures, showing the population density in the cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Paris, and environmental conditions in places including the Yangtze River Delta in eastern China and Lake Namtso on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in south-western China.

CGTN, December 21, 2021



CLIMATE CHANGE

Scientists warn that world's climate is changing because of rising greenhouse gas emissions that might end up warming up the planet by well of 2 degrees. Here are some glaring numbers that show the impacts of climate change in Asian and the Pacific.

ASIA IS KEY



The percentage of worldwide energy-related carbon dioxide emissions from developing Asia, compared to 17% in 1990.



The percentage of the region's emissions that comes from the People's Republic of China.

IMPACTS TO THE REGION



of nations at highest risk to climate change and natural disasters worldwide are in Asia and the Pacific, 3 of which are tiny Pacific island states.



The number of Bangladeshis who will be displaced by a 1-meter rise in sea level in 2050.



The number of the region's population working in agriculture, fisheries and forestry - sectors most at risk to climate change.

RISK MANAGEMENT



The annual average economic cost of disasters in Asia and the Pacific.



The annual average economic cost of disasters in Asia and the Pacific.



PREMIUM REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER OF PAKISTAN

10⁺

HIGH RISE PROJECTS
IN TWIN CITIES

10 MILLION

SQ.FT COVERED AREA PROJECTS
IN TWIN CITIES



MALLS

CORPORATE TOWERS

HOTELS

RESIDENTIAL COMPLEXES

HOUSING SOCIETIES