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Editor's Note

The *Journal of Contemporary Studies* is a flagship publication of the Faculty of Contemporary Studies (FCS), National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad. The journal offers its readers in academia, government, and the policymaking world in-depth and scholarly analyses, diverse policy perspectives on important contemporary issues, and on-going debates in the areas of national and international security, public policy and the broader field of world politics.

This journal issue comprises seven articles, three book reviews and two documents providing valuable primary information on significant international developments. The first article, *Discursive 'Othering' of China in The US President Donald Trump's Foreign Policy* by Asim Zaman and Aisha Younus, dissects the role of identity discourses in US foreign policy towards China, focusing on Donald Trump's discourse on China as a threat. It argues that identity is constructed through discourse, shaping foreign policy and justifying trade wars and non-cooperation.

The second article, *India's Maritime Strategy and Its Implications for Pakistan* by Nazish Bhutta and Arshad Ali, highlights the changing dimensions of power in the Indo-Pacific region. A paradigm shift in India's maritime strategy is shaping the balance of power in the region. In addition, the regional balance shifted in favor of India due to the new Indo-Pacific policy of the United States. However, India's maritime strategy has far-reaching implications for Pakistan's security and economy.

The third article, *Embracing Artificial Intelligence Challenges for Public Sector Organizations in Pakistan* by Sara Nazir & Yousma Gul analyses Pakistan's public sector organizations face challenges in implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve efficiency, service quality, and policy-making capabilities. These challenges include cost, budgets, technology adoption, research, development, cost-benefit analysis, collaborations, bureaucratic structures, and ICT readiness. Further research and policy-making can help overcome these challenges and improve the adoption of AI in public offices.

The fourth article, *The US Withdrawal and China's Growing Engagement in Afghanistan* by Saeed Ahmed Rid elucidates China's interest in Afghanistan, evident from the Logar Aynak, the copper extraction project of China, the largest foreign investment in Afghanistan. In this paper, China's role in the aftermath of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan is examined at length. The main problems and obstacles China

faces in Afghanistan are explored, and challenges and opportunities arise as a result are discussed as well.

The fifth article, *The Deconstruction of Paigham-e-Pakistan (Counter Narrative) and Its Impacts on Pakistan's De-radicalization Efforts* by Saba Noor & Anum Baber, interprets how Pakistan has adopted hard and soft power approaches to deal with this menace of extremism and terrorism. They consider Paigham-e-Pakistan (Message of Pakistan) as a grand counter narrative and an attempt to answer extremist views, hatred, intolerance and promulgating enlightenment and peace in the Pakistani society.

The sixth article, *The Four Horsemen of the Afghan Question: Structural Constraints on the Afghan Solution* by Imran Khan & Naila Qazi, explores Taliban-ruled Afghanistan's challenges in the post-US era, focusing on four structural factors that contribute to political, economic, and humanitarian failures. These include regional insecurities, lack of a hegemon, political ideologies, defiance of the liberal world order, and US influence on the international economic system. The study identifies external forces rather than internal ones, emphasizing the need for regional fixation in post-US Afghanistan.

The last article, *Accountability in the Governance of Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan* by Muneer Ahmed & Shafei Moiz Hali, examines Pakistani university teachers' perceptions of accountability, transparency, research environment, employee welfare funding, and hiring regular faculty members. A sample of 443 faculty members was selected, and results showed significant differences between public and private institutions. The study highlights the importance of understanding faculty members' perspectives on accountability processes in higher education.

I am grateful to all the contributors who have sent their articles for this issue and the anonymous peer-reviewers whose valuable comments helped authors to improve their contributions. We are accepting articles for the upcoming issue of the Journal of Contemporary Studies issue based on original qualitative or quantitative research, an innovative conceptual framework, or a substantial literature review that opens new areas of inquiry and investigation. The editorial team at the Journal promotes submissions from expert analysts from around the world. The Journal seeks to promote a scholarly understanding of contemporary issues pertaining to traditional and non-traditional security, peace studies, public policy, and human resource development. It intends to stimulate interdisciplinary research and writing.

Editor
Prof. Dr. Abdul Jalil

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DISCURSIVE 'OTHERING' OF CHINA IN THE US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S FOREIGN POLICY

Asim Zaman* & Aisha Younus**

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to understand the role of identity discourses in US foreign policy towards China. It focuses on the foreign policy of Donald Trump to deconstruct his discourse on China as 'different' and, therefore, a 'threat' which eventually justified the trade war policies and non-cooperation on the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a continuation of similar identity based, foreign policy ventures under Joe Biden administration. By employing constructivism, it is argued that the relationship between identity and foreign policy is performative; identity is constructed through discourse, which consequently shapes the foreign policy of a state. To understand this relationship of performativity, Donald Trump's foreign policy towards China is analyzed by applying Lene Hanson's inter-textual critical discourse analysis model. It unfolds that the American mainstream newspapers constructed the events of trade war and COVID-19 in line with Trump's 'China threat' narrative. This inter-textuality between the official and unofficial discourse legitimized Trump's otherization of China as a threat and, consequently, his policies.

Keywords: Deconstruction, Identity, Otherization, The US Foreign Policy, Donald Trump, China

Introduction

American identity has never been a fixed phenomenon rather it is constructed through recursive discourse practices. The discourse is based on the process of linking and differentiating, where linking means the qualities that are claimed to be common in the 'in-group' while differentiating refers to the qualities that are attributed to the 'out-group', to "otherize" it from the self. Historically, the discursive othering of China was in terms of China being a 'communist regime.' Later, the otherization

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had different forms, such as China being 'non-democratic', 'totalitarian', 'illiberal regime', and 'revisionist power'.¹

In the Trump era, the otherization was based on the discourse that China is a 'usurper state'² that commits trade abuses, and it is a 'fraudulent state'³ that is responsible for the spread of the coronavirus. During the Trump administration, tariffs and non-tariff restrictions were placed on China. President Trump alleged that China was involved in intellectual property theft and espionage.⁴ In May 2019, he banned the US companies from working with Huawei, a large Chinese multinational, telecommunications and electronics company, over concerns that it was stealing intellectual property and spying on companies and the government.⁵ He stated that the US government was trying to find out if the virus originated at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. He accused the World Health Organization of acting like the 'public relations agency for China' and withdrew US funding from the institution.⁶

President Joe Biden has accepted and propagated Trump's discourse of China as 'strategic competitor.'⁷ Biden's foreign policy is regarded by most experts as 'old wine in new bottles.' President Trump's 'trade tariffs,' the 'Quad,' and 'the upgrade in Taiwan's protocol status' have been maintained by President Biden.⁸ The Chinese leader, Xi Jinping, is referred to as a 'thug' by President Biden.⁹ According to interviews with more than a dozen of his advisers and associates in foreign policy as well

¹ Su-Mei Ooi and Gwen D'arcangelis, "Framing China: Discourses of Othering in US News and Political Rhetoric," *Global Media and China* 2, no. 3-4 (2017): 269-83.

² Politico Staff, "Full Text: Trump Davos Speech Transcript - POLITICO," (January 26, 2018), <https://www.politico.com/story/2018/01/26/>

³ "Donald Trump Speech 2020 UN General Assembly Transcript | Rev," (September 22, 2020), <https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/>.

⁴ Lorand Laski and Adam Segal, "A New Old Threat: Countering the Return of Chinese Industrial Cyber Espionage," Council on Foreign Relations, December 6, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/report/threat-chinese-espionage>.

⁵ Brandon M. Boylan, Jerry McBeath, Bo Wang, "US-China Relations: Nationalism, the Trade War, and COVID-19," *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, (October 2020): 23-400.

⁶ Aljazeera, "Trump Claims Coronavirus Came from Wuhan Lab," *Aljazeera News*, May 4, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/2020/5/4/>

⁷ Cheng Li, "Biden's China Strategy: Coalition-Driven Competition or Cold War-Style Confrontation?" *Brookings*, May 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/>

⁸ Andrew J. Nathan, "Biden's China Policy: Old Wine in New Bottles?" *China Report* 57, no. 4 (2021): 387-97.

⁹ "Watch Biden Calls China's Xi a 'Thug' - Bloomberg," February 26, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2020-02-26/>

as his own statements, President Biden considers China as his greatest strategic challenge.¹⁰

This study tries to explicate, what the role of identity discourses in Donald Trump's foreign policy towards China? In what ways did the constructed identity of China legitimize Trump's foreign policy of Trade war and Non-cooperation on the COVID-19 pandemic? How has Joe Biden continued or changed the identity discourse on China and what are the implications for his foreign policy goals? The study employs Lene Hansen's critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework to explore: Firstly, the main issue under consideration. Secondly, the time perspective, either focusing on a single moment or making comparisons across multiple moments. Thirdly, the number of events involved, whether it is one event, or several events linked by either the issue or time. Fourthly, the number of individuals or parties involved, which could be a single entity or a comparison of different entities surrounding the events or issues. Lastly, the inter-textual model, which involves combining four textual models (official discourse, wider political debate, cultural representations, and marginal political discourses) in various ways to conduct inter-textual analysis.¹¹

Using Hanson's research design, the study investigates the phenomenon of the "otherization of China," discourse. The temporal perspective considered is the period of President Donald Trump's tenure from 2017 to 2021. The events under scrutiny are the Trade war between the US, China and the COVID-19 Pandemic. The study focuses on one main actor, namely Trump's foreign policy towards China. It analyzes the official discourse presented by President Trump regarding China and the marginal political discourse found in print media representations of China.

Literature Review

To explain this US-China quagmire there is a variety of theoretical models in contemporary International Relations. However, in case of the US-China foreign policy analysis, the realist and liberal theorists' analysis dominate IR literature. Realism focuses on fix material factors to explain the rise of China. Christopher Layne, in his paper titled "The US-Chinese Power Shift and the End of the Pax Americana,"¹² bases his analysis on realist assumptions. He argues for the decline of the West. Paul Kennedy,

¹⁰ Edward Wong, Michael Crowley, and Ana Swanson, "Joe Biden's China Journey," *The New York Times*, September 6, 2020, sec. U.S., <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/06/us/politics/biden-china.html>.

¹¹ Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (Routledge, 2013).

¹² Christopher Layne, "The End of Pax Americana: How Western Decline Became Inevitable," *The Atlantic*, April 26, 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/04/>

in his book titled "Rise and Fall of Great Powers,"¹³ also relies on realist assumptions in his analysis. He argues for an unpeaceful rise of China. John J. Mearsheimer, in his work titled "China's Unpeaceful Rise,"¹⁴ similarly argues for the likelihood of conflict between China and the US. Graham Allison, in his work titled "Destined for War: How China and the US can Escape Thucydides Trap?"¹⁵ argues for the likelihood of conflict between China and the US.

Liberal's theoretical literature on the rise of China in most cases has been less pessimistic.¹⁶ In their study titled "Globalization/Anti-Globalization: Beyond the Great Divide,"¹⁷ David Held and Anthony McGrew assert that the US and China are economically intertwined. Charles Kupchan, Emanuel Adler, Jean-Marc Coicaud, and Yuen Foong Khong, in their work titled "Power in Transition: The Peaceful Change of International Order,"¹⁸ suggest that globalization has created forces of cooperation and trade. John Ikenberry, in his study titled "The Rise of China and Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?"¹⁹ asserts that while China can surpass the US, it cannot overturn the western world order, as joining it is relatively easy but overturning it is difficult.

The above-mentioned discussions of realist and liberal scholars take interests of states as permanent and does not observe the role of identity discourse in defining those interests.²⁰ Some of them perceive structure of international system as deterministic and do not take into consideration the agency of actors. They do not consider culture, values, ideology or domestic politics, which may shape international structures. The role of discourses, knowledge production practices, identity politics and inter-subjectivities are downrightly ignored by realist and liberal theorists.

¹³ Paul Kennedy, *Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (Vintage Books: 1989), 515.

¹⁴ John J Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," in *Realism Reader* (Routledge, 2014), 464–67.

¹⁵ Graham T. Allison, "The Thucydides Trap: Are US and China Headed for War?" *The Atlantic*, September 24, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/>

¹⁶ Louise Fawcett, *International Relations of the Middle East* (Oxford University Press, 2013), 19-27.

¹⁷ David Held, and Anthony McGrew, *Globalization / Anti-Globalization: Beyond the Great Divide* (Wiley, November 2007), 103.

¹⁸ Kupchan A.Charles, Emanuel Adler, Jean-Marc Coicaud and Yuen Foong Khong with the assistance of Jason Davidson, *Power in Transition: The Peaceful Change of International Order* (United Nations University Press, July 2001), 241.

¹⁹ John Ikenberry, "The Rise Of China And Future Of The West: Can the Liberal System Survive?" *Foreign Affairs*, (2008), 23-37.

²⁰ Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath, *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills* (Oxford University Press, 2017), 35.

*Role of Identity Discourse in US Foreign Policy
towards China: A Constructivist Perspective*

Constructivism believes that reality does not exist independent of the observer. Reality is a subjective or an inter-subjective phenomenon.²¹ In other words, the subjects construct reality through the discursive and sociological processes of interaction and shared understanding. Constructivism draws a distinction between natural kinds and social kinds, based on time-specificity, inter-subjective variability, and the dependence of social facts on practice.²² **Moreover**, constructivism resolves the agent-structure debate by proclaiming that structure and agents are mutually constitutive.²³ Agents make structures, but structures in turn shape agents.²⁴

Furthermore, constructivism argues for multiple logics of anarchy. There can be a *Hobbesian Culture of Anarchy (Enmity)*, as existed in state of nature or there can be *Lockean Culture of Anarchy (Rivalry)*, in which states currently exist or states can move to a *Kantian Culture of Anarchy (Friendship)* based on the four master variables that Wendt has suggested in his work; interdependence, common fate, homogeneity and self-restraint.²⁵ Lastly, they claim that our knowledge of the world is socially produced, and knowledge production has an important correlation with hegemonic consolidation.

The term 'discourse' derives from Latin, word 'discursus' meaning "to run" or "to flow," referring to the flow of conversation.²⁶ In this study, "discourse" refers to the system of meaning creation, attachment, and generation. Discourse studies involve analyzing text and its context to understand how the meanings are attributed to specific words and how these are influenced by power dynamics and establish power relationships. Discourse plays a central role in social life. People engage in discourses, but discourses also shape individuals. Many social concepts such as power, interests, identity, and foreign policy are constructed through discursive practices. Language holds power. It is through language that objects, subjects, actors, and their identities are constructed, and consent is obtained.

Applying the elaborated theoretical assumptions of constructivism, this study shows that identity and foreign policy are processes of social construction. Firstly, identity and foreign policy are constructed discourse

²¹ Halperin and Heath, *Political Research*, 41.

²² Ibid., 67-77.

²³ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 139-156.

²⁴ Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Out Line of the Theory of Structuration* (University of California Press, 1986)

²⁵ Wendt, *Social Theory*, vol. 67., 343-363.

²⁶ Richard Nordquist, "What Is the Meaning of 'Discourse'?" in *ThoughtCo*, January 30, 2020, <https://www.thoughtco.com/>.

and inter-subjectively believed. For instance, how the US defines China or vice versa or how their mutual identities emerge as a result of the linguistic and sociological process of interaction will significantly influence their behavior towards each other.²⁷ Secondly, identity and foreign policy are social kinds. The US identity of China is inter-subjectively produced, dependent upon time and space and refined by certain human practices. Thirdly, identity and foreign policy are structures constructed by actors, but these structures in turn constrain or enforce actions of actors. Thus, in the case of US-China, both states have more agency to form their political realities, but the realities constructed then have a limiting or enforcing effect on their relationship.

Furthermore, the rivalry between US and China should not necessarily be seen under the *Hobbesian Culture of Anarchy*, but there are other possibilities too. Relationships of conflict, cooperation and competition are socially produced and reproduced and thus there is possibility of new relationships. Lastly, power or cultural hegemony necessitates the acquisition of consent, and discourse plays a crucial role in generating consent. Power relationships are established through discourse, with those who dominate language also dominating power. Discourse functions to normalize, naturalize, legitimize, and idealize certain social practices. It contributes to the existence, growth, and dominance of specific practices over others. For instance, China mostly has tried to avoid the rise of China discourse; they avoid terms like 'Chinese century' or 'New Asian Century'. Why? Because it leads to their otherization, but their epistemic communities are not as strong as the US. That is why we are observing the otherization discourse as dominating. Framed in other words, the US is able to unleash an epistemic violence on China, which rarely is a subject of concern for mainstream International Relation theories.

The current study adopts a constructivist lens to understand the role of identity discourses in the US President Donald Trump's foreign policy towards China. President Trump's trade war policies and non-cooperation on the COVID-19 epidemic were justified throughout his administration by the identity rhetoric that China is 'different' and hence a 'threat.' It begs on questions like, what is the role of identity discourse in understanding the US foreign policy behaviour vis-à-vis China under the President Trump administration? And how this role of identity discourse in the US foreign policy can be systematically analyzed?

Deconstructing China's Otherization in Trump's Foreign Policy

There has been a considerable rise in China's ascendancy discourse during President Trump's era. Most American citizens thought that China was rising, and China's power and influence posed threat to the US. According to the Pew Research Center survey conducted in March

²⁷ Wendt, *Social Theory*, 113-125.

2020, the negative view of China has risen in the US.²⁸ Roughly two-thirds had an unfavorable view of China. It was and still is the highest since the center started to ask this question in 2005. It has increased by 20% since the beginning of Trump administration. These statistics indicate that the discourse of 'otherization' of China as a revisionist power and hence a threat became common-sensical in the US during Trump and prevails post-Trump as well.

These discourses are expressed in oft-repeated political jargons like 'Power transition', 'Neo Cold War' or 'Cold War II' or 'Cold War 2.0' or 'Trade war' which construct threats for the US 'self'. Threat is the most common foundation for identity construction. The 'other' is radically differentiated from the 'self' and then constructed as a threat to the survival of 'self' but the 'other' is required for existence of the 'self'. Since other's identity is based on threat hence threat of the 'other' is required for existence of 'self'. Discourses of danger create identity of state. In the context of US-China, discourse of danger/threat of rise of China constitutes US identity as a status quo power and, consequently, foreign policy.

The rise of China discourse has exacerbated the process of otherization. 'Rise' is always in relation to something or someone else. In the context of China, the rise is in relation to the West (existing power). The discourse of ascendancy of China has created an identity for the West that is one of a declining power and an identity for China of a rising power. It creates an identity divide between existing power and rising power. Rising power is perceived to be posing a threat to existing power, which creates an anxiety and fear of decline for the existing power, as encoded in the term 'Thucydides Trap' by Graham Allison.²⁹ However, Graham Allison believes the two powers are naturally caught in such a trap, rather they are being discursively put into it. In other words, Allison takes otherization as a natural condition of the two powers rather than a process which is continuously produced and reproduced.

Lene Hansen's Critical Discourse Analysis Framework

Lene Hansen's critical discourse analysis framework investigates five areas of a problem: 1) The issue at hand 2) The temporal perspective: one moment or comparative moments 3) The number of events: one or multiple events related by issue or time 4) Numbers of selves involved: single or comparison around events or issues 5) The inter-textual model: Hansen in her theoretical framework provides four textual models which can be combined in different orders to carry out inter-textual analysis.

²⁸ Kat Devlin, Laura Silver and Christine Huang, "U.S. Views of China Increasingly Negative Amid Coronavirus Outbreak," *Survey*, (Washington, D.C, US: Pew Research Center, April 21, 2020) <https://www.pewresearch.org/>

²⁹ Graham T. Allison, "The Thucydides Trap."

These textual models are a) official discourse b) wider political debate c) cultural representations d) marginal political discourses.³⁰

Based on this research design, the issue examined in this study is the otherization of China discourse. The temporal perspective deliberated over is President Donald Trump's era from 2017-2021. The events studied are a) Trade war between US and China b) the COVID-19 Pandemic. The number of selves involved in this study is one, which is Trump's foreign policy towards China. The discourse analyzed, contains the official discourse of President Trump on China and the marginal political discourse of the print media representations of China.

Figure1: Lene Hansen's Elaborated Research Design

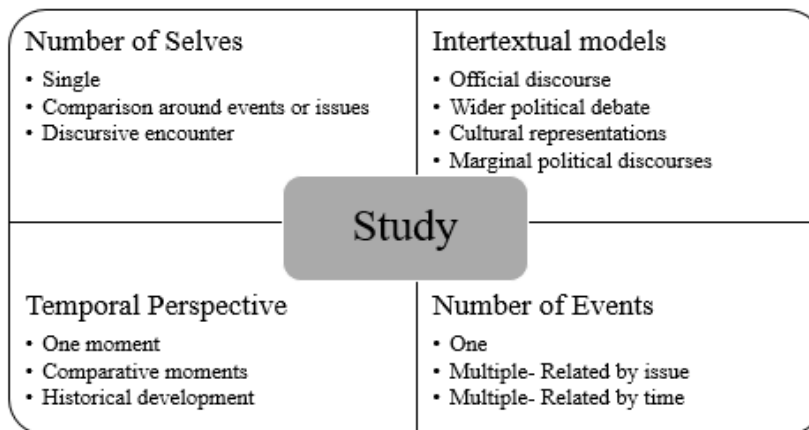
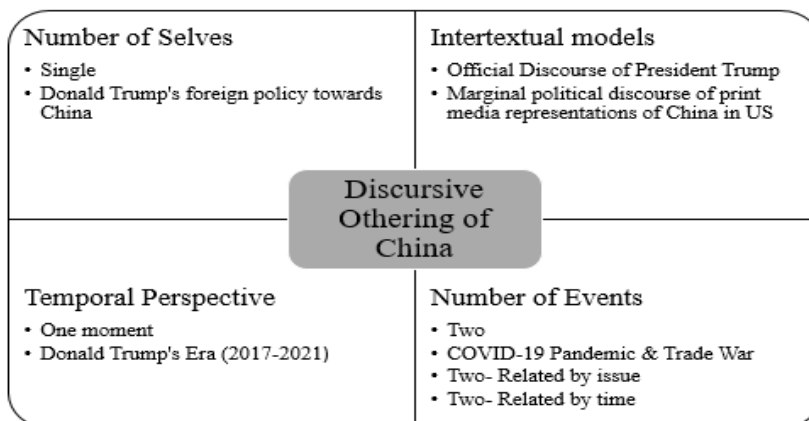


Figure 1.1: Research Design for Discursive Othering of China in Donald Trump's Foreign policy



³⁰ Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*.

Issue: Discursive ‘Othering’ of China in President Trump’s Foreign Policy

Discursive othering is a political process that leads to the legitimization and acceptance of certain policies over others. The discourse on rise of China in the US foreign policy can lead to the legitimization of policies like containment or engagement of China, based on what identity discourse dominates. The engagement discourse is to integrate China to rule-based, institutionalized, normative international system.³¹ While the containment discourse has its roots in the Cold War. It is to contain the spread of communism by containing China.

President Trump, in his National Security Policy (NSP), designated China as a ‘Revisionist Power’ that tries to overturn the liberal economic order. He stated that “China [and Russia] challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity. They are determined to make economies less free and less fair, to grow their militaries, and to control information and data to repress their societies and expand their influence.”³² Hence making it necessary for the US to respond to such challenges. In his presidential tenure, the containment discourse was dominant; hence foreign policy of a trade war, disengagement and non-cooperation were legitimized, to stabilize identity with policy.

Temporal Perspective: President Trump’s Administration

Otherization of China in Western discourse is not novel. It existed in the pre-Trump era and exists post-Trump as well, in the Biden administration. Nonetheless, the temporal perspective this study investigates, is restricted to President Donald Trump’s tenure from 2017 to 2021. There are three major reasons for this choice: first, there has been a disproportional increase in the discourse of ‘Trade war,’ the ‘new Cold War,’ ‘Cold War II,’ and American’s negative views of Chinese, as evidenced by the Pew Research Survey.³³ Second, during its term in office, the Trump administration brought about a clear shift in American policy towards China. From the time of Richard Nixon’s visit to China in 1972 through the administration of George W. Bush, the US pursued an engagement strategy in various forms in the hopes that allowing China to join the current US-dominated international order would enable it to at the very least become

³¹ David Shambaugh, "Containment or Engagement of China? Calculating Beijing's Responses," *International Security*, (1996):180-209.

³² National Security Committee, *National Security Strategy of United States of America*, National Security Document, White House Washington DC, 2017, <https://trumpwhitehouse.archives.gov/>

³³ Kat Devlin, Laura Silver, and Christine Huang, "Amid Coronavirus Outbreak, Americans."

a 'responsible stakeholder,' if not necessarily a liberal democracy.³⁴ Third, the dispute over the origins of COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the discourse of otherization during Trump's tenure.³⁵

Number of Events: The US-China Trade war and the Covid-19 Pandemic

Number of events this study undertakes to analyze the discourse of otherization are two: Firstly, the Trade war between US and China that resulted in tariffs and counter tariffs and was legitimized through otherization discourse. Secondly, the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the otherization discourse was made operational to turn down cooperation. The purpose of this study is to understand how in both these events, the representation of China as 'other' constituted the US foreign policy.

Most economists argued that the economic tariffs on Chinese products were not a viable policy option.³⁶ It resulted in counter-tariffs and consequently a trade war, but President Trump's representation of China as an economic-threat where Chinese products have been dominating the US markets, which places it at a relatively advantageous position vis-a vis the US resulted in constructing such policies. In this context, President Trump categorically declared that "the United States will no longer tolerate economic aggression or unfair trade practices."³⁷ The Chinese economic aggression discourse that President Trump propagated, facilitated in overlooking the pitfalls of the US economy.

Similarly, cooperation on COVID-19 pandemic between the two powers may have resulted in better responses to curb the pandemic.³⁸ Nevertheless, President Trump in order to hide his own mishandling of the crises and take a competitive edge over China, started a blame game. He labelled the virus as 'Foreign Virus,' 'Chinese Virus,' and 'Wuhan Virus.'³⁹ Such discursive tactics exacerbated the 'self' and 'other' divide and reduced the utmost needed cooperation. In other words, the identity discourse of otherization legitimized a foreign policy of non-cooperation on COVID-19 pandemic.

³⁴ Robert B. Zoellick, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?" *NBR Analysis* 16, no. 4 (2005): 5.

³⁵ Kat Devlin, Laura Silver and Christine Huang, "U.S. Views of China Increasingly Negative Amid Coronavirus Outbreak."

³⁶ Ryan Hass and Abraham Denmark, "More Pain than Gain: How the US-China."

³⁷ National Security Committee, *National Security Strategy of United States of America*. National Security Document, White House Washington DC, 2017.

³⁸ Thomas J Christensen, *A Modern Tragedy? COVID-19 and US-China relations*. Policy Brief, Brookings, May, 2020.

³⁹ Jerome Viala-Gaudefroy, and Dana Lindeman, "Donald Trump's 'Chinese Virus': the Politics of Naming," *The Conversation*, April 2020, <https://theconversation.com/>.

Number of Selves: One; President Trump's Foreign Policy

This is a non-comparative study, which means it looks into one single case. It only takes Donald Trump's foreign policy vis-a-vis China. Nonetheless, it is cognizant of the fact that otherization discourses existed prior to Trump and continues to grip US Foreign under Joe Biden as well. Despite being a single-case study, it covers two significant events: trade war between US and China and the COVID-19 pandemic. It does not compare but projects that a similar discourse of otherization dominated in both these events which constituted Trump's foreign policy.

Inter-Textual Discourses Analysis

Discourse analysis of foreign policy is an inter-textual process. It is not only about analyzing the official documents, but also understanding their link with the wider political debate and marginal discourses. It may include studying wide genres and their relationship; including policy speeches, interviews, journalistic reporting, editorials, academic analysis and literary non-fiction etc.

Inter-textual discourse analysis helps us identify the function of multiple texts in constituting foreign policy. Different texts like a biography or a memoir, which are not considered directly relevant with foreign policy, can have a significant influence in foreign policy formulation.⁴⁰ For instance, Hanson mentions in her work that when Clinton read a travelogue, he changed his policy towards Bosnia. Similarly, George Bush administration's foreign policy intertwined with the apocalyptic evangelical left behind discourses of good and evil.⁴¹

Understanding otherization of China in Trump's foreign policy discourse also requires an inter-textual study. It requires studying the broader official discourse: including President Trump's speeches and National Security Strategy document and the marginal political debate: including print media representation of China.

Official Discourse

Official discourse directly centers on words/statements of political leaders with official authority to sanctify foreign policy. To understand the discursive othering of China in Donald Trump's foreign policy, the text of official National Security Strategy (NSS) document released in December 2017 and two of Trump's prominent speeches: one at the World Economic Forum at Davos, Switzerland in January 2018, and the other to the United Nation General Assembly in September 2020 are analyzed.

⁴⁰ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 53.

⁴¹ Ibid., 50.

NSS Text

National Security Strategy, December 2017 document reflects how the US 'self' is understood vis-a vis China.⁴² In defining the US 'self' the emphasis is on the 'other'. It means that the 'self' is vis-a vis the 'other'. To put it differently, the 'self' is defined in juxtaposition to the 'other'; China. The NSS text mentions, "We are a nation of laws...our founding principles have made the United States of America among the greatest forces for good in history." While the 'other' is given an identity of a usurper, who does not play by the rule; "We stood by while countries exploited the international institutions we helped to build. They subsidized their industries, forced technology transfers, and distorted markets." 'Other' is the one who steals our jobs and commits economic aggression against us; "Unfair trade practices had weakened our economy and exported our jobs overseas...We have also continued to make clear that the United States will no longer tolerate economic aggression or unfair trading practices."⁴³

Here, an identity of 'other' in juxtaposition to 'self' is created, which is expressed in language as an 'aggressor, usurper, exploitative, unlawful and a force for evil'. On the basis of these identity constructions, China was portrayed as a threat to the US. The NSS text reaffirms the threat to the US coming from China in the following words:

*"The United States faces an extraordinarily dangerous world, filled with a wide range of threats that have intensified in recent years...Rival powers [are] aggressively undermining American interests around the globe...China and [Russia] challenge American power, influence, and interests, attempting to erode American security and prosperity. They are determined to make economies less free and less fair, to grow their militaries, and to control information and data to repress their societies and expand their influence."*⁴⁴

Otherization of China in Trump's foreign policy is made to the extent that China was not considered even worthy of engagement. Trump stated, "The United States will only engage industrialized democracies and other like-minded states to defend against economic aggression."⁴⁵

The otherization of China narrative which was built in NSS-2017 constituted a stringent foreign policy: A Trade war and a policy of non-cooperation. Such discourse continues to reflect in Trump's later speeches. Two of his speeches are analyzed here. Speech one is particularly relevant to the otherization discourses resulting in trade war, while speech two is

⁴² National Security Committee, *National Security Strategy of United States of America*.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

relevant to the otherization discourse resulting in policy of non-cooperation on handling the COVID-19 pandemic.

Speech 1

Analysis of President Trump's statement at Davos, gives a similar echo of 'self' and 'other' cry as observed in the NSS document.⁴⁶ In describing 'self' he said, "American economy is by far largest in the world," "We have the best colleges in the world, we have the best universities in the world, and we have the best workers in the world." He consistently used superlative degree for defining the 'self'.

While the representation that he used for China was one of 'revisionist power': one who does not play by the existing norms of international system, hence poses a threat to US hegemony and current world order. President Trump labelled Chinese economic practices unfair; "The United States will no longer turn a blind eye to unfair economic practices including massive intellectual property theft, industrial subsidies, and pervasive state-led economic growth."

He invoked the temporal, spatial and ethical forms of identity. To temporally distinguish his regimes from past, he said, "there has never been a better time to hire, to build, to invest and to grow in the United States." On America's ethical identity he uttered "we are making historical investments in American security... to make the world safer from rogue regimes, terrorism and revisionist powers". Here a particular reference to China is made by using the term 'revisionist power.' In emphasizing American spatial identity, he believed that America is land of opportunities, but not everyone can enter into this land. "[We] select new arrivals based on their ability to contribute to our economy, to support themselves financially and strengthen our country."

He asked to prioritize 'self' over the 'other' in his widely-repeated "America-First" mantra; "As a President of the United States I'll always put America first just like the leaders of other countries should put their country first also." Resultantly, such discourse of otherization legitimized Trump's foreign policy behavior of being tough on China.

Keywords: *Unfair Economic Practices, Intellectual Property Theft, Pervasive State-led- Economic Growth, Rogue Regimes, Revisionist Power.*

Speech 2

Trump's virtual address to the United Nations General Assembly on Sep 22, 2020, was a manifestation of the similar theme of the US 'good'

⁴⁶ Politico Staff, "President Donald Trump, Full Text: Trump Davos Speech Transcript," Presidential Speech, January 26, 2018, <https://www.politico.com/story/>

and China 'bad' binary.⁴⁷ He portrayed US as a responsible world leader while China as an aggressor. His description of the US was: a leader in human rights, bedrock of freedom and security, global peace maker and special worthy of God's blessings:

"America will always be a leader in human rights...American prosperity is the bedrock of security and freedom all over the world...America is fulfilling our destiny as peacemaker...God bless America."

His description of China was: a plague originator, a cheater who holds information on the virus and misinformed the world about it, polluter of the environment and abuser in trade who does not play by the rules:

"Seventy-five years after the end of World War II and the founding of the United Nations, we are once again engaged in a great global struggle. We have waged a fierce battle against the invisible enemy — the China virus — which has claimed countless lives in 188 countries... As we pursue this bright future we must hold accountable the nation which unleashed this plague onto the world: China, In the earliest days of the virus China locked down travel domestically while allowing flights to leave China- and infect the world...China falsely declared that there is no human-to-human transmission...every year China dumps millions and millions of tons of plastic and trash into the oceans...We stood up to two decades of China trade abuses."⁴⁸

Keywords: *China Trade Abuses, China does not Play by Rule, Great Global Struggle, China Virus, China unleashed Plague onto the World.*

The key words tapped in the NSS document, and these two speeches indicate that the identity of China was constructed as the one who abuses trade, distorts market, does not play by the rule, one who is revisionist in intentions and tries to alter status quo, one who is responsible for the spread of virus; hence has made the world an extraordinarily dangerous place. President Trump turned his back on the wider economic liberalization and open market discourse in the West to economic nationalization, mercantilist and threat discourses. He constructed China as 'different' and on the basis of that difference a 'threat' to the US. It helped him to withdraw from several multinational treaties and adopt a rigid policy stance on China.

Next, we study how the official discourse of otherization of China was reproduced in the unofficial marginal political discourse of print media.

⁴⁷ "President Donald Trump, Donald Trump Speech 2020 UN General Assembly Transcript," Presidential Speech, Rev Transcript Library, 2020.<https://www.rev.com/blog/>

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Marginal Political Discourse

Marginal political discourse analysis investigates a text different than the official discourse, which can influence foreign policy. Its object of analysis can be newspapers, websites, books, pamphlets or academic works.⁴⁹

Jianxin Yang and Haimei Wang conducted a study in 2020.⁵⁰ They took three papers: the New York times, the Guardian and the Times as their subject matter and studied the coverage of China related COVID-19 news as the data to examine how a global epidemic is being reported. They quantitatively analyzed the keywords and collocations and qualitatively examined the discursive strategies used in these papers.

The study outlays that China's image was constructed as an epidemic paralyzed country that adopts ineffective epidemic prevention measures. Headlines were used as mini-narratives, and a moral lecture—the commonly adopted discursive strategies. The negative mini-narratives in the headlines included statements like 'Virus Spreads as World Pays for Dictator Xi' and 'China's Coronavirus Has Revived Global Economic Fears' while the mini moral lectures included statements like 'China must share all it knows about this mystery virus' and 'The government needs to communicate with the public clearly, honestly and often about the coronavirus,' ; also 'Beijing must be called to account after this crisis for its lies about the spread of coronavirus, West can no longer turn a blind eye to China.'

Keywords: *Economic Fear, China's Corona Virus, Can no Longer turn a Blind Eye to China.*

In brief, the American mainstream newspapers constructed the events of trade war and COVID-19 pandemic in line with the Trump's 'China threat' narrative. President Trump capitalized on such discourse and further exacerbated it. The otherization discourse projected by Trump in his official speech acts—China's unfair trade practices, deviating from international rules, and a rival power responsible for the spread of the Coronavirus—is reflected in the representation of China in the US print media: 'China's unfairness and corruption,' 'China's virus,' 'China's created global economic fears,' and so on. The inter-textuality between the official and unofficial discourse legitimized Trump's otherization of China as a threat and consequently his policies of Trade war and of non-cooperation on the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁴⁹ Hansen, *Security as Practice*, 55-56.

⁵⁰ Jianxin Yang and Haimei Wang, "Discursive Othering in the Fighting Against COVID19: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the China Related Coverage of COVID-19," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, vol.537, 2020.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to explicate the role of identity discourses in US President Donald Trump's foreign policy vis-a-vis China. It relied on the theoretical question of the role of identity discourse in foreign policy. Premised on the constructivist assumption, it argued that identity discourse constitutes foreign policy. It explored the idea that discourse is not a passive mode of communication, but it rather performs several functions. One of its key functions is the constitution of identity. Identity is a discursive practice, which in turn constitutes the foreign policy of a state. Foreign policy depends on identity and representation; states pursue foreign policy in line with their identities.

The study explored how the role of identity discourse in foreign policy can be analyzed. For this task, it investigated the core tenets of constructivist theory and applied the critical discourse analysis model. The different features of constructivist theory— structuration, constitutive theorizing, social construction of reality and discursiveness of structures— provided a non-essentialist understanding of identity and foreign policy, while Lene Hanson's critical discourse analysis model provided a systematic way for studying the constitutive role of identity discourse in foreign policy.

The study of identity discourses in the US foreign policy unfolded that the US identity is not something given or fixed but constituted through discourse practices over a longer period of time. The discourse that essentially constructs the US identity is otherization discourse: self-good and other-bad discourse, where the 'self' assumes the duty of a policeman to discipline, order, and civilize the 'other'. This identity discourse shaped US foreign policy at various points in time, from Amerindian to the current Chinese other.

The case study of Donald Trump made clear that identity discourse was central to his foreign policy pursuits. He constructed an identity of radical other for China. In return, it not only constructed the noble US 'self' vis-à-vis an 'ignoble' and, therefore, a 'threatening' China, but also legitimized his policies of trade war and non-cooperation on COVID-19. Application of Lene Hanson's model revealed that multiple texts—not only President Trump's official discourse but also the marginal print media representation—reproduced Trump's otherization discourse and consequently his foreign policy towards China. The study provided a critical scrutiny of Donald Trump's foreign policy towards China. It elucidated the discursiveness of Trump's foreign policy. It showed that discourses of otherization do not vanish, when President Biden take over the office, but continues to manifest, though in subtle forms. The study thus questions the given-ness, fixity, and structural compulsions of foreign policy, as propagated by most IR scholars, and opens the way for building new relationships based on alternative discourses.

INDIA'S MARITIME STRATEGY AND IT'S IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

Nazish Bhutta* & Arshad Ali**

Abstract

This study highlights the changing dimensions of power in the Indo-Pacific region. A paradigm shift in India's maritime strategy is shaping the balance of power in the region. The regional balance has shifted in favor of India due to the new Indo-Pacific policy of the United States. A major shift in US policy has strengthened India's maritime security and blue economy in the region. However, India's maritime strategy has far-reaching implications for Pakistan's security and economy. This article examines India's maritime strategy in the 21st century and the development of partnerships with Western powers to contain China in the region. The article analyzes the change in India's maritime strategy and the expansion of its role in the Indo-Pacific region due to the availability of new technologies.

Keywords: *Indo-Pacific Region, Indian Maritime Strategy, Maritime Security, Blue Economy, US Indo-Pacific Policy*

Introduction

All the oceans and seas of the world are important, but the Indo-Pacific Region (IPR) is crucial among all the parts and oceans of the world due to the hot water theory, and it is rich in natural resources. The world's economy is mainly conducted through the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The maritime race in these oceans started with the disturbance of the balance of power in the region and a shift in the maritime policies of major states. This region has gained world attention due to its strategic significance, which has become the core of the global economy. New partnerships emerged in the region, and all the regional and major powers wanted to control it. India has the closest association with this region due to its long-term interests and geostrategic closeness with the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Moreover, India has become the 5th

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largest economy in the world, modernizing its naval forces and becoming one of the leading navies in the world. India now claims to be the region's net security provider and is trying to hold the role of the regional hegemon.¹

The Indian government has changed its maritime strategies in the 21st century. There was little focus on the changing regional dynamics and geo-political environment of the IOR in the Indian maritime strategy of 2007. However, in its new maritime doctrine of 2015, India has focused on the needs and concerns of the Indian navy in the changing security environment of IOR.² Subsequently, India is increasing its technological developments in the maritime domain to counter the threats and dominate the region.

In addition, India has shifted its focus to collective security by having partnership with major powers such as the US, France, Australia, and Japan. India is actively participating in combat operations to counter security threats such as piracy, cybercrime, and environmental disasters in the Indian and Pacific Oceans with and without allied countries. India is also trying to secure its sea lines of communication in the region through the direct deployment of forces, military assistance, military diplomacy, and capacity building. Therefore, India is attempting to increase its power and become a regional hegemon.³ India has also shaped the maritime doctrine, which is vital to the blue economy. For instance, India currently has 4% of the blue economy of its total GDP. In the financial year 2021-22, India's blue economy was about US \$7.2 billion. With its constant economic growth, the Indian government focuses on various maritime strategies to achieve its interests in the ocean.⁴ India's growing power in the IOR has created an imbalance in South Asia. Pakistan has shown concerns over India's increasing role with the support of the US.⁵ Pakistan

¹ A. L. Sindhu, "Pakistan and Maritime Competition," *The Nation*, August 30, 2020, <https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Aug-2020/pakistan-and-maritime-competition>.

² D. M. Baruah, "India's Evolving Maritime Strategy," *The Diplomat*, December 3, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/indias-evolving-maritime-strategy/>

³ Anit Mukherjee, *India as a Net Security Provider: Concept and Impediments*. S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 2014, <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/>

⁴ Sitara Fernando, "India's Strategy in the Indian Ocean and South Asia: Implications for Sri Lanka's National Security," *Proceedings in Defense Strategic Studies*, 9th International Research Conference-KDU, Sri Lanka-2016, <http://ir.kdu.ac.lk/bitstream/handle/>

⁵ HV Pant, "India in the Indian Ocean: Growing Mismatch between Ambitions and Capabilities," *Pacific Affairs* 82(2), (2009):279-297, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25608866>.

is trying to partner with China to counter Indian hegemony and create a balance of power in the region.⁶ India worries about China's growing maritime powers by building different fleets, using satellite communication grids, and developing underwater listening devices.⁷

In order to understand the discussion, the theory of Neo-realism is applied. In the frame of reference of neo-realism, the offensive realism and defensive realism are used as its variants. In the theory of neo-realism, the major proponent is Kenneth Waltz. Within the working framework of this proponent, the international system is anarchic in nature. The international actors are relying on "self-help system." The unit of analysis is state. State is the sovereign actor and has the authority to legitimize the use of force and is a primary actor in international world politics. States strengthen their capabilities to ensure their survival. States focus more on the security and survival. According to Kenneth Waltz, in the anarchic world the states make partnerships to deal with the potential threat from rival states. Within the frame of reference of neo-realists, the national interest of the state varies according to the capabilities of the state.⁸

The conceptual framework of neo realism has two major variations i.e., offensive realism and defensive realism. The major proponents of defensive realism are Kenneth Waltz and Robert Jackson. According to the theory of defensive realism, the most crucial factor for states is their security. Waltz stated that sovereign states try to maximize their security through balance of power. Defensive realists ensure their survival and security and act as expansionists only in certain conditions, they are the preventionists and do not try to neutralize the enemy. The further variation in defensive realism is offense-defense military balance. According to Van Evera, states are opportunity and threat variants. If there are more chances of winning, then state will go for offense, but if there are chances of threat then state will go for defense. For defensive realists, the advantages of offense are exceedingly rare, so they go for the defense. The defensive realism has major contribution in international world politics, but it is highly criticized by offensive realists and other scholars.

John Mearsheimer has mainly criticized defensive realism and came up with the theory of offensive realism because states think rationally and strategically to survive in this anarchic world rather than relying at a chance.⁹ The prominent proponent of offensive realism is John

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Luis Simón, "Neorealism, Security Cooperation, and Europe's Relative Gains Dilemma," *Security Studies* 26, no. 2 (2017): 185-212.

⁹ Steven E Lobell, "Structural Realism/Offensive and Defensive Realism," In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, 2010, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.304>

J. Mearsheimer and Robert Gilpin. Within the conceptual framework of offensive realism, sovereign state is a primary actor in international world and the urge for security and survival make it power maximizer. States only cooperate in temporary partnerships, but it always tries to neutralize their enemy and enhance their own power. Mearsheimer has the basic assumptions about this theory that international world is anarchic in nature, all sovereign states have certain military capabilities, and they can go beyond the borders to achieve their national interests. The extreme level of offensive realists is hegemonic stability, state try to achieve the maximum power and to become the only hegemon.¹⁰ The offensive realists are not always offensive but sometimes they act as the defensive when the major powers try to gain interest at the expense of them, so to deter that state they must choose between balancing the power or buck passing. Buck passing means to take no action but relaying on the ally or some other to resist the enemy, but its major drawback is that the ally state might fail to resist the enemy state.¹¹ The offensive realism has major contribution in world politics to understand the behavior of different states and run the affairs of the world. But there are certain criticisms on offensive realism by different scholars that if the states wage the war to achieve their interests, then why certain expensive wars occur against the interests of the state that had started it? The second criticism is that offensive realists counter the democratic peace of the world. The third criticism is that there is cooperation in anarchic world against the interests of the offensive realists.¹²

Theoretically the maritime security has the neorealist approach in which the states are power seekers, and they project hard and soft power in the ocean to get hegemony in the world. But the goal of the states is to get security and safety. As the maritime theatre of the threats whether they are conventional or non-conventional, and becoming a core concern for the safety of the states. The security of the state and the maritime security are interlinked to each other. In the 21st century all the states have major focus on the maritime security because their economy and security are linked to maritime theater. Now the world has entered to the maritime competition to get more resources and to increase their trade through the sea routes and sea lines of communication. The world has

¹⁰ A. Munro, "John J. Mearsheimer / Biography, Books, & Facts," Britannica- 2020, December 10, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Mearsheimer>.

¹¹ Glenn H. Synder "Mearsheimer's World-Offensive Realism and Struggle for Security: A Review Essay," *International Security* 27, no. 1 (2002) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3092155>.

¹² Dominic DP Johnson, and Bradley A. Thayer, "The Evolution of Offensive Realism: Survival under Anarchy from the Pleistocene to the Present," *Politics and the Life Sciences* 35, no. 1 (2016): 1-26.

made many technological developments in the oceans, and they are investing more in the maritime security. For the maritime security, the states are taking collaborative measures and making partnerships to make this area secure. The international organizations like IMO have been created, the regional organizations are focusing on it too. States are developing their own maritime forces and strengthening it to attain more power and security. If we look at the Indian Ocean, the regional powers are developing partnerships to secure their maritime borders, like China and Pakistan have developed strong partnership and started the CPEC project, which is of immense importance. This project is helping both China and Pakistan to increase their economy as well as their power. On the other hand, India and USA are developing strong bonds to maritime security and maritime power. For this purpose, they are conducting different naval exercises and signing agreements. Other countries are also becoming part of their partnership. Hence, the state security and the maritime security are inter-linked to each other.

This paper explores the shift in Indian maritime strategy and the ways it is creating challenges for Pakistan in Indian Ocean. The first part describes the evolution of the Indian maritime security strategy. And Indian maritime partnership with Western powers to counter the new emerging powers in the region. The second part explores security perspectives on Indian maritime strategy in the context of US Indo-Pacific strategy. The third part analyzes the implication of the US Indo-Pacific and Indian blue economy on Pakistan. This paper is examining the only two factors of security and economy in Indian Ocean because these are the two most important factors in this anarchic world to show the power of the state and to dominate other states through it.

The Evolution of the Indian Maritime Security Strategy

India is pivotal in the IOR and has brought many changes to its maritime strategy to enhance its power capabilities. However, China has remained a significant threat to India in the region due to its massive progress in the maritime domain. India has been transforming its maritime strategy to meet its geo-political needs and counter any potential threat in the IPR. Indira Gandhi played a pivotal role in modernizing India's naval power, but the major shift came in the post-Cold War era when India developed its submarines, cruise missiles, patrolling stations, naval bases, and other maritime equipment.¹³

The 2007 maritime strategy emphasized the freedom of using the seas, but it had not considered the changing geo-political environment of

¹³ Gurpreet S. Khurana, "India's Maritime Strategy: Context and Subtext," *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 13, no. 1 (2017): 14-26.

the IPR. The 2015 maritime strategy has given its utmost focus to the changing dimensions of the region and reflected the robust version of the Indian navy with further developments. The Indian chief of Naval Staff, RK Dhowan, has explained the need to revise the 2007 maritime strategy that in recent decades the world has shifted its focus from Euro-Atlantic to IPR.¹⁴ More specifically, the shift of world economic and military powers towards Asia has made many regional changes and has more significant implications for the power trajectory of India in the region and beyond. Therefore, India has expanded its areas of naval interests to a more considerable extent in the new maritime strategy, including the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Red Sea, the South-west Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Southeast Indian Ocean, West Coast of Africa, East China Sea, Western Pacific Ocean, and their surrounding regions. More importantly, India has described itself as the "Net Security Provider" in the IPR.¹⁵

In 2009, the term 'Net Security Provider' was first coined by America for India in the Shangri-La Dialogue by US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. He said, "we look to India to be a partner and net provider of security in the Indian Ocean and beyond." Then it became a colloquial term used by Indian leaders. Indian Premier Manmohan Singh said India is the 'Net Security Provider' in the Indian Ocean. He came up with the statement that India is a strong naval power in the Indian Ocean and can quickly respond. India can also provide security to the region's littoral states.¹⁶

The external powers play a crucial role in evolving the maritime order in IOR. For example, China has adopted various maritime strategies, such as the String of Pearls, labelled by US but nothing as such described by China, to encircle India in the maritime domain. China has also invested in the countries of IOR under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project, which has great strategic importance. More specifically, China has surrounded India by establishing partnership with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, and other littoral states.¹⁷ Consequently, India is concerned about China's growing role in the IOR and developing partnerships with major powers. Such partnerships enabled India to access ports like Djibouti in Africa, Islands near Madagascar, and Diego Garcia in the Southern Indian Ocean. These

¹⁴ K. Mathur, "Challenges and Prospects for India-Australia Maritime Cooperation," *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, 2019.

¹⁵ *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*.

¹⁶ Anit Mukherjee, India as a Net Security Provider.

¹⁷ Lavina Lee, "Assessing the Quad: Prospects and Limitations of Quadrilateral Cooperation for Advancing Australia's Interests," *Lowy Institute for International Policy*, 2020.

strategic partners conduct joint navy trainings and exercises with India and provide re-fueling stations for its naval fleets and ships.¹⁸ Since 1992, India and the US have been conducting bilateral naval exercises at the Malabar coast, 'Malabar Naval Exercises,' to increase their power projection. Japan also joined these exercises in 2015 and invited Australia to participate in them in the Indian maritime arena. These quadrilateral naval exercises have sent shivers down the spine of China and isolated them. These exercises have expanded the Indian maritime domain and its sea power.¹⁹

Additionally, India became part of the QUAD, a group of four democratic countries: the US, Japan, Australia, and India. In 2007, the group agreed to increase their security and economic ties in the IPR. ²⁰ It was revised in 2017 due to the growing significance of the Indo-Pacific. The QUAD has provided a platform for coordination and diplomatic meetings to discuss different issues of their interests regarding the Indo-Pacific's openness and the region's security.²¹ The primary purpose of QUAD is to ensure the economic and security interests of the partners, protect the trade routes, and contain China. Furthermore, the closed-door meetings of the 'U.S.-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue,' are taking place regularly, empowering India's security domain and increasing its maritime power.²² The new partnerships and alignments helped India to become a dominant actor in the region.²³ Thus, India has been trying to modernize and improve its maritime capabilities in the post-Cold War era. There are three aspects of modernizing India's naval capabilities in post-cold war era that India is developing naval capabilities, partnerships with big extra-Indian Ocean states (e.g. the US), and helping junior partners in the region. These developments are up-lifting the Indian maritime power.

Besides making partnerships with major powers, India has also developed regional maritime partnerships with neighbouring countries to increase its power in the IPR. India has focused on the 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectorial Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) to improve its relations with Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar. India also implemented Maritime

¹⁸ Vivek Mishra, *"Consolidating India's Indian Ocean Strategy,"* The Diplomat (2019).

¹⁹ Roy Chaudhury, Rahul, and Kate Sullivan de Estrada. "India, the Indo-Pacific and the Quad," *Survival* 60, no. 3 (2018): 181-194.

²⁰ Roy-Chaudhury, Rahul, and Kate Sullivan de Estrada, "India, the Indo-Pacific and the Quad."

²¹ Lavina Lee, "Assessing the Quad: Prospects and Limitations of Quadrilateral.

²² Roy-Chaudhury, *"India, the Indo-Pacific and the Quad."*

²³ D. M. Baruah, *"India in the Indo-Pacific: New Delhi's Theater of Opportunity,"* Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Baruah_UnderstandingIndia_final1.pdf

Capability Perspective Plan (MCP) to improve the relations with all the other countries. It is also considered a grand regional plan to increase India's power and naval capabilities by installing submarines, aircraft, and nuclear submarines.²⁴ India has given the humanitarian posture to have more political influence in the region and to encircle and counter the rival nations in the region.²⁵ This has increased the Indian influence in the regional maritime zone and has become a significant player in the IPR.

In addition, the critical driving force of India's maritime strategy is its geo-strategic position and geo-strategic environment in the IPR. India is in a significant maritime position with several small Islands across the IOR. It provides India with the Sea lines of communication (SLOCs) to become a maritime power. There are both traditional and non-traditional threats and challenges to India's SLOCs. The location of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI) provides India with a tremendous strategic advantage in its east to counter the increasing Chinese footprints in Indian Ocean Region. Therefore, India is considering ANI as the principal factor to enhance the maritime power projection capabilities to secure its role as a 'net security provider in the region and establish political connectivity with the states in the east.'²⁶

In 2001, India upgraded the ANI and established Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) and it was helping India to monitor India's Exclusive economic zones. It also provides logistic support to its ships deployed from East and South East Asia to monitor the busiest shipping lanes of Six Degree and Ten Degree Channels and the Strait of Malacca. It also acts as the base for India's coordinated patrols with Thailand, Indonesia, and the MILAN (military exercises). Furthermore, India has started projects to assist the weaker states of IOR in providing training, equipment, and advisors. It cooperated with Mauritius, Mozambique, Madagascar, Maldives, and Seychelles to monitor its maritime environments.²⁷ India's strategic location in the maritime domain provides India with an excellent opportunity to become a regional power.

Under the new maritime strategy of India, the national strategists have emphasized the blue economy, as India carries 90% of its trade through sea routes. India is a technologically advanced state, but still, there is a need to change maritime policies regarding the maximization of

²⁴ Rajeev Ranjan Chaturvedi, "The Indian Ocean Policy of the Modi Government," In *Modi and the World: (Re) Constructing Indian Foreign Policy*, 163-184. 2017.

²⁵ Vivek Mishra, "Consolidating India's Indian Ocean Strategy."

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Priyanjali Ghosh, "India's Indian Ocean Region Strategy," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs Article Display*, <https://www.AirUniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Article-Display/Article/>

the blue economy. Different expert committees are established to cope with challenges faced in the development of the blue economy.²⁸

Thus, the dependency on India on maritime has increased rapidly due to its military, economic, and technological interests. India finds IPR the most appropriate way of increasing its connectivity with the outside world to speed up economic growth and protect the SLOCs, and overseas strategic interests.²⁹ Subsequently, Indian foreign policy has made a notable change towards the IPR by shifting its focus from land security to maritime security for the first time in its history. Powerful countries such as Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom and the US consider India, a key factor in the security of this region. Partnerships in the Indo-Pacific are at the core of Indian interests to expand its regional diplomatic relationships and enhance its security.³⁰ Thus, the dependency of India on maritime has increased rapidly due to its military, economic, and technological interests. India finds IPR the most appropriate way of increasing its connectivity with the outside world to speed up economic growth and protect the SLOCs, and overseas strategic interests.³¹ Subsequently, Indian foreign policy has made a notable change towards the IPR by shifting its focus from land security to maritime security for the first time in history. Powerful countries such as Japan, Australia, the United Kingdom and the US consider India, a key actor in the security of this region. Partnerships in the Indo-Pacific are at the core of Indian interests to expand its regional diplomatic relationships and enhance its security.³²

Security Perspectives in Indian Maritime Strategy

In the 21st century, the world started looking into Asia Pacific as IPR. This major shift occurred as the US started using Indo-Pacific to clarify its Indian-centric policies in IOR. The US wanted India to dominate the IPR to contain the Chinese in the maritime domain. Subsequently, India became a key partner with the US in multilateral maritime alignments, evident in its new Indo-Pacific policies.

²⁸ Michelle Voyer, Dominique Benzaken, and Constance Rambourg, "Institutionalizing the Blue Economy: an Examination of Variations and Consistencies among Commonwealth Countries," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 377, no. 1854 (2022): 20210125.

²⁹ *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*, 185.

³⁰ Sharifah M. Alatas, "India's Maritime Strategy in the Indian Ocean Region: Issues of Strategic Culture," *Journal of South Asian Studies* 3, no. 3 (2015): 397-406.

³¹ *Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy*.

³² Sharifah M. Alatas, "India's Maritime Strategy in the Indian Ocean Region."

The US Indo-Pacific Policy

The Indo-Pacific region is essential for the world, especially for the major powers to maintain status quo. Nicholas Spykman believed the US had already dominated the western hemisphere by controlling the Greater Caribbean. Using those resources could affect the balance of power in the eastern hemisphere.³³ However, China is a great continental power and holds a strong position in IPR, a significant threat to the US hegemony. The rise of China is reshaping power politics through economic alignments with regional countries and by increasing its maritime power. US has shown concerns about the rise of China and made a shift in its Indo-Pacific policies to counter China's growing influence in the IPR.

When President Donald Trump came into power in 2017, the US administration and its allies were concerned about the security commitments and role of the US in IPR. The regional anxieties were high due to the increasing role of China from Asia to Africa, Europe and the Pacific, which is changing the maritime realities for the concerned states. Consequently, President Trump adopted a new Indo-Pacific strategy to increase regional security and power. For this purpose, the US viewed India as a counterbalancing state to China and the preserver of the US interests in the IPR. So the US played a prominent role in India's Indo-Pacific security strategy. Under this policy, the US will provide economic and security assistance to India, which will help them to become a dominant regional player in the IPR.³⁴

Under the previous US administrations, Asia-Pacific terminology was used for the Indian and Pacific oceans. However, the Trump administration used the word "Indo-Pacific" considering the more significant role of India in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. This policy shift in the US means that India will be a maritime power to compete with China. In 2017, at the meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) which was held in Vietnam, President Trump talked about the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP), which was a clear indication that in future, the policies would be shifted to counter the ambitions of China to get strategic hegemonic control over the 'South China Sea' and the whole region. He talked about free and open trade in the IPR, which is in the interest of all the eastern and western states.³⁵

In the published US Indo-Pacific policies in 2017, the US mentioned that new geo-political competition is emerging in the Indo-Pacific region

³³ Robert D Kaplan, *"Earning the Rockies: How Geography Shapes America's Role in the World,"* 2017.

³⁴ Sobia Hanif, and Muhammad Khan, "US Security Strategy for Asia Pacific and India's Role," *Strategic Studies* 38, no. 1 (2018): 1-20.

³⁵ A J Blinken, *"A Free and Open Indo-Pacific,"* (United States Department of State, December 14, 2021)

between the region's openness and repressiveness. In the National Security Strategy of December 2017, the US used the term "revisionist power" for China because China is trying to replace the US hegemonic role and using different economic strategies to get control over this region. However, the "Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships and Promoting a Networked Region," which was published by the Department of Defense in June 2019, emphasized the defence of the Indo-Pacific region by claiming that Chinese communist leadership is reshaping the power in the region by increasing its influence in the region through economic alignment and militarization.³⁶

To counter Chinese dominance, the US has attempted to reinforce its ties with regional partners and allies. Interestingly, the US changed the US Pacific Command (USPACOM) to the US Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), which indicated India's increasing role in the IPR. Moreover, the Department of State published the third official document of Indo-Pacific policy in November 2019, named "Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a shared vision." In this policy, the US desired to work with its partners to promote peace and prosperity in the IPR and highlighted India as its strategic partner as they shared the same vision and interests. Moreover, many infrastructure projects with the partners were proposed to counter the Chinese BRI.³⁷ Later, the Biden administration continued with the same Indo-Pacific policy and took new initiatives to work with the allies in this region. Biden's multilateral meeting with the QUAD leaders resulted in several initiatives through which they can get more roles in the IPR and US called Asian NATO.³⁸

Thus, the new US Indo-Pacific policy strongly influences India because it holds a more significant power role in the IPR. More importantly, India has also considered China a threat to the region's security and wanted to change its foreign policy in the IPR. Therefore, India adopted the Indo-Pacific policy of partners like the US, Japan, and Australia to counter the Chinese security threat in the region. The Indo-Pacific policy is an opportunity for India to increase its influence and presence in the region, get the advantage of strong partnerships, and remove the constraints in achieving the state's security interests. This policy also allows New Delhi to expand its diplomatic and strategic footprints in the IOR through the new partnerships and initiatives adopted

³⁶ Cleo Paskal, "Indo-Pacific Strategies, Perceptions and Partnerships," Chatham House 23 ,(2021)

³⁷ Cleo Paskal, "Indo-Pacific Strategies, Perceptions And Partnerships."

³⁸ Ashley Townshend, Susannah Patton, Tom Corben, and Toby Warden, "Correcting the Course: How the Biden Administration should Compete for Influence in the Indo-Pacific," United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney, 2021.

by the US under its new Indo-Pacific policy. But here the turning point in India-US relations is that since Russia's unprovoked and illegal war in Ukraine, India has demonstrated much independence from the US, and this might create tensions between the two in future. This could affect the bilateral relations of US and India and it could change dimensions in Indo-Pacific region.

In addition, the Indo-Pacific policy will help India to increase its investments in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, increasing India's influence over the maritime domain and the region's littoral states. Initially, India was reluctant to join the strategic Western alignments to contain China. However, the aggressive stance of China on different issues like the South China Sea and Southeast Asia became of particular concern for India due to its proximity to Indian Ocean security.³⁹

Indian Maritime Strategy and its Blue Economy

The geographic location of India also provides numerous opportunities in the blue economy domain in the IPR. In 2012, first time the term "Blue Economy," coined from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro. Blue economy is a term generally means usage of sea resources to enhance the GDP of the state. The integration of energy production, conservation, marine transport, bio-prospecting, ocean resource extraction is considered as the state development in the blue economy domain. To achieve this development, the national and international organizations should maintain ocean resources, respectively. The purpose of the blue economy is to restore the health of ocean lives and encourage coastal economies so that people can earn more and make their better living standards. Blue economy plays leading role in the economic growth of the state, it provides vast opportunities for employment, and achieves fundamental objectives of sustainable development. To build better ocean economy, it is essential to properly maintain global marine ecosystems, and to improve the natural resource extraction from the oceans. Different marine resources which are in depth are still unexplored by the powerful states through the technology is advanced to higher levels in contemporary world.⁴⁰

India has developed its extended coastal areas surrounded by the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, and the Arabian Sea, which increases its geo-economic position in the region. Developing sustainable coastal zones is an essential aspect of the Indian Maritime Strategy. In coastal economic

³⁹ Harsh V Pant, and Abhijnan Rej, "Is India Ready for the Indo-Pacific?" *The Washington Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (2018): 47-61.

⁴⁰ Rosa María Martínez-Vázquez, Juan Milán-García, and Jaime de Pablo Valenciano, "Challenges of the Blue Economy: Evidence and Research Trends," *Environmental Sciences Europe* 33, no. 1 (2021): 61.

zones, India has engaged the local communities in tourism, fisheries, and other activities related to marine aquaculture. Recognizing the importance of the blue economy, India is taking different initiatives to develop the infrastructure of coastal areas. In 2020, the SAGAR-MALA program proposed an investment of US \$120 billion, including more than 600 projects.

Similarly, for the development of the Coastal economic zones, an investment of US \$150 million is provided.⁴¹ In his speech, Prime Minister Modi said, "The blue economy must act as a catalyst in improving India's progress." In the coastal zones of Tamil Nadu and Gujrat, offshore renewable energy projects are also started by India, besides the fisheries and coastal zone activities. Promoting new offshore projects would benefit India to raise its economy and power status globally and support the 2030 SDGs.⁴²

In this scenario, India has almost 13 ports for trading purposes, which can significantly boost its blue economy. At the Shangri La Dialogue of 2018, Modi stated that the Indian Ocean had played a prime role in India's foreign policy by strengthening its relations with IOR, building economic partnerships, and improving maritime security for regional states. India is a vocal supporter of freedom of navigation and developing multilateral cooperation in various sectors such as sharing of assets, technology transfer, blue economic growth, and development of ports. India has expanded its cooperation in marine technology, tourism, infrastructure development, trade, investments, and marine or ocean environment protection to maximize the blue economy. India is intensifying its bilateral and multilateral cooperation across the globe, including Africa, Europe, South Asia and nations of the Pacific Ocean.⁴³

Additionally, India is expanding its cooperation with European states to raise its blue economy. India has established a joint task force on the blue economy with Norway during the ocean dialogue. Prime Minister of Norway gave his points of view that Indian Prime Minister Modi has a definite vision of sustainability of economic growth for all the states in the region. He added more by saying that his government focuses more on creating ocean-based employment for his Norwegian people. In the bilateral initiatives of India and Norway, several maritime projects started and some are already being implemented.

⁴¹ A Ninawe,, and S. T. Indulkar, "Blue Economy Mission: India's Focus," *Journal of Aquaculture & Fisheries* 3, no. 1 (2019): 17.

⁴² Deepika Manoharan, and Stella James, "Cruise Tourism in India: Sailing into Troubled Waters," (2021).

⁴³ Dinoj K., Upadhyay, and Mishra Manoranjan, "Blue Economy: Emerging Global Trends and India's Multilateral Cooperation," *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 16, no. 1 (2020): 30-45.

Moreover, at the 14th India-EU summit held in 2017, the emphasis was given to cooperation in different sectors to promote the blue economy. During this summit, it was mentioned that both European Union and India intended to improve the ocean's connectivity, security, stability, and sustainability to shoot up their blue economy. Germany and France have a significant role in developing blue economy cooperation with India in 2019 and 2020, respectively. India has also developed such kind of cooperation regarding the blue economy with different continental and regional states, which is expanding the blue economy of India and, eventually, its national economy to a more significant level.⁴⁴

India's blue economy strategy can be seen as a strategy to oppose China's BRI project in the region. India is increasing its investments in the region and specially in the blue economic domain to influence the other states of the region. Through the blue economic strategy, India is trying to counter the dominance of China in region which was strengthened by the huge BRI project. As the realistic state and to create balance of power in the region India is modernizing its strategies to oppose Chinese dominance in IPR.

Indian Maritime Strategy: Implications for Pakistan

Pakistan is closely located in IOR and is developing different strategies to secure itself from external threats. Pakistan has a longer coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone along the Indian Ocean. Due to Indian growing influence in the IPR, Pakistan has shifted its focus to develop solid maritime policies to enhance its blue economy and, eventually, national economy. However, India is trying to get the role of regional hegemon with the support of the major powers, which has more significant implications for Pakistan's security and economy.⁴⁵ For example, India launched its nuclear-powered submarines, which completed its first patrolling in 2018. However, Pakistan still needs to catch up to India in developing its submarines. In addition, India came up with nuclear submarines in 2019, showing its superiority over Pakistan in the region. During Trump's visit to India in February 2020, a \$20 billion contract was signed between the two countries through which India's anti-submarine warfare capabilities would be increased. These continuous developments in Indian maritime capabilities are disturbing the region's

⁴⁴ Neil Winn, "Between Competition and Cooperation: The EU Global Strategy as Means to Reinvigorate EU-Indian Cooperation?" *EU-India Relations: The Strategic Partnership in the Light of the European Union Global Strategy*, (2021): 291-307.

⁴⁵ A Mahmood, D M Kasi, & D A Q Mengal, "US-India Strategic Partnership and Implications for Pakistan," *The Dialogue*, 16(2), (2021): 131-146. <http://pr.hec.gov.pk/jspui/handle/>

balance of power (BOP). Pakistan has serious concerns over these developments and the disturbance of BOP in IPR, which can lead to war.⁴⁶

Furthermore, India is focusing on developing Chabahar port near Gwadar because India is highly interested in the natural resources of Afghanistan. With the help of Chabahar port, India will try to accomplish all its interests in IOR. Through these developments and partnerships, India poses severe threats to CPEC and Pakistan's naval force in the IOR.

In addition, the US Indo-Pacific policy is Indian-centric, posing a severe threat to the security of Pakistan. Under this policy, the US will help India to boost its defence, economy and military, enabling India to counterbalance China in the region. This is a direct threat to Pakistan's security as India takes Centre stage in the region, shifting the power balance in favour of India. Therefore, it has long-lasting implications for the security of Pakistan in the IPR. It would affect Pakistan's maritime position and power in IOR, which are directly linked to national security.⁴⁷

In addition, the US also classified in the policy framework that India would be provided with the military, intelligence, and diplomatic channels to counter the Chinese power projection and resolve the Indian dispute with China. Furthermore, the US wanted to challenge the BRI and CPEC projects by strengthening India's military and power capabilities, providing economic aid to different states and developing economic interdependence.⁴⁸ Thus, the US Indo-Pacific policy has significant implications for Pakistan's security because Pakistan's economy is highly dependent upon the future of the CPEC project. If there is a threat to CPEC, then automatically, it is a direct threat to the security and interests of Pakistan. Furthermore, there was a time when the US was the central balancer in South Asia to avoid any conflict between Pakistan and India.⁴⁹ However, the US has completely shifted its policy towards India to counterbalance China, primarily undermining Pakistan's regional strategic interests.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Rahat Shah, "Pakistan's Quest for Balance in the Context of the Indo-Pacific Strategy," *Australian Journal of Maritime & Ocean Affairs* 14, no. 1 (2022): 39-52.

⁴⁷ Maira Afzazze Saeed, and Umbreen Javaid, "India's Naval Expansion and Strategic Partnership with the Us In The Indian Ocean Region: Implications For Pakistan," *Margalla Papers* 24, no. 1 (2020): 67-80.

⁴⁸ A L Kurian, & C Vinodan, "India and China in the Indian Ocean: Changing Dimensions of Maritime Strategy," *Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, 8(1), (2021)

⁴⁹ Fakhar Hussain, Saadat Nawaz D. Ahmad, S. Haider, and Muhammad Atif, "Challenges to China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC): The Indian Perspective," *Elementary Education Online* 20, no. 5 (2021): 3764-3770.

⁵⁰ Damiya Saghir, and Dr Khushboo Ejaz, "A Comparative Analysis of India and Pakistan's Naval Strategy:(2001-2019)," *South Asian Studies* 2, no. 35 (2021)

With the help of the US Indo-Pacific strategy, India's increasing maritime capabilities are compelling Pakistan to spend more on maritime and air defence capabilities, making Pakistan spend less on other major issues. Supplying the latest technology and nuclear submarines to India and Australia under QUAD and AUKUS will have a domino effect on the region's littoral states. It will affect the whole ASEAN states. Furthermore, it will enhance several nuclear submarines, naval fleets and cruise ships, which will increase worries of Pakistan. India can use these assets against Pakistan anytime, threatening its security, sovereignty and survival in the region.⁵¹ This is because the two countries have a long history of strategic opposition and conflicts, thus they perceive each other as a threat. Increase in Indian maritime power is perceived as a threat by Pakistan.

In the context of increasing ties between India and US which are becoming the reason of raising challenges for Pakistan. India's new US Indo-Pacific policy and blue economic policies have increased Pakistan's security concerns. Though the US policy of "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" aims to counter China, it has more significant implications for the stability and security of Pakistan. This policy is developing a zero-sum game for Pakistan, where Pakistan is now looking towards China and Russia to balance Indian growing power in the region. However, Pakistan needs help to create a balance of power both internally and externally. Let us look at the internal struggles of Pakistan to create a balance of power. It focuses on technological advancements in its maritime spheres, modernizing its navy, and acquiring more advanced weapons, submarines, and cruise missiles. Pakistan is also developing its nuclear technology in the Indian Ocean and developing strategic ties to enhance maritime security.⁵²

Externally, Pakistan is a strong ally of China, and they have helped each other in crucial circumstances. China understands Pakistan's need to increase its defence and economy and provides economic and military assistance and technologically advanced equipment. According to the realist approach, China is helping Pakistan in order to balance India in the region. To maintain the balance of power in the region, Pakistan is participating in joint naval exercises in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, importing modern technology, increasing strategic partnerships, exchanging officials to deal with threats in Indo-Pacific and enhancing military cooperation.⁵³

⁵¹ Reema Shaukat, "The U.S.' Indo-Pacific Strategy and its Implications for Pakistan," *Hilal*, <https://www.hilal.gov.pk/eng-article/>.

⁵² Ghazala Yasmin Jalil, "India's Development Of Sea-Based Nuclear Capabilities," *Strategic Studies* 38, no. 1 (2018): 34-47.

⁵³ Hussain, D. Ahmad, S. Haider, and Muhammad Atif, "Challenges to China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC): The Indian Perspective."

Additionally, Pakistan is reaching out to different countries to gain economic stability and increase its defence. Pakistan is developing bilateral relations and trade agreements with Middle eastern countries, Southeast asian states, and the Central asia States. Pakistan is also moving towards Russia to seek security cooperation. Pakistan is trying to improve its bilateral relationship with the US. The US is a superpower, and no country can afford to have broken ties. So, Pakistan is shifting its foreign policy to have better relations with all the states and a better economy. Pakistan is focusing on improving its Indian and Pacific Ocean defensive systems. The geo-strategic position of Pakistan demands to create a balance of power in the region. Because there is a continuous threat coming to Pakistan from Indian domination in the region. India is trying to engage Pakistan in an arms race in the Indian Ocean, which is a severe threat to the region's security as India is an emerging power and is a serious threat to Pakistan's security and regional security. India and Pakistan must avoid indulging in an arms race because it threatens regional peace. India is uprising as a continental threat in South Asia.

Conclusion

The Indian and Pacific Oceans are essential for the power determination of the states. In the changing international environment, the oceans are more critical to getting power and becoming a global hegemon. In this anarchic world, different powerful states try to achieve the role of global hegemon by projecting their continental and sea power. The naval patrols of different states are making their bases in the Indian and Pacific Oceans through technological advancements. India is the most preeminent actor in this region, and it has adopted the offensive realist approach and emerged as the most powerful state in the region. Through the lens of realistic approach, maritime power rivalry between the super power and emerging powers can be analyzed thoroughly. It will reveal the broader sides of rivalries in Indo-Pacific.

India's new comprehensive maritime doctrine has emphasized the security and the blue economy of the state. In this regard, the powerful state of the US has shifted its focus to the Indo-Pacific region to counter the Chinese power in this region. Increasing Chinese power is a threat to the hegemonic power of the US, for which they came up with the Indo-Pacific Policy, which is Indian-centric. This policy aims to develop India as vital to counter China in the region and act as a US interest preserver. US-backed Indians have developed underwater listening devices and communication grids using satellites. India is enjoying the support of the US and enhancing its power and security in the region. India is also signing cooperative agreements with different states to promote its blue economy and ocean-based activities, which will play a crucial role in lifting the economy of India.

The maritime strategy of India in IPR has far-reaching implications for the security of Pakistan because India is enjoying the role of a US strategic partner, enhancing India's military capability and economic power. With the rise of Indian power, Pakistan is concerned about its regional security and balance of power. To seek security, Pakistan is reaching out to different states to develop mutual defense and economic pacts. Pakistan wants to counterbalance India and secure its national interests. So, Pakistan's maritime and foreign policy should be not only comprehensive but also avoid an arms race with India in IOR while emphasizing a more blue economy.

Pakistan and India should shift their traditional realistic approach to the human centric and economic-centric approach. This will help the regional nations to get out the trap of balance of power and work more on the development of state structure and human societies. Both states should move towards increase of trade and economic dependence on each other. It will create economic and social prosperity in the region. This will also stop both states from entering into traditional conflicts. They should look more on the non-traditional security environments. In 21st century the critical situation's also emerge due to non-traditional threats. So, both India and Pakistan should collaborate to counter these threats in the region. They should adopt different approach than that of the traditional conflict causing approach. This will flourish the societies economically.

EMBRACING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CHALLENGES FOR PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS IN PAKISTAN

Sara Nazir* & Yousma Gul**

Abstract

Public sector organizations are adopting Artificial Intelligence to gain efficiency, improve service quality and enhance policy-making capabilities. However, the growth of technology adoption in Pakistan's public sector organisations is slow because of several challenges the country faces. This paper focuses on the challenges that Pakistan's public sector organisations face in implementing AI and aims to highlight the initiatives in light of "Vision 2025," and "Digital Pakistan Policy 2018." In a nutshell, technological challenges like cost, budgets, technology adoption, research and development, cost-benefit analysis, collaborations, bureaucratic structures, and ICT readiness are the issues that are faced by public sector organisations. Policy-making in digitalisation and overcoming the adoption challenge is a big challenge for public sector organizations. This paper has identified some of the challenges in public sector organisations where further research and policy-making can help overcome challenges for public offices in the future.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Adoption Challenges, Public Sector Organizations, Pakistan.*

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in public sector organisations has caught much attention worldwide in the last two decades because of its potential uses and information dissemination capabilities.¹

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¹ Weslei G. Sousa et al., "How and Where is Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector Going? A Literature Review and Research Agenda," *Government*

Advancement in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has sparked a debate in literature, and policy-makers over the probable benefits of digital technology adoption in the public sector.² As the public sector organisations in a country are primary enablers and users of Information Technology (IT), there is an increased chance that Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption will benefit public-private coordination and transparency in its services. The use of AI in the public sector is often driven by the goal of improving public services, enhancing efficiency, and addressing societal challenges. Government organizations have access to large amounts of public data, such as government records, public surveys, and demographic information. They may use AI to analyze this data for policy-making, resource allocation, and public service delivery, which can benefit private organizations in terms of service delivery in light of policies made by public sector organisations. As public sector organisations work with an aim of provision of essential services to the people, collaborate, allocate resources and devise policies. In comparison there is profit making in private sector. Public service delivery challenges are unique as compared to private organisations and need special consideration to overcome barriers. Because of the immense uses of technological services like Artificial Intelligence, cloud storage, Cyber security, and machine learning, there is a potential for digital technology adoption in the public sector organizations that can help in the transformation and development of government services.³

The likely advantages of AI in the government sector include; improved productivity and performance, identification of issues, economic incentives, information gathering, service benefits, overall societal benefits, decision-making, public engagement and interaction with the system, and sustainable development.⁴ Keeping in view the potential benefits like transparency, value, and accountability, the responses from public institutions have been welcomed around the world regarding the

Information Quarterly 36, no. 4 (2019): 101392, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2019.07.004>.

² Bernd W. Wirtz, Jan C. Weyerer, and Carolin Geyer, "Artificial Intelligence in Theand the Public Sector—Applications and Challenges," *International Journal of Public Administration* 42, no. 4 (2019): 101-3927 (2018): 596-615, <http://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2018.1498103>.

³ OECD, *The OECD Digital Government Policy Framework: Six Dimensions of a Digital Government*, (Paris: OECD, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.1787/f64fed2a-en>.

⁴ Anneke Zuiderwijk, Yu-Che Chen, and Fadi Salem, "Implications of the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Public Governance: A Systematic Literature Review and A Research Agenda," *Government Information Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (2021), <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2021.101577>.

implementation of AI-enabled initiatives in their workplaces.⁵ It is because of the various uses of AI in the public sector organizations, many countries have developed and adopted the policies on a larger scale. The European Union (EU) "Digital Europe Programme," is one initiative where the EU has planned a budget of €8.2 billion between 2021 and 2027.⁶ Other countries followed in their footsteps and allocated a considerable amount of funds for the development and up-gradation of their technological services. Globally, it is estimated that the spending on AI services will be around \$98 billion in 2023, and around 24 percent of the global GDP will be generated by AI services, which makes it a potential market for the industry.⁷

Despite its numerous benefits, developing countries and their respective public sector organizations are lagging in technology adoption. McKinsey and company reported that the barriers to technology adoption by the government include lack of technological talent, low funding for technological research and development and unclear regulation of technology adoption in these countries.⁸ Other factors also include cloud security issues, support of executive management, and cloud complexity that hinder in the way of technology adoption.⁹ World Economic Forum (WEF) identified five challenges that are hindering the way of Artificial Intelligence adoption in the public sector organizations including; the efficient use of AI generated data, lack of AI adoption skills, low AI landscape in public sector organizations, legacy culture and policies of procurement mechanism.¹⁰ As a developing country, Pakistan has many challenges that government organisations face while transforming to digital services like Artificial Intelligence. Although Pakistan has started

⁵ Carlos E. Jimenez-Gomez, Jesus Cano-Carrillo, and Francisco Falcone Lanas, "Artificial Intelligence in Government," *Computer* 53, no. 10 (2020): 23–27.

⁶ European Commission, *White Paper on Artificial Intelligence: A European Approach to Excellence and Trust*, (Brussels: European Commission, 2020), <https://commission.europa.eu/publications/>

⁷ World Economic Forum, *The Future of Jobs Report 2018*, (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2018), <https://www3.weforum.org/docs/>

⁸ Niklas Berglind, Ankit Fadia, and Tom Isherwood, "The Potential Value of AI-- and How Governments could Look to Capture it," McKinsey & Company, 2022, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/>

⁹ Ali Al Hadwer et al., "A Systematic Review of Organizational Factors Impacting Cloud-based Technology Adoption Using Technology-Organization-Environment Framework," *Internet of Things* 15 (2021): 100407.

¹⁰ Julián T. Santeli and Sabine Gerdon, "5 Challenges for Government Adoption of AI," World Economic Forum, 2019, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/08/artificial-intelligence-government-public-sector/>. (Accessed April 5, 2023).

adopting Artificial Intelligence and digital technologies in key departments, the overall adoption of technology process is however slow. This paper focuses on the adoption challenges that Pakistan is facing in implementing digitalized services like Artificial Intelligence in public sector organisations and aims to highlight these challenges in light of "Vision 2025" and "Digital Pakistan Policy 2018."¹¹ The study is aimed at addressing the question, "What are the AI adoption challenges for public sector organisations in Pakistan?" The study is qualitative in nature and results are drawn based on literature collected from secondary sources using PRISMA techniques.¹² The study has adopted Institutional Theory to understand the phenomenon and provide policy implications for development and understanding of the AI adoption challenges.

The first section of the paper provides a background of AI technologies from a global perspective, and highlights some challenges. The second section discusses the "Artificial Intelligence," technologies in practise in the public sector organisations of Pakistan. The third section discusses the AI adaption challenges in light of secondary data collected from various sources. The last section focuses on the challenges in detail before concluding AI adaptation challenges in Pakistan.

Artificial Intelligence: Global Perspective

The use of Artificial Intelligence has gained popularity in the public sector organizations, economy, and society giving way to new opportunities, and broadening the scope of existing workplaces.¹³ Artificial Intelligence for public sector organizations is aimed at designing a system that accesses the environment and designs solutions accordingly to attain specific goals with autonomy."¹⁴ The tasks are assigned to the system according to the needs of the organization which it interprets to provide

¹¹ Sadia Jamil, "From Digital Divide to Digital Inclusion: Challenges for Wide-Ranging Digitalization in Pakistan," *Telecommunications Policy* 45, no. 8 (2021): 102206.

¹² Dinah V. Parums, "Editorial: Review Articles, Systematic Reviews, Meta-Analysis, and the Updated Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 Guidelines," *Medical Science Monitor* 27 (2021)

¹³ Matthew Boyd and Nick Wilson, "Rapid developments in Artificial Intelligence: how might the New Zealand government respond?" *Policy Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (2017)

¹⁴ European Commission, *Communication Artificial Intelligence for Europe: Shaping Europe's Digital Future* (Online: European Commission, April 25, 2018), <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/communication-artificial-intelligence-europe>.

several possibilities to take action.¹⁵ Artificial Intelligence usage in government organizations comprises of, but is not limited to, planning, research and development, analytical skills, optimisation functions, optimization, cyber activities, the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics and, image recognizing, virtual assistance, and self-directed technologies.¹⁶ Public sector organizations have gained interest in Artificial Intelligence usage in administrative and support services to improve efficiency and organisational policy-making. As a result, the service quality of citizen to government administration, taxation, police, and health services has improved with Artificial Intelligence adoption.¹⁷

Despite numerous benefits of technology adoption, public sector organizations globally are facing Artificial Intelligence (AI) adoption challenges including weak regulations, low organizational readiness, compatibility issues and lack of resources.¹⁸ The biggest user of Artificial Intelligence, healthcare faced issues pertaining to learning curve, technology usability, health and safety, government regulations, user readiness because of high regulations. Specifically issues like patient readiness to get operated by machine instead of humans.¹⁹ Other issues include data sharing problems, privacy and security concerns, low engagement of stakeholders, lack of harmony between anticipated and actual outcomes and organizational hierarchies.²⁰ The technical issues include data interpretation and trust on the results, bias of algorithms applied, and the misinterpretation of the outcomes of the data which

¹⁵ Kristinn Thórisson et al., "Why Artificial Intelligence Needs a Task Theory and What It Might Look Like," (In International Conference on Artificial General Intelligence, vol. 9782, 2016), 118–28.

¹⁶ Petar Radanliev et al., "Artificial Intelligence in Cyber-Physical Systems," *AI & Society* 36, no. 3 (September 1, 2021): 783–96.

¹⁷ Sohail Raza Chohan and Zaeem Hassan Akhter, "Electronic Government Services Value Creation from Artificial Intelligence: AI-Based e-Government Services for Pakistan," *Electronic Government, an International Journal* 17, no. 3 (January 2021): 374–90.

¹⁸ Sulaiman Alsheibani, Yen Cheung, and Chris Messom, "Artificial Intelligence Adoption: AI-readiness at Firm-Level," In *PACIS 2018 Proceedings* 37, 2018, <https://aisel.aisnet.org/pacis2018/37>.

¹⁹ Rishi P. Singh et al., "Current Challenges and Barriers to Real-World Artificial Intelligence Adoption for the Healthcare System, Provider, and the Patient," *Translational Vision Science & Technology* 9, no. 2 (2020): 45.

²⁰ Averill Campion et al., "Overcoming the Challenges of Collaboratively Adopting Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector," *Social Science Computer Review* 40, no. 2 (2020): 462–477.

posed challenges for the users of the data.²¹ Adversarial attacks have also emerged as a new threat to AI adoption where the enemy attacks through AI limit the potential use of AI in different fields including medical field, defense technologies and organizations using deep learning.²²

Artificial Intelligence: Public Sector of Pakistan

The government of Pakistan has taken various steps to introduce digitalized technology in light of the global "Industrial Revolution 4.0." The planning commission of Pakistan issued "Vision 2025" for the country in 2013, where the emphasis was given to the development of digitalization in Pakistan named "The Knowledge Revolution."²³ The document contains a roadmap to public-private consortium in the Information Technology (IT) sector and enabled educational institutions to develop curriculums accordingly. Under Pillar III of the document, E-governance strategies have been planned by the government, which focuses on the up-gradation of the IT infrastructure and a close connection between the government and its citizens along with the establishment of "E-government," "E-health," "E-education," and "E-commerce."²⁴

Globally, Pakistan has an AI index of 40.22 compared to the US, which has an index of 85.72, India with 63.67, and China with 70.84 according to the "Government AI readiness index 2022."²⁵ It ranked 92nd in the world out of 181 and 13th in the region out of 16 countries. In research conducted on the responses, accessibility, mobile friendliness, and content accessibility on public organizations' websites in Pakistan, it was found that only 12 from the 50 web pages reported less than fifty percent of issues in accessibility and very poor conformance according to international standards in 2021.²⁶

²¹ Ricardo S. Peres et al., "Industrial Artificial Intelligence in Industry 4.0 - Systematic Review, Challenges and Outlook," *IEEE Access* 8 (2020): 220121-220139.

²² Shilin Qiu et al., "Review of Artificial Intelligence Adversarial Attack and Defense Technologies," *Applied Sciences* 9, no. 5 (2019).

²³ Planning Commission Pakistan, *Pakistan Vision 2025*, (Islamabad: Ministry of Planning Development and Reforms, 2014), <https://www.pc.gov.pk/uploads/>

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Oxford Insights, "Government AI Readiness Index 2022," Oxford Insights, 2023, <https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/>

²⁶ Muhammad Bilal et al., "Evaluate Accessibility and Usability Issues of Particular China and Pakistan Government Websites," (In 2019 2nd International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Big Data (ICAIBD), 2019), 316–22.

Artificial Intelligence Institutional Adoption in Pakistan

In light of the digital revolution, different technological initiatives have been introduced into the system by public service organisations to enhance the digitalization capabilities. The year 2020 saw the establishment of the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) for the development of the IT sector of Pakistan, whose aim is to establish Special Technology Zones (STZs) in the country.²⁷ In light of Vision 2025, the government of Pakistan developed twenty-two software technology parks in the country in the year 2022 and a plan to increase them to 40 was underway by the year end.²⁸

Sino-Pak Center for Artificial Intelligence (SPCAI) was established in 2022 to provide solutions to the daily life challenges of the industry in the country.²⁹ The institute provides solutions in the field of intelligent biomedical applications, smart city urban planning, smart agriculture, applied neural interface, computer vision, robotics, deep learning, system designs, natural disaster management, and the Internet of Things (IoT) for different stakeholders.³⁰ Another institution established by the government is the National Center of Artificial Intelligence (NCAI) Secretariat, Pakistan which offers its services to local industry, the Higher Education Commission (HEC), along with other government departments in the field of AI, machine learning, deep learning, Image Recognition, and Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) equipping them with the latest technology as a part of the Vision 2025.³¹ HEC has also approved thirty-eight universities in Pakistan to offer AI in their curriculum.³² HEC also established six national centers under the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) 2018-19, that offer research in the field of AI under the names “National Centre for Cyber Security” (NCCS), “National Centre for Robotics and Automation” (NCRA), “National Centre for Artificial

²⁷ Minister of E-Commerce, “List of Software Technology Parks,” ETijarat Portal (blog), 2022, <https://etijarat.gov.pk/information/software-technology-parks/list-of-software-technology-parks/>.

²⁸ The News, “IT Ministry to Set up 18 More Software Technology Parks,” *The News* (online), January 24, 2022, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/>.

²⁹ PAF IAST, “SPCAI: Sino-Pak Center for Artificial Intelligence,” PAF IAST (blog), 2021, <https://paf-iaast.edu.pk/spcai/>

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ NCAI, “National Center of Artificial Intelligence- NCAI Sectt, Pakistan: Overview,” LinkedIn, 2021, <https://www.linkedin.com/company/ncai-pk/?originalSubdomain=pk>. (Accessed April 6, 2023)

³² Edu Rank, “Best Artificial Intelligence (AI) Universities in Pakistan,” August 11, 2021, <https://edurank.org/cs/ai/pk/>

Intelligence" (NCAI), "National Centre for Cloud Computing and Big Data" (NCBC), "National Centre for GIS and Space applications" (NCGSA), and "National Centre for Livestock Breeding, Genetics and Genomics" (NCLBG&G).³³ The purpose of these facilities is to enhance capacity building of public and private institutions of the country through offering their consultancy in their respective fields.

Healthcare is another sector where Artificial Intelligence is adopted in some institutions of the country. Technological advancement in the field of Artificial Intelligence is crucial for the healthcare industry of Pakistan, which, if it does not develop, will not reap the benefits of technological breakthroughs.³⁴ The use of AI in medical services has been welcomed by practitioners because of its positive role despite a lack of practical knowledge of the technology which they are willing to adopt. The role of advanced AI in the medical profession, whether private or public, is a welcoming sign for countries like Pakistan that can benefit from the AI advancement and improve their services.

Another field where the public sector investment in AI in Pakistan is granted is the educational institutions especially higher education institutions and research facilities established under the umbrella of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan. Educational institutions have started adopting AI to meet user needs but the constraints in implementing it fully of comprise budget, time, and technology-equipped staff.³⁵ Under the HEC funding policy related to Artificial Intelligence, different research facilities have been set up within different universities that are building advanced digital capabilities at institutional levels and offering expertise to the industry both in the government and private sectors.³⁶

The central bank and other economic organisations have been testing Artificial Intelligence in different economic and financial modelling tools, although the technology is not fully implemented. Artificial Intelligence has also been used in economic models forecasting in Pakistan to test conventional forecasting techniques with Artificial Neural Networks (ANN) models where the use of Artificial Intelligence predicted

³³ HEC, "Research for Innovation National Centers (NCs)," Higher Education Commission, 2019, <https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/research/>

³⁴ Muhammad Imran Khan et al., "Status of Artificial Intelligence in Pakistan and Its Implications in Anesthesiology," *Anaesthesia, Pain & Intensive Care* 26, no. 1 (July 2, 2022): 110–14.

³⁵ Muhammad Y. Ali et al., "Artificial Intelligence Application in University Libraries Of Pakistan: SWOT Analysis and Implications," *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*, (2022)

³⁶ Ibid.

better results compared to traditional methods.³⁷ Other models that are used by AI networks include decision tree, Support Vector Machine, Bayesian Classifiers, K-means clustering, and Random Forest. These models have also been used on an experimental basis in different institutions of the country for research and scientific purposes. It has also generated reliable content for use by public and private institutions. For instance, the use of ANN modeling in rainfall predictions has also been tested in Pakistan and is found to be much more accurate than the mathematical conceptual methods already being used by the metrological department.³⁸ The use of Artificial Intelligence is also found to be facilitating the human resource functions of government operated institutions in Pakistan.³⁹

In certain institutions, there is an urgent need for AI adaptation for improved services as Pakistan is behind the global standards in these places. The lack of using Artificial Intelligence in the legal system of Pakistan to help legal system reforms and speedy case processing is also found to be lagging behind the UK, Australia, and India due to which the process is time taking.⁴⁰ Other uses of AI are in the public sector organizations where the initiatives are still lagging include Smart electricity and water distribution networks, shelf management, crop-yield prediction, customer segmentation, stock market prediction, financial frauds prediction, crime prediction and cyber-attacks prediction. This is challenging because the majority of the AI projects are still in testing phases and their implementation on a large scale has not been attained by the public sector organizations so far. Digital technologies like Artificial Intelligence, cloud computing, cyber security and digital application platforms have also found its uses in the defense forces globally where warfare modelling has improved as a result of advanced decision-making

³⁷ Adnan Haider and Muhammad Nadeem Hanif, "Inflation Forecasting in Pakistan Using Artificial Neural Networks," *Pakistan Economic and Social Review* 47, no. 1 (2009): 123–38.

³⁸ A. R. Ghumman et al., "Runoff Forecasting by Artificial Neural Network and Conventional Model," *Alexandria Engineering Journal* 50, no. 4 (December 1, 2011): 345–50.

³⁹ Syed Alamdar Ali Shah et al., "Information Technology Moderation in HR Functions of Public Sector Organisations in Pakistan," *International Journal of Technological Learning, Innovation, and Development* 13, no. 4 (January 2021): 370–87.

⁴⁰ Javairia Shafiq, Hafiz Muhammad Salman Shafiq, and Muhammad Shabbir Sarwar, "Use of ICTs and Artificial Intelligence to Overcome Judicial Trial Delays in Pakistani Courts," *Pakistan Languages and Humanities Review* 6, no. 2 (June 30, 2022): 1153–63.

capabilities of the machines including robots and machine learning models.

Theoretical Lens

The article has discussed the Artificial Intelligence (AI) challenges in light of the Institutional Theory. The institutional theory of organizations suggests that organisations get influenced by economic factors but also by social norms, values, and institutional pressures.⁴¹ One key concept in institutional theories is institutional isomorphism, which refers to the tendency of organizations to become similar to each other over time which is driven by the pressures organizations face to conform to the expectations and practices of their institutional environment.⁴² Institutional Isomorphism could be further distributed into three categories; (1) Coercive isomorphism where organizations adopt similar structures and practices due to external pressures from powerful actors. (2) Mimetic isomorphism where Organizations imitate successful models or practices of other organizations in their field, often driven by uncertainty or a lack of clear best practices and (3) Normative isomorphism where organizations conform to the norms and values of their institutional environment, such as professional standards or cultural expectations.⁴³ Institutional theories also emphasize the role of legitimacy, which refers to the perception that an organization's actions and practices are appropriate, desirable, and socially acceptable.⁴⁴ Organizations seek to maintain or enhance their legitimacy by aligning with the prevailing institutional norms and values.

Institutional theory, in the light of isomorphism can be applied to understand the challenges and opportunities of adopting artificial intelligence (AI) by government organisations in Pakistan. The theory, on AI adoption in Pakistan, can help examine the need of technology adoption, and what are the institutional pressures that drive or hinder the adoption of AI in government organisations. The study used the PRISMA technique to identify previous literature. PRISMA (Preferred Reporting

⁴¹ Lynne G. Zucker, "Institutional Theories of Organization," *Annual Review of Sociology* 13 (1987): 443-464.

⁴² Bob Hinings, Thomas Gegenhuber, and Royston Greenwood, "Digital Innovation And Transformation: An Institutional Perspective," *Information and Organization* 28, no. 1 (2018): 52-61.

⁴³ Donald C. Hambrick et al., "Isomorphism In Reverse: Institutional Theory As An Explanation For Recent Increases In Intra industry Heterogeneity And Managerial Discretion," *Research in Organizational Behavior* 26 (2004): 307-350.

⁴⁴ David Baxter et al., "Institutional Challenges in Agile Adoption: Evidence from a Public Sector IT Project," *Government Information Quarterly*, 2023.

Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) is a widely used framework for conducting and reporting systematic reviews and meta-analyses.⁴⁵ While PRISMA is primarily designed for primary research, some of its strategies can also be applied to secondary research. The articles were extracted by the guidelines of PRISMA using the inclusion and exclusion criteria and based on research objectives. To answer the research question of the challenges of artificial intelligence adoption to public sector industries, we introduced the setting to secondary data extraction using academic peer review journals and generated the results using the following keywords; Artificial Intelligence, Adoption challenges, public sector organisations, Pakistan. The initial search matched 4460 review articles. Further application of inclusion-exclusion criteria matched nine searches since 2019.

Adaption Challenges

Table 1: AI Adaption Challenges for Public Sector Organizations. (n=9)

Authors	Adoption Challenges
(Zuiderwijk et al., 2021) ⁴⁶	The potential challenges for AI adaption in government include data challenges, social, societal, and economic issues, organizational adoption issues, management compatibility, skill set, understanding, ethical and acceptability challenges, political, legal, policy drafting and implementation challenges.
(Zeeshan Javed, 2021) ⁴⁷	Adaption of AI and digital technologies have made policy-making easy for various government institutions for data collection and service delivery but the biggest challenge for the government will be in cyber security that, if not resolved, could bring the entire AI system to a complete halt within hours.

⁴⁵ PRISMA, "Who Should Use PRISMA?" PRISMA, 2020, <https://prisma-statement.org/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>.

⁴⁶ Chen Zuiderwijk, and Salem, "Implications of the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Public Governance: A Systematic Literature Review and a Research Agenda."

⁴⁷ Zeeshan Javed, "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in the Enhancement of Cyber Security of Pakistan," *Journal of Contemporary Studies* 10, no. 2 (2021): 1–14.

(Yongrong Xin et al.) ⁴⁸	The challenges for AI adaption in the public sector organizations in Pakistan include lack of infrastructure development, standardization of inter-departmental databases, adoption issues, and cyber security risks.
(Alex Gilliard 2020) ⁴⁹	Eight challenges to Pakistan's AI transformation are; work ethics and culture, lack of knowledge, frequently changing leadership of the country, delays in funding, no software procurement rules, missing national data governance policy, context-driven digital payment gateways, and lack of secure and reliable digital access in the country.
(Maciej Kuziemski & Gianluca Misuraca, 2020) ⁵⁰	Hefty costs, negative experiences with technological installment in the past, governance issues, resistance by the bureaucratic structures, and decision-making issues of man versus machine autonomy.
(Mahrose Nadeem et al., 2023) ⁵¹	The challenges in digitalized economy include a lack of IT infrastructure, lack of awareness, and market conditions are some of the challenges for the digital economy of Pakistan.
(Xu & Baigy, 2022) ⁵²	Individual perception of technology, weak regulations, limited resources, low technological maturity and organizational support.
(Amjad, 2023) ⁵³	Low technological skills, unavailability of data,

⁴⁸ Yongrong Xin et al., "Assessing Citizens' Attitudes and Intentions to Adopt E-Government Services: A Roadmap toward Sustainable Development," *Sustainability* 14, no. 22 (2022)

⁴⁹ Rasool and Malik, "The 8 Challenges in Pakistan's Digital Transformation Journey."

⁵⁰ Maciej Kuziemski and Gianluca Misuraca, "AI Governance in the Public Sector: Three Tales from the Frontiers of Automated Decision-Making in Democratic Settings," *Telecommunications Policy, Artificial Intelligence, Economy, And Society* 44, no. 6 (July, 2020): 101976.

⁵¹ Mahrose Nadeem et al., "Barriers and Strategies for Digitalisation of Economy in Developing Countries: Pakistan, a Case in Point," *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, (2023).

⁵² Pan Xu and Esmaeil Baigy, "Innovation Adoption Case Study and the Potential of Blockchain on Trade Single Window: Identification of Adoption Challenges and Suggestions for Pakistan Single Window," (Master's Thesis, Uppsala University, 2022), ProQuest, <http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uu:diva-480244>.

	data privacy.
(Bibi, Munazza, 2019) ⁵⁴	Complex Human resource departments, resistance to technology, fear of unemployment, lack of data and infrastructure non-availability.

Source: Author

Discussion

The use of digital services like Artificial Intelligence in government departments impacts policy-making, expedites decision-making, and enhances communication and service quality, which can help improve the working of government organisations.⁵⁵ As the impact of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 continues to expand, the global economy is moving into a technological phase where it is imperative for the organisational survival that they adopt to the technological changes and keep in line with the new developments in this field. In these conditions, the role of digitalized public sector organisations is vital as these institutions perform the decision-making, planning, governance, and interaction with the public.

The public sector organisations in Pakistan are running on traditional systems that are out dated in terms of current technology.⁵⁶ As a result, there are governance-related issues in many public sector organisations that need an overhaul of their systems. The study aims to highlight the challenges faced by the public sector in terms of Pakistani public offices affecting the performance of these institutions. Also, the paper investigates the challenges that are present in the policy documents that need to lay down a road map for digital transformation and Artificial Intelligence adoption in government institutions in Pakistan.

The digital transformation initiatives by the government known as **Pakistan Vision 2025** documented the digital future of Pakistan. It focused on national capacity building in terms of the digitalization of the economy. The document focused on digitalizing various government departments, including the tax authorities and automating the tax record of the country. Also, another initiative highlighted in the document is the plan for smart cities and digital connectivity which is part of Vision 2025,

⁵³ Muhammad H. Amjad, "Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Policy in Developing Countries," (Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 2023), <https://pide.org.pk/research/>

⁵⁴ Munaza Bibi, "Execution of Artificial Intelligence Approach in Human Resource Management Functions: Benefits and Challenges in Pakistan," *Sarhad Journal of Management Sciences* 5, no. 1 (2019): 119-124.

⁵⁵ Jamie Berryhill et al., "Hello, World: Artificial Intelligence and Its Use in the Public Sector," (Paris: OECD, November 21, 2019)

⁵⁶ Nadeem et al., "Barriers and Strategies for Digitalisation of Economy in Developing Countries."

where better connection and IT infrastructure development are part of the city planning. Pillar IV of the document highlights "the development of the knowledge economy of Pakistan through value addition."⁵⁷ The document also highlighted "laying foundations for the knowledge economy," section. The government will enable the education sector to adapt to digitalization including schools, colleges, universities, and vocational institutions. The document further talked about Pakistan's "Information and Communication Technology," (ICT) sector. Special initiatives will be taken to develop this sector and the educational institutions especially to enhance the nation's capacity building.

The "**Digital Pakistan Policy 2018**" also laid out a plan for digitalising Pakistan. The policy focuses on the infrastructure development and capacity building of the ICT services. The main sectors that will be focused on include health, education, agriculture, e-commerce, and other socio-economic institutions.⁵⁸ Promotion of incubation centers for startups, e-government, and establishment of IT parts and STZs. The "**e-governance**" focused on the provision of official services to the people through an online platform for efficiency, e-procurement, the establishment of data centers for government organizations, and **G-Cloud services** to integrate the government IT infrastructure and secure the existing networks. Other services to use digital technologies are: e-Agriculture, e-Health, e- Energy, e-Commerce, e-Justice, and ICT Education. Section II (17 & 18) focused on AI, Cloud computing, IoT, Big data, and Robotics. Focus is given to the establishment of facilities that will enhance the use of these resources, upgrade the existing capacity collaboration between different partners for the promotion of services, engagement of different departments, including NADRA, FBR, ICT administration, and AGPR.⁵⁹ The purpose of the digital Pakistan policy is to ensure that the overall IT and digital capabilities of the country are improved. The document focuses on Public-Private collaborations, facilitation of government as well as private industries, promotion of IT exports, and development of the educational sector through HEC for the promotion of digital activities.

Documents issued by the government of Pakistan about its digital policy and vision 2025 focused on making Pakistan a digital product exporting country. There needs to be more mention of improvement of the public sector in terms of enhancing their digital capabilities. Although different policies have been highlighted in the document, a concrete plan

⁵⁷ Planning Commission, "Pakistan Vision 2025."

⁵⁸ MOITT, "Digital Pakistan Policy," (Islamabad: Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, 2018), <https://moitt.gov.pk/>

⁵⁹ Ibid.

in terms of the implication of Artificial Intelligence in government institutions needs to be discussed in detail. The document did not address any existing challenges and how the government plans to overcome them. The policies focus on is also the development of digitalization in the country rather than on implementing these services, especially in the public sector. The document also focused on the development of institutions that will be developers and content providers, like universities and educational institutions. The study noted that these policy documents focused little on how digital services, including AI and Cloud Computing will be used in public sector organizations. There are also issues related to policymaking in bridging the gap between public and government institutions personnel. There is a lack of active digital activities in government organizations that focus on public-private interactions, use of AI -related decisional activities and adoption of digital decision-making.

Our findings showed that one of the challenges the public sector organisations face is the lack of funding. The use of AI in organisations is a vital tool, but the high costs associated with installation and maintenance is affecting its technological use.⁶⁰ The role of Artificial Intelligence in government organisations is vital, but challenges related to high cost are a major hinderance in adopting the technology. Although long lasting, the cost-benefit analysis of the technology, is preventing public sector organisations from adopting it. The government departments do not have enough developmental budget to spend on technological developments that could cost millions or billions to the state coffers. AI regulations for each sector, cloud policy, data protection and security policies can pave the way for AI adoption, particularly AI -based solutions integration in Pakistan's public sector organizations. Having an indigenous AI -based solution for less-sensitive problem areas and local data repository is better than spending a hefty budget on providing AI -based products from external sources (that may have a backdoor and cause data leakage). A lack of adoption of indigenously developed AI solutions is another reason. In a developing country, the majority of revenue is spent on providing basic services to the people and on non-developmental expenditures due to lack of planning. This leaves government institutions with little to no funds to be spent on adopting digital technologies.

Our second finding suggests that there is also a lack of practical knowledge in terms of operations. In order to materialize the transformative potential of AI, public sector organizations need to

⁶⁰ Ali Tarab Rizvi et al., "Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Its Applications in Indian Manufacturing: A Review," in *Current Advances in Mechanical Engineering*, ed. Saroj Kumar Acharya and Dipti Prasad Mishra, Lecture Notes in Mechanical Engineering (Singapore: Springer, 2021), 825–35.

successfully assimilate AI in their operational activities. Implementing AI requires specialized knowledge and skills, which may be lacking in the public sector. Additionally, limited financial and technological resources can pose challenges to adopting and maintaining AI systems. In order to materialize the transformative potential of AI, public sector organisations need to successfully assimilate AI in their operational activities. Higher Education Commission, in collaboration with universities in the country, is offering programs in AI, but the output is at the beginners' phase to address the needs of the public sector. The public office holders also lack the knowledge of handling the technology, interpreting the data and using it for their benefit. Thirst to adopt AI will increase only after understanding the benefits of AI in government operations. People are reluctant to try the experience because of the detailed knowledge required as an AI professional. Once, they are aware of the potential benefits of the technology, an attitude building towards AI adoption will occur.

Our third finding suggests that developing and implementing Artificial Intelligence compatible with individual institutional needs could be much higher. There are very few institutions that are using the technology at the moment. Other departments are still working on traditional practices. Despite the popularity and usefulness of Artificial Intelligence in government institutions, and the private/ public cloud still addressing availability, privacy and security issues on the cloud is another challenge.⁶¹ There is also no mechanism defined in the official organizational and government policies for development and adoption of digital technologies that cater to organizational needs. Although the policies and guidelines discuss improving digital services in the country, but how they will be developed, still remains to be seen. AI systems rely on large amounts of high-quality data to function effectively. Public sector institutions may face challenges in accessing and managing the necessary data for AI applications.

Our subsequent finding about cyber security and data confidentiality hinders Artificial Intelligence adoption challenges in public institutions. Pakistan is ranked one of the lowest AI and cyber security capable countries in the region and around the world poses a threat to the data breach.⁶² Because of the security and data privacy challenges, many government institutions are reluctant to adopt Artificial Intelligence in

⁶¹ Slava Jankin Mikhaylov, Marc Esteve, and Averill Campion, "Artificial Intelligence for the Public Sector: Opportunities and Challenges of Cross-Sector Collaboration," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 376, no. 2128 (August 6, 2018)

⁶² Oxford Insights, "Government AI Readiness Index 2021."

their departments. Digital existence is impossible without embracing AI and Cyber Security in true letter and spirit.

Our findings also indicate challenges related to data quality and information availability in government institutions. Artificial Intelligence models rely heavily on data quality and availability to model their programs. However, the necessary expertise and data sources are unavailable to the public departments to train these models. Also, some government organizations might struggle to collect and sort data for its use.

Another issue in light of the institutional theory found was the Institutional barrier. Public sector institutions often have established bureaucratic structures, processes, and regulations that can hinder the adoption of new technologies like artificial intelligence. These institutions may need to adapt their policies and procedures to accommodate AI implementation. There is paperwork involved, lack of acceptance to adopt AI, challenges the man versus machine approach, and the fear of the unknown in decision-making are some of the issues that hinder technology adoption in the country. The case of NADRA, for instance, where the employees resisted the technological development for a long time, but the organisation ultimately succeeded in its technology adoption. The same challenges are observed in other public sector organizations where people hesitate to adopt technology. Other challenges and issues include lack of awareness, resistance towards change, inherent transparency of AI driven results, verifiability and repeatability of AI - driven results.

Conclusion

AI significantly contributes to the betterment and efficiency of public sector organizations as they are engaged in policy-making and public dealing. Adapting the latest technologies like AI can be of help to the improvement of efficient digital services in public sector organizations of Pakistan. There are already examples of technology adoption in the country where the result was an efficient organizational function. The digital technologies like Artificial Intelligence, cloud computing and cyber security, among other technologies, might be new in the country, but combined with the education, and planning and experiences of the institutions already equipped with these services, will benefit in taking over the challenges. AI has various benefits, but they come with challenges for benign technology states like Pakistan. International evidence suggests public sector organizations face challenges while adapting to AI or related digital technologies in their departments. With the passage of time and with careful planning, these institutions overcame the hurdles associated with digitalization. How these institutions achieved it could be studied and adopted in developing countries like Pakistan.

Technological challenges like adoption cost, lack of resources and budgets, technology adoption fear, lack of research and development, cost-benefit analysis, departmental collaborations, bureaucratic structures and ICT readiness are the issues that are faced by the public sector organizations. Policy-making in digitalization and overcoming the adoption challenges is a big challenge for the public sector organizations. Although government has taken initiatives like “Digital Pakistan,” funds to the educational institutions to produce professional and allocation of budget towards technology adoption, there is a lot to do in terms of overcoming these challenges. This paper has identified some of the challenges in the industry where further research and policy-making can help overcome the issues for the public offices technology adoption and use. To address these issues, the government policy makers may need to devise a comprehensive plan including investment in training the personal, and increase awareness in the people on the benefits of inclusion of Artificial Intelligence related technologies. The government needs to curtail the digital divide in the country and enhance the technological services so that the technological requirements of shifting towards AI models’ fulfilled. There is also a dire need to allocate a sizeable budget towards adopting digitalized services. The lack of AI supportive legislations is another reason for non-adoption of AI in many sectors where the government needs to focus on and draft policy legislation that can ease the way of AI adoption in public sector organizations.

THE US WITHDRAWAL AND CHINA'S GROWING ENGAGEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

Saeed Ahmed Rid*

Abstract

China's interest in Afghanistan has grown substantially over the past few decades. This is evident from the fact that Logar Aynak, the copper extraction project of China, is the largest foreign investment in Afghanistan. In this paper, China's growing engagement in Afghanistan is studied, especially China's role in the aftermath of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan is examined at length. The main problems and obstacles China faces in Afghanistan are explored, and challenges and opportunities arise as a result are discussed as well. Considering China's policy of careful engagement in the region, the nature of China's growing involvement in Afghanistan is studied.

Keywords: Sino-US Rivalry, CPEC, OBOR, Taliban Government, China-Afghanistan Relations

Introduction

Unlike the United Kingdom, United States of America, and Russia who have a history of intervening in Afghanistan affairs and fighting proxy wars against each other, China has no such history. For the last few decades, China's interests in Afghanistan were limited to controlling the spill over of the jihadi trend in Afghanistan among the Uyghur separatists of Xinjiang.¹ China shares a 47-mile border with Afghanistan along the North-Eastern Afghan province of Badakhshan with China's Muslim-dominated region of Xinjiang.

Despite being an immediate neighbour, China has never been directly part of the great game in Afghanistan because traditionally Afghanistan had been a low diplomatic priority for China and strategically speaking China did not consider itself ready for the great game.²

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¹ Dirk Van Der Kley, "China's Foreign Policy in Afghanistan," (Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy: 3) <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/>

² Zhao Hong, "China's Afghan Policy: The Forming of the 'March West Strategy?'" *The Journal of East Asian Affairs*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2013, 1-29 ; Zhao Huasheng,

Nonetheless China has kept increasing its trade and investment in Afghanistan for last few decades. Between 2002 and 2010, China's exports in Afghanistan increased from \$19.91 million to \$704 million.³ Moreover, since 2007, China has invested \$4.4 billion in Afghanistan through its two state-owned companies, Metallurgical Corporation of China (MCC) and Jiangxi Copper Corporation (JCCL), at the location of Mes Aynak, which holds 240 million tonnes of 2.3 percent grade untapped copper ore, making it one of the world's largest copper mines.⁴ The Logar Aynak, the copper extraction project of China, is the largest foreign investment in Afghanistan thus far.

China's policy of keeping itself away from the great game in Afghanistan helped them get strategic gains at others' expense. From 2002-2021 the USA and Europe were carrying the burden of the security and state-building project in Afghanistan during Karzai and Ghani regimes, while China kept improving its stakes in trade and investment. Despite signing the large-scale financial agreements with the Afghan government, China did not take any sides between the Taliban and the Ashraf Ghani led Afghan government. In hindsight it can be argued that was a wise policy because it helped China maintain a working relationship with the Taliban leadership which proved very useful in the post-US withdrawal scenario.

Moreover, since 2017-18 as the US withdrawal from Afghanistan became imminent, China started increasing its military stakes in region around Afghanistan.⁵ China denies it but reports are at least two Chinese funded military bases are constructed one in Murghab region and the other in Gorno-Badakhshan province of Tajikistan bordering Afghanistan to provide the security cover to Tajikistan and to protect the Sinkiang province of China, from any spill over effect of extremist religious militancy emanating from the volatile Afghanistan region.⁶ This makes a strategic sense because the Central Asian countries including Tajikistan are an integral part of the One Belt-One Road (OBOR) initiative, therefore,

"Afghanistan and China's New Neighbourhood Diplomacy," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944)*, vol. 92, no. 4, (2016): 891-908.

³ Raja Mohammad Khan, "China's Economic and Strategic Interests in Afghanistan," *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, Special Issue, vol.1, no.1. (Summer 2015): 3.

⁴ Erica Downs, "China Buys into Afghanistan," *SAIS Review*, vol. XXXII, no. 2 (Summer-Fall 2012): 66.

⁵ Stephen Blank, "China's Military Base in Tajikistan: What Does it Mean?" *The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, April 18, 2019.

⁶ Chris Devonshire-Ellis, "China To Build Military Bases In Tajikistan," *Silk Road Briefing*, November 2, 2021, <https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2021/11/02/>

China has the genuine concerns over maintaining the security in the region.⁷

Experts say China had kept a low profile in Afghanistan, but started having plans of larger engagement in the region in the post-2011 scenario when Obama had announced the plan for the gradual withdrawal of the US troops from Afghanistan.⁸ China can ill-afford any political instability and long-drawn civil war in Afghanistan. The political stability in Afghanistan is important for China, as it is an important route for reaching Eurasia. Afghanistan is wedged between two major routes for China's trade between Central Asia and Pakistan through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Hence, the security of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) also depends upon the stability and peace in Afghanistan.

In this paper China's foreign policy towards Afghanistan is studied in the context of Sino-US rivalry and the post-US withdrawal scenario. The focus of this research paper is to explain how starting as a low diplomatic priority, over a last decade or so Afghanistan has gradually become strategically important for China. Moreover, to explore what will be the foreign policy of China in Afghanistan. Whether China will completely take the responsibility of Afghanistan like the USA did or it may adopt a different course.

The paper is divided into four sections. In the first section the reasons for the US pull out from Afghanistan are explained with the lens of increasing Sino-US rivalry. In the second section, the nature of Taliban rule and political and economic situation in post-US withdrawal Afghanistan is explained. In the third section growing engagement of China in Afghanistan from low diplomatic profile to a country of a strategic importance is studied. In the fourth section obstacles for China in Afghanistan are examined.

Research Questions

The main research questions which this paper explores are to study how Afghanistan has emerged as a region of strategic importance from traditionally a low diplomatic priority for China in last few decades. Moreover this paper explores whether the Chinese engagement in Afghanistan has increased or not after the US withdrawal and what are the chances of China taking over the leadership role in Afghanistan like USA did from 2002 to 2021.

⁷ Irina V Kokushkina, and Maria A. Soloshcheva, "The Role of Central Asia in the 'One Belt—One Road' Initiative," *Iran & the Caucasus*, vol. 23, no. 3, (2019):283–98.

⁸ "Obama Announces Afghanistan Troop Withdrawal Plan," *CNN News*, June 23, 2011, <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/POLITICS/06/22/>

The US Withdrawal and the Sino-US Rivalry in Afghanistan

The newspapers and reports from the USA suggest that for the last several years leading to the departure of the US and NATO forces from Afghanistan, the US administration and policy makers were increasingly seeing their presence in Afghanistan as more damaging than doing any good to them in their overall competition with rising China. The US administration was increasingly seeing that their presence was benefitting China at their expense. The US administration was apprehensive of the positive image and conciliatory policies of the Hamid Karzai government towards China.⁹ By 2010, they had started accusing China of “free-riding” and getting massive investment deals in Afghanistan at the expense of the United States, which was paying the price not only in monetary terms but also because the US soldiers were losing their lives on the soil of Afghanistan.¹⁰ The USA was apprehensive of the Chinese strategy of bidding for massive investments in Afghanistan while keeping a distance by not taking sides, which meant that the Chinese investments faced no threats from the insurgents, and they positioned themselves to work with whoever controlled Kabul.¹¹

It is quite clear from the discussion above that the United States did not like this equation and wanted to change this in favour of the USA. The USA had wanted China to pay for its investment gains in Afghanistan by cooperating with the USA in its peace efforts in Afghanistan.¹² Like the USA had proposed China several joint projects including constructing schools around the Aynak region, the site for Chinese copper mines.¹³ But China did not take any interest because China was not ready for getting involved in the quagmire of the Afghan imbroglio. The famous China expert, Andrew Small had told the *Reuters* in 2014, “At the end of 2011, the Chinese realized America was leaving and they were getting this dumped on their lap.”¹⁴

Several explanations exist for the abrupt, unwise pull out of the USA from Afghanistan in August 2020. One of the explanations that make a sense to me is the policymakers in the United States believed one way to

⁹ Tiffany P, *China's Role in Shaping the Future of Afghanistan* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2010) https://carnegieendowment.org/files/china_role_afghanistan.pdf

¹⁰ Robert D. Kaplan, “Beijing’s Afghan Gamble,” *New York Times*, October 7, 2009.

¹¹ Tiffany P. Ng.

¹² Katharine Houreld, Ben Blanchard, “Anxious China Emerges as Diplomatic Player in Afghanistan,” *Reuters News*, April 14, 2014, <https://www.reuters.com/article/>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

make China pay for the security of Afghanistan could be to pull-out the US and NATO forces from Afghanistan and let China handle the Afghanistan mess. In other words dump Afghanistan in China's lap in a hope that Afghanistan will prove to be a graveyard for China as well like it has been the graveyard of empires in past.¹⁵ From Alexander the Great in 327 BC to former Soviet Union and the United States in recent past, history tells us Afghanistan has proved to be a difficult region to control which is why many term it a 'graveyard of the empires.'¹⁶

In *The Washington Times*, Bill Gertz wrote an article on August 18, 2021, reporting an encounter in China between David Stilwell, former assistant secretary of state for East Asia and Pacific affairs during the Trump administration, and a People's Liberation Army (PLA) officer. During encounters, the Chinese PLA officer criticized the 'imperialist US policies', which, according to him, had turned Afghanistan into an American colony. On this Mr. Stilwell agreed America should depart as soon as possible and was reported telling the author, "I wished him and his PLA buddies luck in the graveyard of empires."¹⁷ In the same news story, Mr. Stilwell showed his happiness over the expected US withdrawal from Afghanistan, "Now they (China) have no choice but to engage. The alternative is to leave all that investment in Afghanistan and give up the One Belt/One Road dream."¹⁸ Hence, the policy makers in the United States were convinced that once they pulled out from Afghanistan, China would take complete charge of Afghanistan and would have to bear all the expenses to maintain peace and security in Afghanistan.

The Sino-US rivalry has been on the rise since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in Wuhan, China, and it is taking very dangerous turns as competition is becoming fierce, covering a range of issues involving economic competition, the power of alliances and ideological struggle.¹⁹ Mearsheimer, believes that the America-China rivalry is inevitable and that the USA must control the rise of China before it is too

¹⁵ Milton Bearden, "Afghanistan, Graveyard of Empires," *Foreign Affairs* 80, no. 6 (2001): 17–30, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20050325>.

¹⁶ Akhilesh Pillalamarri, "Why Is Afghanistan the 'Graveyard of Empires'?" *The Diplomat*, June 30, 2023, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/06/why-is-afghanistan-the-graveyard-of-empires/> and Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires: America's War in Afghanistan*, (New York: Norton, 2010)

¹⁷ Bill Gertz, "China Set to Join 'Graveyard Of Empires' in Afghanistan," *The Washington Times*, August 18, 2021, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/aug/18/china-set-join-graveyard-empires-afghanistan/>

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Huang Tran, "Is the US–China Strategic Competition a Cold War?" *New Atlanticist*, April 21, 2021, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/>

late.²⁰ Even there is talk on the possibility of a new Cold War between China and the USA. In his article in the *New York Times*, David E. Sanger compared the worries of the US administration vis-à-vis China with their concerns during the 1950s vis-à-vis the former Soviet Union and asked whether the war between China and the USA had started.²¹ In response, Hal Brands and John Lewis Gaddis were in agreement with his concerns regarding the Cold War with China and answered whether it had started already or maybe not yet in their article published in *Foreign Affairs* magazine a few days later.²²

In all this conversation of the Sino-US strategic rivalry and the possibility of a new Cold War, being a periphery Afghanistan is surely not at the centre stage but it will remain one of the major venues of the US-China rivalry.²³ For China peace and stability in Afghanistan is important for the success of CPEC and OBOR initiatives. On the other hand, for USA, Afghanistan remains relevant because USA still has its strategic interests in the region. Moreover, the USA would not like smooth sailing for China in Afghanistan, therefore, would like to remain engaged.

The Post-US Withdrawal Situation in Afghanistan

The post-US withdrawal situation in Afghanistan is still evolving, but thus far, under Taliban rule, the future of Afghanistan is uncertain. The Afghan economy is in the doldrums, and poverty is at its peak.²⁴ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports ninety percent (34 million) of the Afghan population lives below the poverty line as the two-thirds of the Afghans are not sure about their next meal.²⁵

On the question of women's rights, the Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid in his first press conference said, "In regard to women, of course, they will be able to work within the frameworks of our Islamic

²⁰ John J. Mearsheimer, "The Inevitable Rivalry: America, China, and the Tragedy of Great-Power Politics," *Foreign Affairs*, (November/December 2021) <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-10-19/>

²¹ David E. Sanger, "Washington Hears Echoes of the '50s and Worries: Is This a Cold War With China?" *The New York Times*, October 16, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/17/us/politics/>

²² Hal Brands and John Lewis Gaddis, "The New Cold War: America, China, and the Echoes of History," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2021. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-10-19/>

²³ Mohsen Shariatnia, "China-US Rivalry: the Afghanistan Factor," *MENA Affairs*, August 22, 2021, <https://menaaffairs.com/>

²⁴ Haroun Rahimi, "The Taliban in Government: A Grim New Reality is Settling in," *Al-Jazeera News*, March 23, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/>

²⁵ Kelly Ng, "Afghan Economic Hopes Threatened by Taliban – UN," *BBC News*, April 18, 2023.

laws for example in education, in health, in prosecution.”²⁶ However, the last two years of Taliban rule show no change for Afghan women compared to the first stint of the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. Afghan women still cannot go outside for work or travel without a male guardian, and girls above 12 are not allowed to attend their schools. Many others have lost jobs in the labour force, media, and entertainment industries. There was not a single woman in the cabinet of the Taliban government, and the government’s Ministry of Women Affairs was replaced by a Ministry for Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice.²⁷

During the Karzai and Ghani governments, Afghan economy relied heavily on foreign aid from the United States and its NATO allies. As all of that has suddenly stopped, the Taliban government is denied access to US\$10 billion assets held overseas in the Afghan central bank. According to the United Nations’ World Food Programme (WFP), Afghanistan is going to be the world’s largest humanitarian crisis. The WFP has reported that Afghanistan’s needs for basic human necessities have surpassed those of other worst-hit countries, such as South Sudan, Syria, Ethiopia and even Yemen.²⁸ According to the WFP website, 22.8 million Afghans, which is more than half of the total population, are facing acute food shortages, and 8.7 million are facing emergency levels of food insecurity among the 41.7 million total population of Afghanistan.²⁹

The situation in Afghanistan is currently in a flux, as none of the countries, including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and UAE, that had previously recognized the Taliban government in the 1990s have officially recognized the current Taliban government. Pakistan has declared that it will make a “regional decision” on this. The spokesperson of the Pakistan Foreign Office, Mr. Asim Iftikhar in a news briefing told the media, “We thought that it would be the best to do it through a regional, consensual approach.”³⁰ Which means this time even the Pakistan government would not recognise the Taliban government unilaterally.

The question of the legitimacy of the new Taliban regime has made the situation worse. The United States, Germany, IMF, Asian Development Bank (ADB), and World Bank had frozen Afghanistan’s financial resources worth 3.5 billion US dollars, leading to a collapse of the Afghani (the

²⁶ “Transcript of Taliban’s First News Conference in Kabul,” *Aljazeera*, August 17, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/8/17/>

²⁷ Bart Edes, “Afghan Women under Taliban Rule,” *Observer Research Foundation*, December 27, 2021, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/>

²⁸ Available at <https://www.wfp.org/stories/wfp-glance> (Accessed October 27, 2022)

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Kamran Yousaf, “Pakistan Rules Out Solo Flight on Taliban Recognition,” *The Express Tribune*, July 23, 2022.

currency of Afghanistan) and the complete downfall of the banking system in Afghanistan. Initially the absence of financial channels made it difficult for international donors to send relief money to Afghanistan. In August 2022, when the first anniversary of the Taliban rule in Afghanistan was being celebrated, the US administration announced that frozen Afghan funds could not be transferred because the Afghan government was not trustworthy, as it had given refuge to Ayman al-Zawahiri, the topmost al-Qaeda leader.³¹ Later, in September 2022, the creation of a new "Afghan Fund" was announced, which was given the task of distributing frozen money directly to the people of Afghanistan independent of the Taliban government and Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB), the central bank of Afghanistan.³² After more than six months of that announcement, those funds are still languishing in a Swiss bank, The Bank of International Settlements (BIS) based in Basel, Switzerland.³³

To avert Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis and economic collapse, a special session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers was held in Islamabad, Pakistan, on December 19, 2021. The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan demanded immediate actions. Still, at the end of the session, merely a pledge was made that the OIC would set up the Humanitarian Trust Fund (HTF) and Food Security Programme expected to start its operations by March 2022 and would be managed by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB).³⁴ Finally, on May 12, 2023, official launch was organised by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia where agreements were signed to carry out different Humanitarian projects in Afghanistan.³⁵

China's Growing Engagement in Afghanistan

At the time of the first Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in 1996, China had closed its embassy in Afghanistan and suspended its diplomatic

³¹ "Frozen Afghan Funds," *The Nation*, August 18, 2022, <https://www.nation.com.pk/>

³² Kylie Atwood, "US Sets Up Fund to Distribute Frozen Billions to Afghanistan," *CNN*, September 14, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/09/14/politics/>

³³ Line Golestani, "Afghanistan: the U.S. Has Frozen the Assets of its Central Bank, the Population Foots the Bill," *Orient XXINews*, April 18, 2023, <https://orientxxi.info/magazine/>

³⁴ Baqir Sajjad Sayed, "OIC Pledges Money, Food Aid for Afghanistan Amid Fears of Chaos," *Dawn*, December 20, 2021.

³⁵ "IsDB/AHTF and World Food Programme Sign Agreement to Provide Life-Saving Food Assistance in Afghanistan," *The IsDB Official Website*, May 12, 2023, <https://www.isdb.org/news/>

relations with Afghanistan.³⁶ But once Taliban were removed from the power, the diplomatic relations were revived by the end of 2001.³⁷ Hamid Karzai visited China immediately after taking the charge of the transitional government in 2002 and later paid official state visits in 2006 and 2010 as the President of Afghanistan.³⁸ But still China kept low-profile engagement in Afghanistan limiting its involvement to the relief work and trade and investment only. China refused to commit the military involvement by not joining International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) despite the US willingness and left the security matters in Afghanistan to the United States and its Western allies. Prof. Zhao Huasheng, explains the reasons for China's low-profile involvement,

A series of conditions influenced China's low-profile policy. With the outbreak of the war in Afghanistan, the United States and its European allies entered into Afghanistan in a massive way and took the role of political supervisor and military guarantor in Afghanistan. They enjoy the overall dominant influence in Afghan issues, ranging from regime formation and military buildup, to economic reconstruction. Actually, China currently has no big role to play, and has no interest in playing a subordinate partner under the dominance of the West.³⁹

However, China started thinking about more proactive engagement, once President Barak Obama announced the withdrawal of 33,000 US troops from Afghanistan by the end of September 2012 in his address from the White House on June 22, 2011.⁴⁰ The visit of the politburo member Zhou Yongkang in 2012 and the signing of agreements to help "train, fund and equip Afghan police" was the first clear sign of Chinese increasing interest in building a strategic partnership with Afghanistan.⁴¹ From 2012 onwards there were several developments which suggested China wanted to engage more proactively in Afghanistan.

³⁶ Chulanee Attanayake & Zheng Haiqi, "Understanding China in Taliban-led Afghanistan," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, (Air University Press : August 25, 2021), <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/2746135/>

³⁷ Zhao Huasheng, *China and Afghanistan: China's Interests, Stances, and Perspectives* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012), 2.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid, 3.

⁴⁰ "Afghanistan: Obama Orders Withdrawal of 33,000 Troops," BBC News, June 23, 2011, <https://www.bbc.com/news/>

⁴¹ Rob Taylor, "Top China Official Visits Afghanistan, Signs Security Deal," *Reuters*, September 23, 2012, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-afghanistan-china/>

In year 2014 security and intelligence cooperation between Afghanistan and China took new heights when Mr. Guo Shengkun, the Minister of Public Security and State and Mr. Qi Jianguo, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Deputy Chief of Staff visited Afghanistan.⁴² As a result of this visit the People's Armed Police troops of China started patrolling side by side with their Afghan counterparts along the border of Badakhshan province in the North East and offered a mountain brigade for the Afghan National Security Forces to strengthen the Afghan national army.⁴³ Moreover, from 2014 China became part of several multilateral forums where Afghanistan was discussed and for the first time a multilateral 'Heart of Asia' conference on Afghanistan was held in Beijing, China on October 31, 2014 attended by thirty countries including the United States of America.⁴⁴

In May 2015 China with the help of Pakistan tried to broker a peace deal between Taliban and the Ghani government by organising a meeting of the representatives of Afghan High Peace Council with Taliban representatives in Urumqi, the capital of the Xinjiang province of China.⁴⁵ But this peace effort was scuttled by the sudden news leak that Mullah Omar, the chief of Taliban had already died back in 2013. Despite the failure of that peace effort China kept its contacts with Taliban intact and continuously engaged with the Ghani government as well.

In May 2017 a trilateral China-Afghanistan-Pakistan practical cooperation dialogue process was launched in Beijing which has continued and strengthened during the Taliban rule.⁴⁶ Pakistan is the lynchpin of China's Afghanistan policy because without Sino-Pakistan cooperation China could not have made any inroads into Kabul. The Fourth China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Dialogue at the Foreign Ministers' level was held through a video link in June 2021 just a few months before the US withdrawal. In this round the three countries had agreed to deepen their economic cooperation under CPEC, BRI, Heart of Asia Conference and Regional Economic Cooperation Conference (RECCA).⁴⁷ Moreover, they

⁴² Miwa Hirono, "China's Conflict Mediation and the Durability of the Principle of Non-Interference: The Case of Post-2014 Afghanistan," *The China Quarterly*, vol. 239, 2019: 614-634.

⁴³ Feng Zhang, "China's New Engagement with Afghanistan after the Withdrawal," *LSE Public Policy Review*, vol.2, no.3, (2022), 10.

⁴⁴ "Beijing Declaration' of the 'Heart of Asia' Conference," October 31, 2014, <https://www.hoa.gov.af/images/declarations/>

⁴⁵ Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen, "China is Doomed to Play a Significant Role in Afghanistan," *Foreign Policy*, July 31, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/07/31/>

⁴⁶ See the official press release in this regard, <https://mofa.gov.pk/>

⁴⁷ See the Joint Statement of the Fourth China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Dialogue, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/>

agreed to start three new streams of this dialogue process at the level of trilateral Vice-Ministerial Consultation on Counter-Terrorism and Security, the trilateral Vice-Ministerial Strategic Dialogue, and the trilateral Director-General Level Practical Cooperation Dialogue.⁴⁸

Therefore, when the US and NATO forces pulled out from Afghanistan, it was logical for China to increase its involvement in Afghanistan because there was no other great power in a position who could have come forward and helped fill the vacuum created by the pull out of the US forces. China was the only great power which shared positive vibes and pleasantries with the new Taliban regime as soon as it recaptured Kabul in August 2021. Welcoming the capture of Kabul by the Taliban, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said they respected the Afghan people's right "to independently determine their own destiny"; therefore, China was ready to work with the new Taliban government in Afghanistan and wanted to develop "friendly and cooperative relations" with the new Taliban regime.⁴⁹

China, like Pakistan and other allies, did not officially recognize the Taliban regime, but after their capture of Kabul considered them the most powerful military and political force in Afghanistan. In an initial reaction, while assuring their support in the rehabilitation of the Afghan people, China urged the Taliban government to negotiate with their political opponents and try to establish an "open and inclusive Islamic government" in Afghanistan that was acceptable to all stakeholders.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the Taliban government spokesman, Suhail Shaheen in an interview to the CGTN, the Chinese television welcomed Chinese support and said that China was one of the most powerful countries in the world and could play an important role in the rebuilding, rehabilitation, and reconstruction process.⁵¹

By July 2022 China delivered 250 million Yuan (US\$37.4 million) worth of emergency aid to Afghanistan which was pledged in September 2021 and thus became "the largest, most substantial and fastest assistance (provider) to Afghanistan in disaster relief," claimed by Zhao Lijian, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson.⁵² The emergency aid included grain, winter supplies, medicines and three million COVID-19 vaccine

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ "China Says Ready for 'Friendly Relations' with Taliban after Route," *The Express Tribune*, August 16, 2021.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ "Taliban Want China to Play 'Huge Role' in Rebuilding Afghanistan," *The Express Tribune*, August 20, 2021.

⁵² Kata Zhang, "China delivers US\$37 Million in Aid to Afghanistan, Fulfilling Promise to Taliban," *South China Morning Post*, July 6, 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3184316/>

doses. Moreover, when on June 22, 2022 the South-Eastern Afghanistan was struck with an earthquake killing 1000 and injuring 2000 people, China was the first country coming for the help of Afghanistan pledging 50 million (7.5 million dollars) more in emergency aid.⁵³

The way the USA has abandoned Afghanistan after the withdrawal of its forces, China is the only hope for Afghanistan. Well-known US expert on China, Andrew Small, had already declared back in 2013 that it was only China apart from the USA who could provide the level of investment required to uplift the Afghan economy and make it work.⁵⁴

Interestingly, not only the Chinese government but also the Chinese companies have started investing heavily in Afghanistan. On January 6, 2023, the Taliban government signed a 25 year long multi-million dollar contract with Xinjiang Central Asia Petroleum and Gas Company (CAPEIC) to extract oil from Amu Darya Basin and develop an oil reserve in Sar-e-Pul province in the North of Afghanistan.⁵⁵ The Chinese company has promised to invest 540 million dollars in first three years of the twenty-five year contract creating more than 3000 jobs for the local Afghans.⁵⁶

Moreover, under Taliban rule the China-Pakistan-Afghanistan trilateral cooperation has achieved further boost as the Taliban regime is more forthcoming towards Pakistan as compared to the Karzai and Ghani regimes because of its massive reliance on Pakistan and China. On May 8, 2023, in the joint statement of the fifth trilateral China-Pakistan-Afghanistan Foreign Ministers dialogue held in Islamabad it was declared that the BRI and CPEC would be extended to Afghanistan and ongoing projects of CASA-1000, TAPI, and Trans-Afghan Railways would be used to enhance the regional connectivity and economic cooperation in the region.⁵⁷ China is also interested in building a railway link between Iran and China via Afghanistan and Pakistan and construct 573 kilometres long Trans-Afghan railroad to connect Mazar-i-Sharif in Uzbekistan to Kabul in Afghanistan and Peshawar in Pakistan because according to Yue Xiaoyong,

⁵³ "China's Aid Helps Afghans in Difficult Time," *Xinhua News*, August 30, 2022, <https://english.news.cn/20220>

⁵⁴ "China Could Prove Ultimate Winner in Afghanistan," *USA Today*, January 26, 2013, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/01/26/china-winner-afghanistan/1866571/>

⁵⁵ "Afghanistan Signs Oil Extraction Deal with Chinese Company," *Al-Jazeera News*, January 6, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/1/6/>

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ See The Joint Statement of the Fifth China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue, *MOFA*, <https://mofa.gov.pk/> (Accessed on July 30, 2023).

the China's special envoy to Afghanistan "Beijing sees Afghanistan as a bridge linking Central and South Asia."⁵⁸

The Main Obstacles for China in Afghanistan

China has clearly indicated that it is willing to work with the Taliban regime and wants to play its due role in the rehabilitation process and peace building. However, the biggest problem for China is the legitimacy of the Taliban regime. If the Taliban regime is not recognized by the international community and international institutions, then business and support for the Taliban regime maybe taken as China is taking sides in the Afghan conflict and putting her all eggs in the basket of the Taliban.

The Western powers, USA and India are unhappy with the revival of the title "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," which was used by the Taliban government in the 1990s as well. The international community have genuine concerns over mistreatment with women, political opponents, religious and ethnic minorities, and the Taliban's unwillingness to agree on a truly broad-based government in Kabul. Hence, internal legitimacy and external recognition of the Taliban regime will be one of the biggest hurdles for peace in Afghanistan.

Regarding the recognition of the Taliban regime, an agreement was reached during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit held in September 2021 in Dushanbe. In Dushanbe, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and Tajikistan agreed for recognition the Taliban government must establish an inclusive government by sharing powers with their political opponents, respect the human rights in Afghanistan and assure the international community that Afghan soil would not be used against any other country. These broad criteria were agreed upon, but in the final analysis, every nation-state is expected to follow its own policy and would decide based on its own national interests.

For recognition of the Taliban regime, Pakistan wants a 'regional decision', as already mentioned. Pakistan has not clarified exactly but probably it means Pakistan would recognize the Taliban regime provided China, Russia, Turkey, Tajikistan, Iran and other regional allies also recognize. If China wanted it and like USA used its power, this could have been done within months of the Taliban takeover. However, even after two years, no recognition means that China is not satisfied with the 'regional decision' and wants a more inclusive decision preferably involving the USA and India as well. The 'regional decision' on Afghanistan would mean one bloc—China, Russia, Pakistan, Turkey and allies supporting the Taliban regime—while the other bloc—USA, India and their Western allies

⁵⁸ Chris Devonshire-Ellis, "China Ready To Assist in Afghanistan Belt and Road Railway Infrastructure," *Silk Road Briefing*, July 28, 2022, <https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2022/07/28/>

support the opponents of the Taliban. China knows that will not bring back the sustainable peace in Afghanistan.

The track record of the Taliban is that they are unreliable international players because they do not even listen to their allies and benefactors regarding the critical decisions they make. Mostly their decisions are not based on pragmatic, rational choice; rather, they claim to always act on their own version of 'Islamic laws', which are based on a very regressive and out-dated version of Islam. Like on women's rights and 'inclusive government' they have not budged much despite all the international pressures and saner advice from their own allies

The political opposition of the Taliban regime is subdued and quite now because it has no military strength or popular support base to challenge the Taliban regime. The only political challenge of any worth Taliban are facing is from Ahmad Massoud, the son of legendary Tajik commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was famous as 'the lion of Panjshir' during Afghan jihad in the 1980s. Ahmad Shah Massoud was one of the strongest opponents of the Taliban during the 1990s. Now his son Ahmad Massoud is leading the most important armed group called National Resistance Front (NRF) against the new Taliban regime from the Panjshir valley. Apart from Ahmad Massoud, Sami Sadat and Yasin Zia are other two former Afghan war generals who are currently fighting against Taliban.⁵⁹

Apart from the political challenge Taliban are facing from the former war lords, an even bigger challenge comes from the regional chapter of Islamic State in Afghanistan — known as Islamic State Khorasan or ISIS-K. Since the capture of Kabul, ISIS-K has stepped up its terrorist attacks in the Taliban strongholds in Afghanistan, killing hundreds and wounding thousands of people thus far.⁶⁰ Moreover, they have started guerrilla warfare in provinces bordering Pakistan, escalating the conflict and threatening both the Taliban regime and Pakistan. The Sky News Data and Forensic Unit reported that in just two months between August 26 and October 28, 2021, 408 people were killed by ISIS-K in Afghanistan, which included 346 civilians.⁶¹

⁵⁹ David Loyn, "The Scattered Forces Opposing the Taliban Need Support Now," Chatham House, July 28, 2023 <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2023-08/>

⁶⁰ Victor J. Blue, Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Christina Goldbaum, "ISIS Poses a Growing Threat to New Taliban Government in Afghanistan," *The New York Times*, November 03, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/world/asia/>

⁶¹ The Sky News Data and Forensic Unit, "Afghanistan: Flurry of Islamic State Khorasan Attacks Could Be Sign of Group's Growing Strength," October 29, 2021, <https://news.sky.com/story/>.

Some of experts believe ISIS-K will not directly threaten the Chinese assets in Afghanistan but may target “Chinese assets in Pakistan to fuel tension between the allies”.⁶² Such a tension was already created in July 2021 when a bus carrying Chinese workers was attacked near the site of the Dasu hydropower project, killing 12, including nine Chinese citizens. The Pakistan Foreign Office initially termed it “mechanical failure,” while a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson referred to it as an “attack”.⁶³ This kind of attacks may increase on Chinese assets and citizens in Afghanistan and Pakistan if China openly supports the Taliban regime. Therefore, maintaining overall security in Afghanistan will remain one of the biggest challenges for China in Afghanistan.

China surely cannot afford chaos in Afghanistan, as it will have serious consequences for the region and the BRI project. Peace in Afghanistan is also important for the projects and investments China has already made in Afghanistan. Above all, if ISIS-K or any other extremist elements get strength in Afghanistan, they can not only target the Chinese assets in Afghanistan but also enter Uighur through Badakhshan province and may have spill over effects on that sensitive region of China.

China is in a better position to bring peace in Afghanistan compared to the USA. Compared to the USA, which had troubled relations with important regional players, such as Pakistan, Iran and Russia, China has very good relations with all three and the Central Asian neighbours of Afghanistan as well. In my opinion, China should go for the regional solution of the Afghan imbroglio and should go for making all of them part of the peace building effort directly. If they all have a direct stake in the peace process, only that process can bring durable peace in Afghanistan.

For sustainable peace in Afghanistan, a genuine inclusive government is the only way out. If an inclusive government is established in Afghanistan, it would surely help the Afghanistan government get recognized by the international community and international institutions. However, the most difficult question is whether the Taliban would be willing to allow a genuinely inclusive government. There is no clear-cut answer, but China, with the support of Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Iran, can work for this. These are all neighbouring countries of Afghanistan and currently have cordial relations among them. If Pakistan and China together can convince the Taliban regime, Russia and Tajikistan may convince the Tajik leader, Ahmad Massoud and Iran can bring Ismail Khan to the negotiation table, and thus a genuinely inclusive government

⁶² Tom Hussain, “Isis-K Escalates Terror Attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan in Show of Resistance Against Taliban,” December 8, 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/article/3158929/>

⁶³ “Pakistan Bus ‘Blast’ Kills at least 12, Including Nine Chinese,” *Aljazeera*, July 14, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/7/14/>

acceptable to all major stakeholders can be established with an accommodative spirit.

Conclusion

The study of the growing engagement of China in Afghanistan since 2012 makes it evident that though China was not ready to play as a junior partner of USA in Afghanistan, still China was very clear in its approach. China maintained cordial working relations with the Taliban and the Afghan government both during President Karzai and Ghani regimes because China knew Taliban are a key player in Afghan politics and in case USA abandons Afghanistan then China would have to step in and do something because instability in the region did not suit Chinese strategic interests.

However, this does not mean China is ready to play a leadership role in Afghanistan like the USA did from 2002 to 2022. The history of the foreign policy of China reveals that unlike other great powers China avoids interfering in the internal affairs of any state and avoids using coercive tactics to achieve its foreign policy goals. China has always tried to conduct its foreign relations in very sober and measured manner.

The last two years since the US withdrawal indicate, this assessment that China would follow suit immediately and would get bogged down in Afghanistan like the US did is a misplaced assessment. China knows that if it jumps in wholeheartedly and provides everything to the Taliban regime, then Taliban would solely rely on them and the USA and the international community will also pull back their hands forever and would like China to handle the Afghan mess singlehandedly and get bogged down.

China has always followed a very cautious approach and a policy of calculated engagement in Afghanistan. Therefore, in my assessment there is every possibility that China will continue the same cautious approach in Afghanistan. China will keep increasing its financial and strategic stakes in Afghanistan but it will never associate itself too much with the Taliban regime. China will always like to keep its door open to be able to work with any kind of future government in Afghanistan.

PAIGHAM-E-PAKISTAN AS A COUNTER EXTREMISM NARRATIVE

Anum Babur* & Saba Noor**

Abstract

Pakistan has faced issues of religious radicalization, extremism and terrorism for decades; religious intolerance has not only transformed the social fabric of this society but has also divided its people into sectarian identities. Pakistan has adopted both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches to deal with these menaces of extremism and terrorism. On one side, the state has opted for kinetic options such as security operations to eliminate terrorism but it always comes back in some other form or place. On the other side, to eliminate this threat of violence, the state has opted for the use of non-kinetic approaches such as narratives and development/ education projects in the pockets of areas and social strata breeding extremism. This paper considers Paigham-e-Pakistan (Message of Pakistan) as an attempt to answer narratives of extremism, hatred, and intolerance and uproot them from the very foundations they claim to derive from religion. It aims to replace these divisive narratives with ideas of enlightenment and peace derived from the very same religion. This research is an attempt to understand the Paigham-e-Pakistan as a counter narrative document and to illustrate its importance within the Pakistani society.

Keywords: *Radicalization, Paigham-e-Pakistan, Counter-narrative, Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and De-radicalization.*

Introduction

The phenomenon of extremism is not new in Pakistan. It has a long history that starts with the early 70's with the Pan-Islamist movement of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, followed by augmentation in the Islamization movement of Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980's. The Islamization

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period of Zia-ul-Haq aggravated religious sensitivity within the country. However, the tragedy of 9/11 and launch of the War on Terror (WoT) propelled this religious sensitivity into the completely different and more lethal realm of terrorism. The WoT has cost Pakistan \$118 billion¹ and 60,000² lives so far. Given this ever-increasing economic and human cost, Pakistan is in dire need of a counter-narrative to terrorism and extremism that will stem the flow of violence. Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) experts recognize two main approaches to counter extremism and terrorism: kinetic approaches such as defensive and offensive frameworks, and non-kinetic approaches including ideological, communicative, political and social approaches to countering violence.³

The fundamental importance of counter-narratives in fighting terrorism and extremism is generally accepted and established so much so that the United Nations has added counter-narratives to extremism as part of their guidelines for countering terrorism. In that regard, on May 24, 2017 the Security Council adopted the UN Resolution 2354.⁴ The 2354 UN Resolution, while focusing on countering terrorist narratives, illustrates "Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorists' Narrative," as a new way forward to deal with the extremist narratives. This comprehensive strategic agenda urges member states to develop counter-narratives to terrorism and extremism, which provide positive alternatives to individuals vulnerable to narratives of division and hate. The UN center on "Counter-terrorism Implementation Task Force Working Group on Radicalization and Extremism that Leads to Terrorism," has been tasked to define difference between counter-radicalization and de-radicalization efforts. The counter-radicalization pertains to countering the conditions that may lead some individuals towards violence. However, de-radicalization implies engaging with already radicalized individuals and aims to re-integrate such individuals back into the society.⁵ So in that

¹ Associated Press, "War on Terror' has Cost Pakistan \$118bn: SBP," *DAWN*, November 19, 2016.

² Mushahid Hussain, "Trump's Afghanistan Policy: The View from Islamabad," *CNN Online*, August 23, 2017, <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/22/opinions/>

³ Minerva Nasser-Eddine, Bridget Garnham, Katerina Agostino and Gilbert Caluya, "Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review," *Counter Terrorism and Security Technology Centre*, Defence Science and Technology Organisation, Edinburgh, Australia, (2011), www.dtic.mil/

⁴ UN Resolution 2354, "Comprehensive International Framework to Counter Terrorist Narratives," (S/2017/375), May 2017. <https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/news/2017/05/25/>

⁵ Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force.(n.d.). First Report of the Working Group on Radicalisation and Extremism that Lead to Terrorism: Inventory of State Programmes: United Nations.

regards, counter-radicalization is a short-term solution that deals with conditions in which individuals are inclined towards the route of terrorism. Whereas, deradicalization deals with that philosophy which may create a ground to rehabilitate such individuals who have opted to exercise violence, acts of terrorism. Counter-radicalization is a pre-emptive measure while de-radicalization is a post-hoc attempt at bringing back people from the verge of violence. A comprehensive counter-narrative should address both these aspects.

A comprehensive study of existing counter-narratives to terrorism is offered by the EU Parliament's *Countering Terrorist Narratives Report*. The report lists the recent counter-narrative approaches adopted at the global level and also within the European Union in the light of which it makes policy recommendations. The report describes that governments need to carry out disruption of propaganda, readjustment of message dissemination strategy, adoption of a comprehensive campaign and designing of messages to effectively counter terrorist narratives.⁶ Another region-specific study of counter-narratives is offered by the workshop organized by *The Hidayah* and *The Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation* (JCLEC) on "South East Asia Collection of Counter-Narratives for Countering Violent Extremism" in Semarang, Indonesia from March 21-23, 2016. The report of the workshop indicates that the following steps are important to establish a successful counter-narrative to achieve the countering violent extremism aims in the South East Asian region.

1. A counter-narrative should be multi-dimensional such as peace narratives should enhance inter-faith, inter-ethnic harmony and should work on religious and ideological narratives.
2. Counter-narratives should be established according to the requirements of the respective culture, audience and the context of respective society. One-size-fits-all modelling may not help in counter narrative aims.
3. Counter-narratives to religious extremism should promote indigenous interpretations and scholarship rather than religious scholarships from far off regions.
4. Counter-narrative should be multi-dimensional, multi-sectoral and propagated through multiple platforms.
5. A counter-narrative building organization should provide a forum for open discussion and engender dialogue.

⁶ Alastair Reed, Haroro Ingram, and Joe Whittaker, *Countering Terrorist Narratives*, (Brussels: Policy Department for Citizen's Rights and Constitutional Affairs, 2017), <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/>

6. A counter-narrative should also accommodate the role of family relationships, as family structures are highly significant in the South East Asian cultures.
7. Credible messengers should be identified for psychological and emotional counter-narratives.
8. Counter-narratives should include inter-faith and intra-faith dialogue which is particularly significant in the religiously diverse South East Asian context.
9. Counter-narrative should also take into consideration the South East Asian Diaspora communities.⁷

Alex P. Schmid's work on "Al-Qaeda's Single Narrative and Attempts to Develop Counter-Narratives," explains the global efforts to counter Al-Qaeda's toxic narrative. It delineates the state of existing knowledge on counter-narratives and counter-narrative models currently operational in different parts of the world. The study also provides a conceptual road map as a way forward in the form of a "pro-active alternative narrative." According to Schmid, usually most of the counter-narrative approaches have adopted reactionary or defensive lines. These models should opt for pro-active approach and rather than just focusing on an alternative narrative should build bridges between the extremists' philosophy of us vis-à-vis them.⁸ According to Usman Asghar the extremist groups use this phenomenon of us vis-à-vis them to create differences between the followers of their agenda and those who negates their philosophy. In other words, this phenomenon provides recognition to their followers.⁹ Mainly, Schmid's work emphasized on involvement of all the stakeholders in counter-narrative irrespective of their identity and grouping.¹⁰

While the efficacy of counter-narratives in fighting terrorism is well established in contemporary research, there are still numerous challenges in developing an effective counter-narrative. Another report published by the Danish Institute for International Studies titled "Why counter-narratives are not the best responses to terrorist propaganda:

⁷ The Hidayah and the Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) on "South East Asia Collection of Counter-Narratives for Countering Violent Extremism," in Semarang, Indonesia from March 21-23, 2016.

⁸ Alex Schmid, "Al-Qaeda's "Single Narrative," and Attempts to Develop Counter-Narratives: The State of Knowledge," The Hague: The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) –The Hague, 2014, <https://www.icct.nl/download/file/>

⁹ A Telephonic Semi-Structured Interview with Muhammad Usman Asghar, Lecturer at National Defence University, January 5, 2021, Islamabad.

¹⁰ Schmid, Al-Qaeda's "Single Narrative" and Attempts to Develop Counter-Narratives.

Challenges, risks and alternatives,” argues that counter-narratives approach is accompanied with serious challenges and risks. It is because whenever any state tries to provide a counter-narrative to a terrorist or extremist narrative, they adopt a policy of direct criticism or rejection by rejecting or ridiculing the extremist philosophy. This direct engagement with the extremists’ narrative enhances risks of confrontation and may involve authorities in trying to fix or ridicule the extremists’ philosophy and this imbalanced debate may lead the counter-narrative towards rejection by the audience.¹¹

As far as studies related to counter-narratives in Pakistan are concerned, there is a plethora of newspaper articles, but a serious dearth of scholarly undertakings on the subject. Centre for Peace, Security and Developmental Studies’ Ousama Khurshid Khan argues in his article “De-Radicalization in Pakistan,” that a comprehensive counter-narrative is an essential component of any de-radicalization strategy for Pakistan. However, he refrains from delineating what shape such a narrative ought to take.¹² A tangentially related research by another Pakistani scholar discusses the conscious cultivation of Brailvi Islam as an alternative to the more rigid Deobandi brand of Islam, however it failed when the Brailvi school of thought itself turned extremist in the matter of blasphemy related issues.¹³

Another, significant work has been done by Muhammad Usman Asghar. He has conducted a critical discourse analysis of Paigham-e-Pakistan and has provided a thematic analysis on the Islamic themes which have been mentioned in the Paigham-e-Pakistan. Asghar, has declared Paigham-e-Pakistan as a significant step towards developing a counter-narrative in Pakistan.¹⁴

Realizing the importance of counter-narrative for successful deradicalization attempts, the Pakistani government opted to introduce

¹¹ Ann-Sophie Hemmingsen, Karin Ingrid Castro Møller, “Why Counter-Narratives are not the Best Responses to Terrorist Propaganda: Challenges, Risks and Alternatives, Copenhagen,” The Danish Institute for International Studies, 2017, <https://www.diis.dk/en/research/>

¹² Ousama Khursheed Khan, “De-radicalization in Pakistan,” Islamabad, Center for Peace, Security and Developmental Studies, <http://www.cpsd.org.pk/>

¹³ Muhammad Suleman, “Institutionalisation of Sufi Islam after 9/11 and the Rise of Bareilvi Extremism in Pakistan,” *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, vol. 10, No. 2 (February 2018):6-10; International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26358994> (Accessed on January 10, 2021)

¹⁴ Muhammad Usman Asghar, “Critical Discourse Analysis of Paigham-e-Pakistan (Unanimous Fatwa): Counter-Narrative to Religious Extremism in Pakistan,” *NDU Journal* (2020) :31-45.

Paigham-e-Pakistan (*message of Pakistan*) as a unanimous Fatwa (Fatwa is an authoritative legal ruling by competent religious authorities as per Islamic Religious Jurisprudence).¹⁵In that regards, the government of Pakistan approached various religious scholars (Muftis) to issue a *Fatwa* on the basis of their religious knowledge against the misinterpretation of various religious concepts by the terrorist and extremist groups. This Fatwa includes several religious concepts such as *Jihad*, *Takfir*, and *Haram* (illegal).

The first half of this research paper aims to deconstruct the Paigham-e-Pakistan as a counter-narrative document. Secondly, this research will explore what kind of impact Paigham-e-Pakistan has made on deradicalization efforts of Pakistan? This research study applies the theoretical understanding of the Aristotleon narrative building and the Model of Communication for Counter Narrative explained by Qatar International Academy for Security Studies (QIASS) and the Soufan Group to deconstruct the Paigham-e-Pakistan as a counter narrative document. Accordingly, Paigham-e-Pakistan will be analyzed using the basic communications model of message, medium and messenger. However, to find the impact of Paigham-e-Pakistan on deradicalization efforts in Pakistan the approaches of Minerva Nasser-Eddine, Bridget Garnham, Katerina Agostino and Gilbert Caluya have been adopted.

The research has adopted an analytical research design and qualitative data collection methods have been opted. Further, to address the vacuum in existing literature on deconstruction of Paigham-e-Pakistan as a counter narrative document, semi-structured interviews with Academics, Religious Scholars, Researchers and political representatives were done. The sampling of interviews followed purposive approach for the selection of respondents. However, due to COVID 19 pandemic all interviews were done on telephone and were conducted during January 1, 2021 to January 16, 2021.

Theoretical Framework

Narrative is derived from the word “Narratology” and is considered as a theoretical understanding in several fields of the study, including sociology, anthropology, political science, organizational studies and communication. According to some scholars, narratives are sentences that explain certain events and incidents that had occurred in the past.¹⁶Further, for some, narratives are used to explain your own version of reality. However, many scholars of narrative studies use Aristotle’s debate on “Rhetoric” to deconstruct the meanings and impact of

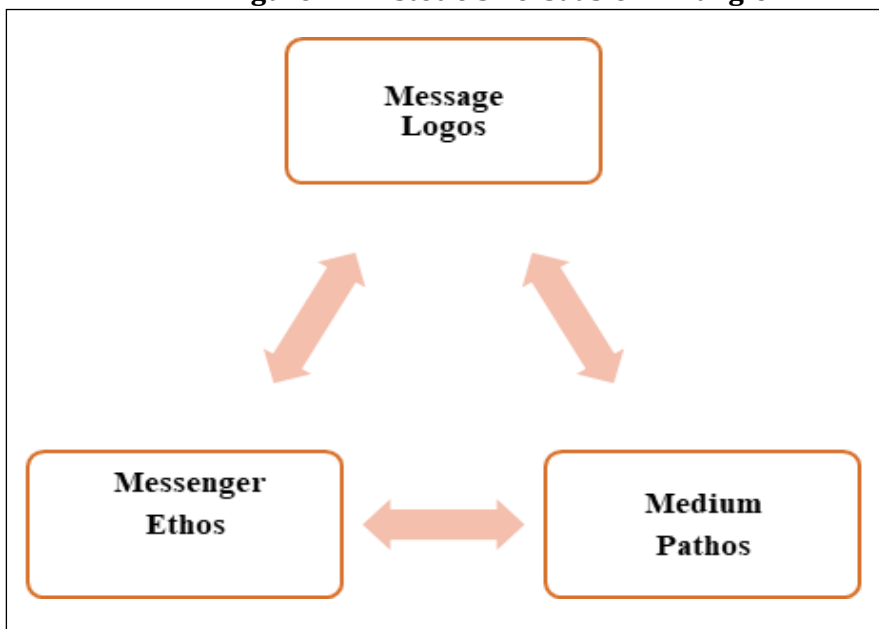
¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ M. Egudo and M.C. Mitchell, A Review of Narrative Methodology, (Edinburgh: DSTO Systems Science Laboratory, 2003)

narratives. Aristotle presented the persuasive triangle to assess the effectiveness of a narrative. He argued that a narrative must be evaluated along the three dimensions of Ethos, Pathos and Logos.

Ethos are impressions and reputation or character of the messengers. When we are aiming to deconstruct any specific narrative it is important to see the impact of the writer or speaker's personality, character, credibility and authority among the people. Further, he explains that the writer/speaker of narrative must not only have credibility while producing that narrative but also maintain the same credibility while delivering the narrative. Pathos refers to emotions, as according to Aristotle, the audience's response towards any narrative or counter narrative is actually determined as per the state of mind in which they are and in which they will respond to the narrative. In that regards, he says that emotions should be taken into account while generating a narrative in two aspects: first, what the target audience are feeling before the dissemination of narrative and second where you want to take them emotionally with your narrative or where they stand after receiving your narrative. Lastly, Logos reflects credibility of the content or narrative itself. In that context the narrative must be logical and understandable.¹⁷

Figure 1: Aristotle's Persuasion Triangle



¹⁷ A report on "The Power of Aristotle's Persuasion Triangle," *Strategy and Storytelling*, December 27, 2017, <https://strategyandstorytelling.com/blog/>

Parallel to the Aristotle's persuasive triangle the model of QIASS and the Soufan Group suggests that a basic communication model relies on selection of the right medium, a strong message and a credible messenger. Since counter-narrative is a discursive practice, its success can be determined by examining its effectiveness across these three components of successful communication. The criticality of choosing the right medium, message and messenger for a successful counter-narrative is established by a comprehensive study of counter-narratives. This project included intelligence, law enforcement and counter-terrorism experts who travelled around the world gathering data, studying terrorist organizations and interviewing former and current extremists as well as authorities and other stake-holders involved in counter-terrorism.¹⁸

To deal with the complexity of humanly constructed narrative that includes self-reporting and personal biases, the QIASS model of communication has been used for the deconstruction of Paigham-e-Pakistan. The bridging of Aristotle's persuasive triangle theory and the QIASS model of communication helped to draw a clear understanding of Paigham-e-Pakistan as a narrative. This theoretical and strategic modeling may assist to not only deconstruct the Paigham-e-Pakistan but may also assist to evaluate its effectiveness as a counter narrative.

Paigham-e-Pakistan

Paigham-e-Pakistan's preface sets out with the ambitious hope that this can not only help to develop a peaceful and moderate Islamic society in Pakistan but also present a positive image of Pakistan abroad. It is also conceived as a pathway to the realization of the basic tenets of the Objective's Resolution.

While Paigham-e-Pakistan does stand apart in terms of comprehensiveness, yet such ideological efforts that deconstruct and refute terrorist narratives in the light of Islam are not new at the global.¹⁹ The university of Melbourne compiled a whole list of monumental fatwas that denounce terrorism from scholars and institutions such as Maulana Tahirul Qadri's 600 page fatwa that was endorsed by Al-Azhar University, Egypt; the Amman message in 2004 signed by 200 Muslim scholars from 50 different countries; the British Muslim Forum's fatwa signed by 500 British Muslim clerics; the OIC's International Islamic Fiqh Academy declaration in 2006; the Hyderabad Declaration endorsed by 6000 Muslim clerics in 2008; the New Mardin Declaration in 2010 against ibn e

¹⁸ Qatar International Academy for Security Studies, *Countering Violent Extremism: The Counter Narrative Study* (September, 2013) : 192.

¹⁹ Highlighted by Professor Muhammad Makki, Head of CIPS, National University of Science and Technology (NUST), in a webinar on January 13, 2021.

Tamiyyah's fatwa which could not be used to justify Takfir etc.²⁰ On February 26, 2008, 20,000 ulema of the Darululoom e Deoband termed terrorism un-Islamic.²¹ Paigham-e-Pakistan stands apart from these previous fatwas in the fact that it not only denounces terrorism as haram as per Islam and an un-Islamic practice but also logically deals with and negates one by one the narratives adopted by terrorists and extremists specifically in the Pakistani context. But if Paigham-e-Pakistan is to stand apart from such previous efforts and have a true impact as a counter-narrative, it would have to be successful on all three counts of message, medium and messenger.

Message (Logos)

Paigham-e-Pakistan, as the name suggests, is primarily intended to be a message. It is the message of Pakistan to the world that Pakistan is a peaceful nation. This aspect was highlighted by the former foreign minister of Pakistan, Khawaja Asif, at the launching ceremony at President house. He said that this narrative "would become the identity of Pakistani nation as peace loving people in the comity of nations".²² Paigham-e-Pakistan is also a message to existing and potential future extremists and terrorists in the society that the path they have chosen to propagate Islam is one that is condemned by Islam itself.²³

Paigham-e-Pakistan is an ideological counter-narrative that deconstructs and discredits existing extremist ideologies that claim to derive their legitimacy from Islam, using the Quran and Sunnah to justify their vile deeds. Thus, Paigham-e-Pakistan hits at the root of these narratives by using the Quran and Sunnah to prove their actions wrong.²⁴

The first important issue that is addressed in Paigham-e-Pakistan is the Islamic way of life as an alternate worldview to the one presented by extremists and terrorists. Islamic way of life is the one based on Meesaq-e-Madina. An Islamic society provides equality of rights for Muslims and non-Muslims. There is no compulsion in religion and no sectarianism or grouping. There is respect for the religion and beliefs of others, and respect for the rights of minorities.²⁵ Most importantly, there is respect for human life, no matter whether it is Sunni, Shia, Hazara, Christian, Hindu

²⁰ University of Melbourne, "Fatwas, Rulings and Authoritative Statements against Terrorism in Islam," <https://arts.unimelb.edu.au/nceis/>

²¹ "20,000 Scholars Term Terrorism Un-Islamic: Declaration Issued at Darul-Uloom Deoband," Dawn News, February 26, 2008.

²² Samaa Web Desk, "Counter-terror Narrative to Become Identity of Pakistan as Peace-Loving Nation: Khwaja Asif," *Samaa Online*, January 16, 2018.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

etc. Terrorists and extremists present their own ideal society or Caliphate but that Caliphate is a society of exclusion, while the ideal Islamic society is a society of inclusion, peace and harmony.²⁶ Thus, in the very beginning Paigham-e-Pakistan challenges the extremist world view based on hatred and discrimination, while presenting an alternate vision of an ideal Islamic society based on tolerance, co-existence and respect for the life and property of others.²⁷

The second theme addressed by Paigham-e-Pakistan is rejection of the concept of *Taghut* as applied to Pakistan.²⁸ Terrorists and extremists justify attacking the Pakistani state and its institutions as they have not established shariah law in the country and thus are considered as “taghut”: the ones who exceed limits and rebel against God. But Paigham-e-Pakistan dismisses this narrative by declaring that “Pakistan is the only country in the world where the most has been done to make laws in accordance with Islam.”²⁹ Examples of this effort include the Objectives resolution as a preamble to the constitution, the constitutional provision that all existing and future laws shall be in accordance with the Quran and Sunnah, the establishment of Islamic Ideology Council for this purpose and Shariah courts as well as Islamic Research Institute. According to a report by the Council of Islamic Ideology, 1997, as quoted in Paigham e Pakistan, 95 % of laws in Pakistan are shariah compliant.³⁰

The third point to be addressed by Paigham-e-Pakistan relates to the problems of terrorism and extremism faced by Pakistan. The ulema declare that Quran o Hadees establish that those who declare war against an Islamic state are not only enemies of the Muslims but also enemies of Allah and his Prophet. They discuss war against state with relevance to two concepts: *Khawarij* and *Hiraba*.³¹ Paighame-e-Pakistan states that the Khawarij was a group that emerged during the reign of Caliph Ali and killed other Muslims in the name of Islam by declaring them kafir, while *Hiraba* means waging war against the society. The ulema declare that extremists and terrorists in Pakistan have been waging war against the state and against society, and killing peaceful non-Muslims and foreigners who enter with the state’s permission and thus such terrorists are the

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Paigham-e-Pakistan Urdu Document, http://www.paighamepakistan.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Paigham-e-Pakistan_Urdu-11-01-2018.pdf

²⁸ A Telephonic Semi-Structured Interview with Muhammad Usman Asghar, Lecturer at National Defence University, January 5, 2021, Islamabad.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Paigham-e-Pakistan Urdu Document.

³¹ Ibid.

khawarij and culpable to the punishment prescribed in the Quran for *Hiraba*.³²

“Indeed, the penalty for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive upon earth [to cause] corruption is none but that they be killed or crucified or that their hands and feet be cut off from opposite sides or that they be exiled from the land. That is for them a disgrace in this world; and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment.” Al Quran (5:33).³³

The ulema also address the problem of suicide terrorism which is categorically forbidden in the Quran (*Surah Baqara*:195). As for sectarian violence, it is the state’s prerogative to punish elements spreading hate and disunity, and resolve conflicts over mosques and educational institutes, in which religious scholars can also play a role

Paigham-e-Pakistan also addresses the issue of *Qital-fi-sabilillah* (Jihad with sword), which is solely the responsibility of the state and no individual can declare jihad or attack anyone on his own. Moreover, in the light of the Quran and Sunnah war is the last resort and reconciliation is better. The concept of *Amr-bil-Marooif-wa-Nahi’ani-Munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil) is also misinterpreted by extremists in the same way. It is only the right of state and its institutions to use force to enjoin good and forbid evil. The ulema declare that a group should not even use religious slogans for political purposes.

Finally, national agreements, pacts, covenants etc should be adhered to. While we must help our Muslim brothers in times of difficulty, we are not bound to help them against a state with whom we have an agreement or pact.³⁴

In their Joint communique at the end of Paigham-e-Pakistan which was signed by 1829 ulema, it is declared that the Constitution of 1973 is Islamic and should be respected. All citizens of Pakistan should be loyal to the state of Pakistan. The state needs to make the shariah appellate bench more effective. Declaring the state or its institutions non-Muslim is against the tenets of shariah and these elements need to be suppressed. Thus, the ulema extended unconditional support for operations Radd-ul-Fassad and Zarb-e-Azb as being against *khawarij*. Any elements that weaken the Islamic state on the basis of religion, sect, ethnicity etc. are against the tenets of shariah and suicide terrorism is haram. Action must be taken against any educational institution private or government that is

³² Ibid.

³³ QURAN-E-KAREEM, Surah-e-Al-Maidah, Chapter 5, Verse 33, <https://corpus.quran.com/translation>. (Accessed on December 15, 2020)

³⁴ Paigham-e-Pakistan Urdu Document.

spreading hatred, extremism, terrorism or sectarianism.³⁵ Hate speech is not allowed in Islam, only peaceful preaching is allowed. Punishment for blasphemy is state and courts' prerogative, not individuals. No part of Pakistan should be used to harbour or train terrorists. Rights of minorities should be safe-guarded. Attacking women's educational institutions, attacking female students and teachers or attacking women in the name of honour is completely against the spirit of Islam. It is a sin to harm the Islamic Republic of Pakistan or any of its institutions on the pretext of enforcing shariah as Pakistan is an Islamic state so attacking it falls under *Fasadul Arz* and is tantamount to disobedience of the tenets of Quran and Sunnah. (Sahih Muslim, Kitab ul Amara, Tradition number 4768). Killing another Muslim is also a cardinal sin (Surah Nisa 93).

So terrorism in Pakistan is a sin on three counts 1. Suicide. 2. Killing of innocents 3. Rebellion against an Islamic state. Hence the fight of Pakistani security forces against such elements is completely in accordance with the tenets of Islam. This communique was signed by 1829 ulema, who ratified and affirmed it.

As a Message we see that Paigham-e-Paigham fully addresses all the core elements of terrorist narratives logically and comprehensively. Terrorists and extremists claim to derive their authority and legitimacy from Quran and Sunnah. In Paigham-e-Pakistan the ulema deconstruct and refute the false interpretations of extremist narratives through evoking the same authorities of Quran and Sunnah. This is a very effective technique of shaping a counter-narrative and discrediting narratives of terrorism and sectarianism that act in the name of religion by declaring them condemned and liable to punishment in that same religion of peace, Islam. The ulema who drafted Paigham-e-Pakistan extensively quoted Quran and Sunnah with every argument they made and thus their arguments carry a lot of weight.³⁶

However, one thing missing in the message formulation of Paigham-e-Pakistan has been pointed out by Dr. Arshi S. Hashmi who criticized the Paigham-e-Pakistan in terms of generation of an effective logos. She said that Paigham-e-Pakistan has completely ignored social and political context of extremism within the Pakistani society. She advised that for an effective message formulation it is necessary that various aspects of socio-political context should also be addressed in a document like Paigham-e-Pakistan.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ A Telephonic Semi-Structured Interview with Dr. Arshi Saleem Hashmi, Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad, January 16, 2021.

³⁷ Ibid.

Medium (Pathos)

Since a message is inherently meant to be communicated, hence it needs an effective medium in order to reach its target audience. Paigham-e-Pakistan itself acknowledges this need for an effective medium when it recommends that the *Jumma Khutba* (Friday prayer sermon) should be regulated and be made uniform in order to make society united and righteous. The ulema assert in Paigham-e-Pakistan that the *Jumma Khutba* is a great opportunity for the state to disseminate the true face of Islam and rectify commonly existing violent misinterpretations; a medium the state has so far failed to utilize to its advantage. Loud speakers should also not be allowed to be used for hate speech. Nor should TV channels be allowed to make a mockery of religion by holding aggressive debates on religious issues.³⁸ Electronic media should be allowed its freedom of expression within state prescribed limits. Paigham-e-Pakistan also recommends making ethics of disagreement a part of all educational syllabi across Pakistan. This is a tacit acknowledgement of the increasingly rigid views on religion becoming mainstream in our society leading to dogmatism and intolerance which ultimately culminates in a desire to eliminate the opponent through violence rather than agreeing to disagree.³⁹

The SDPI policy review report on the gaps and successes of NAP in October 2016 recommended that:

“A well-directed, coordinated and sustained national campaign is needed to create mass awareness regarding terrorism. Counter-narratives should be disseminated through media, literature, curriculum at educational institutions, debates at public forums and sermons in mosques. It would expose the wrong interpretations of Islam by militant organizations and help people deter from joining these militant groups. However, progress on this aspect has been slow.”⁴⁰

This report thus acknowledges that for a counter-narrative campaign to succeed it needs to be effectively communicated through multiple appropriate mediums. This is where Paigham-e-Pakistan falls short. During the time of the Afghan Jihad one could find such narratives everywhere instigating people for Jihad: on TV, radio, cassettes, newspapers, literature, sermons etc. until people were surrounded by the same narrative and prided themselves in contributing to the holy war. The

³⁸ Paigham-e-Pakistan Urdu Document.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Annual Report, Sustainable, Year 2016, <https://think-asia.org/bitstream/handle/11540/7745/>

same level of dedication, commitment and funding is needed to counter this widespread support and indulgence for violence. So far no concrete steps have been taken to disseminate the well-structured, well-articulated argument against terrorism and extremism as embodied in Paigham-e-Pakistan, although there were some lukewarm preliminary steps taken such as the Ministry of Interior's announcement to try to unite the ulema of different sects on a list of topics for Jumma Khutba (Friday prayer sermon) from which each *khateeb* can pick his own topic of choice. The topics would relate to national unity, promotion of peace and tolerance and character-building.⁴¹ The Council of Islamic Ideology also made recommendations to the government to enact legislation based on Paigham-e-Pakistan, which would not only give legal backing to the fatwa but also send a message to the world that Pakistan is serious about countering terrorism and extremism. So far the follow-up on Paigham-e-Pakistan from the side of the government is not effective. The right media need to be picked to spread the sane and sage counter-narrative of Paigham-e-Pakistan to the embattled corners of Pakistan where the problem of radicalization is most severe.

Messenger (Ethos)

For an effective piece of communication, what is being said is almost as important as who is saying it. Also known as importance of the messenger. The need for credible messengers in devising a successful counter-narrative is widely recognized. In the case of Pakistan, due to the highly polarized society and prevailing radicalization and mistrust, it is hard to find messengers who would be considered credible by the target audience. What sets Paigham-e-Pakistan apart from previous ideological counter-narratives is the fact that Paigham-e-Pakistan is the first ever across the board consensus developed on the issue of terrorism and extremism. It is the result of endeavours of the Islamic Research Institute of the International Islamic University in collaboration with *Wifaq-ul-Madaris-Al-Arabia*, *Anzeem-ul-Madaris Ahle-Sunnat*, *Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al Salafia*, *Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Shia*, *Rabitat-ul-Madaris Al Islamiah Pakistan*. All the major Islamic seminaries of Pakistan were also taken on board such as *Jamia Dar-ul Uloom Karachi*, *Dar-ul-Uloom Muhammadia Ghousia Bhera Sharif*, *Jamia Binoria Karachi*, *Jamiat-ul-Muntazir Lahore*, *Jamia Ashrafia Lahore*, *Dar-ul-Uloom Jamia Haqqania Akora Khattak*, *Jamia Muhammadia Islamabad* and *Jamia Faridia Islamabad*.⁴²

Since so many ulema from different orientations and associations have come forward to endorse this fatwa, hence the messenger is credible

⁴¹ "Govt Moves to Regulate, Monitor Friday Sermons," The News (Accessed on January 1, 2021)

⁴² Paigham-e-Pakistan Urdu Document.

in this case. However, someone also needs to come forward as that messenger who will disseminate this message to the grass roots level. If the government or the security forces perform that job, they are already the targets of extremism and terrorism and hence a party to the conflict. Hence, this research argues that the ulema who signed this document be now tasked and incentivised to elevate it to something more than just a document and to promote Paigham-e-Pakistan in their sermons, seminaries, rallies, madrassas, syllabi, public speeches and TV appearances. Since terrorism is most commonly attributed to religious misinterpretations, hence persons with religious authority are the most credible messengers. One might argue that such ulema came forward in the past as well and had to pay with their lives for speaking up against terrorism. The answer to that is that after the success of operation Zarb e Azb and Radd-ul Fasaad terrorists are not as strong as they used to be. Secondly, there is safety in numbers. If the 1829 ulema who signed Paigham-e-Pakistan and all the seminaries who participated in its drafting lend their vocal support and not just their signatures to the cause of eradicating extremism and terrorism, then the prevalent tacit support for extremist and terrorist means and methods might die away sooner rather than later.

Moreover, Dr. Hashmi emphasized on the involvement of individuals from political and social structures of the society too. She believes that rather just focusing on the religious side of extremism, the psycho analysis of the society itself is necessary as only then one can understand the behaviours of extremism in the light of socio-political factors. She said that the structural gaps in the society always become a reason to aggravate sentiments of hate and intolerance in a particular group or sect, therefore, just focusing on the messengers from religious groups would not be justified.⁴³

Significance of Paigham-e-Pakistan

According to CVE experts Minerva Nasser-Eddine, Bridget Garnham, Katerina Agostino and Gilbert Caluya, the CVE approaches that can be adopted by states are: ideological, communicative, political and social CVE approaches. This section of the paper will provide an overview of existing efforts in Pakistan along the lines of these CVE approaches and will evaluate impact or effectiveness of Paigham-e-Pakistan on these levels.⁴⁴

⁴³ A Telephonic Semi-Structured Interview with Dr. Arshi Saleem Hashmi, Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad, January 16, 2021.

⁴⁴ Minerva Nasser-Eddine, Bridget Garnham, Katerina Agostino and Gilbert Caluya. "Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review."

Ideological Approaches to CVE

Ideological counter narratives acknowledge that since ideology is an important driver of radicalization; hence it can be an important means of deradicalization.⁴⁵ Using ideology to counter terrorism and extremism can involve critical and deconstructive approaches that deconstruct and discredit terrorist narratives by evaluating them against the tenets of Quran and Sunnah. Such an attempt was undertaken by Javed Ahmed Ghamdi, Maulana Tahir-ul-Qadri etc. Some argue that these ideological counter-narratives were not really effective because they came from different sects and not the deobandi sect prominently associated with extremism or that such narratives did not reach the grass roots levels of radicalization. However, a more grassroots level approach was used by Maulana Sarfaraz Naeemi who was assassinated by the Taliban for his anti-Taliban rhetoric and Maulana Israr Madni, who himself hails from the deobandi school of thought and working at the grass roots level of radicalization.

Another means of countering radical ideologies is by promoting progressive and moderate Muslim points of view. For instance, President Pervez Musharraf tried to promote the Barelvi stream of Islam as a counter-force to the radical Islamic interpretations of the Wahabi and Deobandi schools of thought. This led to the establishment of the National Council for the Promotion of Sufism (NCPS) in 2006. This approach was followed by the succeeding PPP government as well. However, the Barelvi school of thought soon manifested its own radical and extremist side on the issue of blasphemy and khatm e naboowat.⁴⁶

Another means of countering terrorist narratives is via value-based counter-narratives, values that are generally accepted in the society such as ISPR's song that challenged the manhood and bravery of Taliban who stoop to attack and fight children.

In that regards, Paigham-e-Pakistan can be considered as a formal step towards the ideological response to the extremist ideology. Though, ideological responses were generated earlier too but this is the first time when the state has rebutted the extremist ideology in a more effective manner.

⁴⁵ Jacobson, M. "Learning Counter-Narrative Lessons from the Cases of Terrorist Dropouts," *Countering Violent Extremist Narratives* (2017): 72-83. The Hague: National Coordinator for Counterterrorism.

⁴⁶ Muhammad Suleman, "Institutionalisation of Sufi Islam after 9/11 and the Rise of Barelvi Extremism in Pakistan."

Communicative Approaches to CVE

One way of countering narratives of violence is by disrupting the flow of such narratives through censoring and monitoring. This has been adopted by Pakistani authorities by forbidding the media from showing gruesome images which serve the fear-mongering purposes of terrorists, giving air time to terrorists or broadcasting any specimen of hate speech in the Code of Conduct, 2015 by amendments in the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) Rules, 2009.⁴⁷ ISPR songs, plays, documentaries, dramas, short films and videos that aim to weaken the onslaught of extremist narratives and show the sacrifices of the Pakistani forces also fall under this category. ISPR has even launched a new video-game "Glorious Resolve". However, the weakness of these counter-narratives is that they are coming directly from ISPR wing of the Pakistan army, which is currently a party to the conflict. These counter-narratives should come from a more neutral authority.

NISP and NAP initiatives by the Pakistani government can also be categorized as communicative approaches to CVE since they sought to disrupt extremist narratives and replace them with integrative and benign counter-narratives. The significance of a strong counter-narrative that deals with radicalization at the levels of individual, organization and socio-political environment is generally accepted by the Pakistani authorities. This is reflected in both the NISP (National Internal Security Policy) and the NAP (National Action Plan) put forward by the Pakistani government. However, such policy recommendations/ plans have failed to materialize in the form of a national-level comprehensive counter-narrative.

The points in NAP which implicitly deal with the development of a counter-narrative are as follows:

1. Strict action will be taken against such literature in newspapers, magazine etc. that promotes sectarianism, intolerance, division, hatred or violence.
2. Print and electronic media will be monitored to prevent glorification of terrorists and terrorist organizations through their reportage.
3. Concrete measures will be taken to prevent the promotion of violence and extremism through internet and social media.
4. Strict action will be taken against elements spreading sectarianism.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting displays on its website some follow-up steps taken in pursuit of fulfilling the goals set out in the NAP. In order to curb hate speech, authorities confiscated around

⁴⁷ Associated Press, "Pemra Issues Guidelines for TV Channels," *Dawn*, February 28, 2016.

1,500 books and other hate literature and closed down 71 shops. However, these are hardly impressive figures from all over Pakistan to boast about. Other strict action against hate speech includes 1,961 suspects arrested and 1,893 cases filed against clerics who use their position to spread hate and division. 271 of these suspects have been convicted while 826 cases are still languishing before special courts.

Action has also been used against elements who misuse the loud speaker for hate-mongering. 7,000 cases have been registered so far and 6,855 people have been arrested. 1,482 of them have been already convicted for hate-preaching on loudspeakers.⁴⁸

Paigham-e-Pakistan has highlighted the importance of controlled Friday sermons and has emphasized on the preparation of the list of approved topics for Friday sermons. However, a comprehensive policy is still not being followed on it. In that context the social media can be used as a powerful tool for launching a coordinated communicative and ideological counter-narrative or to disseminate message of Paigham-e-Pakistan as campaign. Since media and terrorism have a symbiotic relationship⁴⁹, terrorists often use media, especially social media to spread their message. Thus, the media becomes a strategic tool in the hands of terrorists who use it to disseminate narratives of fear and hatred. According to recent reports various terrorist groups are using social media as tool for recruitment, training and propaganda purposes during COVID 19 pandemic.⁵⁰

Socio-Political CVE Approaches

According to Briggs, "our experience of terrorism tells us that it is best handled through democracy, not in spite of it".⁵¹ Pakistani governments' efforts to introduce legal and political reforms in FATA such as the extension of Political Parties Order 2002, reforms of the FATA Tribunal and the Qaumi Jirga in 2011, amendments in the FCR and the Rewaj Act in 2017, extension of jurisdiction of superior courts to FATA in 2018 and now the FATA merger negotiations are some of the efforts to integrate FATA with the rest of KPK. However, these steps are too little too

⁴⁸ Shakeel Ahmed Ramay, "National Action Plan: Implementation Gaps & Successes," *SPDI Policy Review*, October 2016, <https://sdpi.org/publications/files/> (Accessed on January 3, 2021)

⁴⁹ V Cvrtila, & A Perešin, "The Transformation of Terrorism and New Strategies," *Političamisa*, 46:5, (2009):121-139.

⁵⁰ Saba Noor, Hira Khan and Dr. Rashid Ahmed, "Role of Social Media in Peace building: Options and Opportunities for Pakistan (A case study of COVID 19)," *International Review of Social Sciences* IRSS, vol 9, Issue 1.

⁵¹ R Briggs, "Hearts and Minds and Votes: The Role of Democratic Participation in Countering Terrorism," *Democratization*, 17: 2 (2010): 273.

late. As for Paigham-e-Pakistan, it has completely ignored the socio-political underlying causes of extremism and addressed the religious aspect only. As mentioned earlier, Dr Hashmi argues that Paigham-e-Pakistan has only focused on the religious concepts and religious issues of extremism in the Pakistani society and has completely ignored psyche of socio-political aspects, due to which Paigham-e-Pakistan cannot be considered as a comprehensive counter narrative. She further avers that Religious enlightenment for one can be too suffocating for other, enlightenment should not be confined to religious thoughts alone rather it requires a complete process in which society evolves politically, socially as well as religiously. Oftentimes social structures, values and beliefs manifest in aggressive behaviours and eventually lead an individual to a particular sect depending on that individual's exposure, so whatever is going on politically and socially that is making an individual vulnerable is an important marker to study how and why extremism is flourishing and being accepted/supported by people.⁵²

Conclusion

The philosophy of counter terrorism indicates that to deal with the menace of extremism and terrorism a state needs to address grievances, include all people in the political process and should present an alternative vision for a better world. It is imperative to note that addressing genuine grievances and political empowerment comes first. Then a counter-narrative to extremism and terrorism can be reasonably expected to take effect. If the situation on ground is rife with poverty, injustice, deprivation, distrust, mismanagement and corruption then people cannot be expected to survive on narratives alone. The process of alleviating genuine grievances and integrating the pockets of resentful and isolated peoples back into the mainstream needs to go side by side with disseminating counter-narratives such as Paigham-e-Pakistan. Counter-narratives also need an atmosphere of debate and transparency in order to promote mutual trust and tolerance. Until this enabling environment is created and the message is disseminated to the grass roots level, words and documents alone would not suffice.

⁵² A Telephonic Semi-Structured Interview with Dr. Arshi Saleem Hashmi, Professor, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, National Defence University, Islamabad, January 16, 2021.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE AFGHAN QUESTION: STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS ON THE AFGHAN SOLUTION

Imran Khan* & Naila Qazi**

Abstract

The article examines how Taliban-ruled Afghanistan faces several challenges due to structural constraints in the post-US era. In this study, the authors aim to identify recurring obstacles to the Afghan state and nation-building process that cannot be adequately explained using reductive reasoning. The literature review identifies four structural variables contributing to the recurrence of political, economic, and humanitarian failures in Afghanistan. These variables include insecurities of regional states; the absence of a hegemon and diversity of political ideologies; regional defiance of the liberal world order; and US influence on the international economic system. Since Afghanistan cannot be fixed in any of the surrounding regions and constitutes a transitional point, the study addresses its regional fix by employing the concept of the Eurasian Balkans to analyze the Afghan question. The article concludes that its volatile fate stems more from external forces than internal ones.

Keywords: Taliban, Post-US Afghanistan, Political Ideology, Liberal World Order, Humanitarian Failures

Introduction

This article examines the structural constraints associated with the Afghan question.¹ After the Taliban's return to power, Afghanistan is experiencing political, economic, and humanitarian upheaval. Corrupt practices have plagued Afghan nation-building efforts; efforts to

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¹ The Afghan question can be defined as Afghanistan's political instability, economic atrophy, and human rights violations. These are the inevitable consequences of decades of strategic competition between national, regional, and international players for power in Afghanistan. The American exit left a power vacuum, and the Afghan question resurfaced, just as the Eastern question did after the decline of the Ottoman Empire or the German question after Germany's total defeat in World War II.

reconcile tribal and ethnic fissures and instil national pride in Afghans have largely failed. Externally, responsibility for much of the political instability and misery of its people can be traced to external powers seeking to realize their own strategic, ideological and economic interests in the country.² Afghanistan, located at the crossroads of all three regions, acts as an insulator state, standing on the edges of geopolitically important regions, and is a zone of weak interaction.³ Although, as an insulator, it stops the spillover of conflict from one region to another; nevertheless, it serves as a point of confluence for the variegated conflicts of the various states located on the inner fringes of the three regions. Afghanistan's instability tempts the intervention of more powerful neighbouring states, in compliance with local Afghan factions, who do so to deny geopolitical space to other claimants or to advance their own.

For the last two decades, the ruling governments in Afghanistan have often failed to derive popular legitimacy and overcome the reigning turmoil. A divided and heterogeneous society like Afghanistan has ample reasons to deepen its rifts on ethnic, religious, and interest-based issues. The patterns of Afghanistan's engagement with Pakistan, India, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Iran best illustrate this argument. Both before (overtly) and after (covertly) the U.S. invasion, Indo-Iranian and Pakistani aid energized conflicting local groups—the Tehrik-i-Taliban Afghanistan (TTA), the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Northern Alliance (in government), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and the Kashmiri Mujahedeen—to work together with regional warring parties. The TTP and Kashmiri Mujahedeen in South Asia while IMU carried out its agenda in Central Asia. Afghanistan's role as a proxy war theatre complemented the contours of surrounding regional conflicts with different ends, diverging interests, and distinct players. Afghanistan has been torn apart by the surrounding regions with the help of local abettors. The units of the nearby regions see Afghanistan through the prism of their regional conflicts, which serve as an auxiliary that burdens the conflict resolution approach within Afghanistan. A more pertinent theoretical lens at the regional level is needed to evaluate the Afghan question.

Almost five centuries ago, different parts of Afghanistan were contested and bloody frontiers of battling regional empires, such as the Uzbeks in Central Asia, the Safavids in Iran, and the Mughals in India.⁴ In

² Marvin G. Weinbaum, "Afghanistan and Its Neighbors: An Ever Dangerous Neighborhood," United States Institute of Peace (USIP) (Washington:United States Institute of Peace, 2006) <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/sr162.pdf>.

³ Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 41.

⁴ Thomas J Barfield, *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 48.

modern times, these empires have evolved into modern nation-states, yet emulate the behavioural patterns of their predecessors. Once the rule of their forefathers ended, their successors longed to exert their influence exactly on the same geographical areas in Afghanistan. Patterns of intervention in Afghanistan by neighbouring states are rooted in history. Realistically, due to its location on the borders of various regions, it does not become a part of any adjacent regions. So what is the most effective theoretical lens to understand the region in which Afghanistan is located? The article uses the concept of the Eurasian Balkans to address this gap, which guides the study.

The second issue that deepens Afghanistan's political, economic, and humanitarian crises is the question of its reintegration into the international arena. Generally, a state that harbours terrorist or dissident organizations and engages in state-sponsored terrorism finds it difficult to reintegrate into the international community. In the mid-90s, Afghanistan ran training camps for regional and global terrorist organizations, posing a common threat to the international community. After August 2021, the Western world and regional states are hesitant to reintegrate Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. In this regard, the first regime of the Taliban is described to contextualize the apprehensions of the regional states about the Taliban's behaviour, and the importance of the role of the hegemon as a stabilizer in such a scenario is discussed. Drawing an analogy with the German question in the post-World War II era, it is inferred that if a hegemon controls a region, it helps moderate the partisan stakeholders' adversarial tendencies. In the Afghan question, the defined region has long been devoid of an active single hegemon. Especially after the collapse of the USSR, wise policymakers in Washington D.C. had already determined that such remote places and people could safely be excluded from America's New World Order.⁵

The third important variable relates to the collective behaviour of a particular region, particularly during the global transition of power. It is a well-observed pattern that a challenger emerges when a dominant power loses its grip over global affairs. Such developments encourage dissatisfied middle or relatively stable players in different regions to rally behind a potential challenger or to take a risk by defying the fundamentals of the existing world order. They deem the incumbent order obsolete for the fulfilment of their international agendas. In this scenario, smaller states bandwagon for the cause of a potential challenger unless the dominant power enters into alliances with smaller states that guarantee survival.

Finally, Afghanistan is too weak a state to flourish independently in this scenario. In the last two decades, a larger portion of its aid-dependent

⁵ *Ibid.*, preface x.

economy has relied on the goodwill of Western donors. Most states of the Eurasian Balkans have a revisionist approach to the liberal fundamentals—liberal democracy and universal human rights principles—of the liberal world order by sustaining tolerable economic wounds. However, the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan cannot afford the luxury of offending Western donors beyond a certain point.

Eurasian Balkans: Fixing Afghanistan's Place in the World

Is Afghanistan the Southern most part of Central Asia, the westernmost part of South Asia, or the Eastern most edge of the Middle East? Whatever the choice, it will be regretfully noted that the inclusion of Afghanistan is problematic.⁶ Fixing Afghanistan's place in the world has been an issue for various scholars from varying disciplines. Thomas Barfield, an anthropologist from Boston University, conducted extensive ethnographic fieldwork in northern Afghanistan and fixed the country in the Turko-Persia region.⁷ His description of the Turco-Persian region almost echoes Dr Zbigniew Brzezinski's, Polish-American geostrategist and statesman, concept of the Eurasian Balkans. The study uses Dr Zbigniew Brzezinski's Eurasian Balkans lens to explain Afghanistan in the context of the region.

The concept of the Eurasian Balkans helps to understand Afghanistan with an expanded geographical concept that spans the various states of all three regions that surround it as a triangle: Central Asia at the upper point, the Middle East and South Asia at the lower western and eastern points, respectively. Eurasia, too, has its "Balkans," but the Eurasian Balkans are much larger, more populated and even more religiously and ethnically heterogeneous.⁸ Geographically, the Eurasian Balkans roughly embraces Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Georgia, Armenia and Afghanistan. In contrast, Iran and Turkey have the potential to be included in the region.⁹ Pakistan and India are still remote, but they are also not disinterested in what may be unfolding in these new Eurasian Balkans.¹⁰ Although Pakistan is considered distant to the Eurasia Balkans, its active engagement over the past four decades has integrated its destiny with the geopolitics and geo-

⁶ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁷ Thomas Barfield defines the Turko-Persia region as "geographically, the Turko-Persia highlands are the large region of Asia that stretches from Anatolia and the Zagros Mountains in the east through the Iranian plateau to the Indian Plains. Its northern limits are the Caucasus in the west and the Eurasian steppe at the Syr Darya River in the east; its southern border runs through arid Baluchistan to the sea."

⁸ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 123.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 139.

economics of the region. To its east, towering India blocks Pakistan's eastward march and thrusts it to the west and north, where Afghanistan, China and Central Asia states are located. Asserting its "look west-north" option, the geopolitical compulsions of the last four decades left Pakistan with no option but greater involvement in the affairs of the Eurasian Balkans. The peculiar dynamics of the region, such as energy reserves, strategic location, and ethnic and territorial fault lines, make the Eurasian Balkans a tinder box. In this volatile region, terrorism has emerged as a tool of policy. It is not South Asia, Central Asia, or the Middle East but the characteristics of the Eurasian Balkans that have the potential to explain the Afghan question. the term "region" in this article will refer to the Eurasian Balkans. The following four structural variables contribute largely to the Afghan question:

Insecurities of the Regional States and Taliban Regimes

The Taliban returned to Kabul after dethroning Ashraf Ghani's government on August 15, 2021. Contrary to the given pledges, its governance style is reminiscent of the past. Internally, the Taliban is consolidating its grip on the daily lives of ordinary Afghans through a stream of Islamic decrees. Externally, the theocratic regime has not yet gained the international community's trust. The absence of de jure status holds the Taliban regime in limbo. This uncertainty exacerbates the challenges to the fledgling regime, such as the fact that no aid, especially from the West, can flow directly to the Taliban regime in Kabul. The question of international legitimacy forced international financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB), to suspend Kabul's access to their funds, posing major obstacles to UN aid missions. Although some exemptions are offered but yet Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) find it difficult out of fear of the sanctions.¹¹ The magnitude of the existing sanctions and the non-recognition of the Taliban regime makes it hard for the world to reach out to the Afghan people in this hour of need.

An interesting dichotomy can be observed in the approach of the various regional states, which were once the lifeline of the Taliban's struggles. After the Taliban seized power, prominent political pundits were expecting China, Russia, and Pakistan to recognize the Taliban regime soon. But the outcome has turned out to be quite the opposite. In contrast to the current situation, various regional states struggled to tip the balance in favour of the Taliban in the fight against the American presence in Afghanistan. The aid to the Taliban came both in diplomatic and material forms. On the other side, regional states have left no stone unturned to achieve an amicable settlement between the then-Afghan

¹¹ Akmal Dawi, "Online Crowdfunding Campaigns Struggle with Restrictions on Afghanistan," *Voice Of America*, February 8, 2022.

government and the Taliban, despite several regional states having a history with the Taliban dating back to their first regime. However, regional states have not lost sight of their national interests, which have already been reshuffled after the Taliban takeover.

On the Afghan chessboard, China's stakes are relatively high. The instability in its immediate neighbour can resonate within and without China. Economically, in its 'westward march' under the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI), Central Asia and Afghanistan serve as a land bridge that connects western China with the fertile regions of Eastern Europe and the Middle East, and so forth. In the South China Sea, China's hands are full. In the event of instability on its western fringe, it will be trapped between two fronts that could seep out its energies in its struggle against the odds. On the domestic front, Chinese policymakers have long worried about the potential spread of Islamic militancy in its Muslim-majority Xinjiang province.¹² In the worst scenario, China will be fighting three wars: against the US and its allies in the South China Sea; at home against the separatist movement in Xinjiang; and on the western fringe, a battle against ossified Islamist militancy. On the Western front, an anticipated Islamic arc—starting from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan and extending to Pakistan, prone to Islamic inspiration—can hamper China's smooth land access to the Middle East, Europe, and so forth. This section also ensures that oil and gas continue to flow from Central Asian states into China. The announcement of BRI coincided with Chinese diplomatic engagement with the Afghan peace process. Since then, it has operationalized multifaceted and multidirectional diplomacy for building regional consensus on Afghanistan. It hosted a series of intra-Afghan dialogues, ran shuttle diplomacy to mitigate mistrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan,¹³ and successfully mediated a three-day truce between the Taliban and the Ghani government.¹⁴

However, China was not alone in feeling a sense of foreboding about the possible spillover of Islamist militancy. Decades of chaos were stirring national security concerns in Central Asian states, Russia, and Iran alike. Russia also used its good offices to strike an intra-Afghan deal. However, its role as a peacemaker was seen with jaundiced eyes and marred by scandals.¹⁵ Iran, as Afghanistan's next-door neighbour and champion of the Shia cause, could not afford to be indifferent to

¹² Andrew Small, *The China-Pakistan Axis: Asia's New Geopolitics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 5.

¹³ Sudha Ramachandran, "China's Peacemaking between Pakistan and Afghanistan," *The Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst*, September 7, 2017.

¹⁴ Kamran Yousaf, "Afghan Eid Truce 'Backed by Pakistan, China'," *The Express Tribune*, June 11, 2018.

¹⁵ Sajjan M. Gohel and Allison Bailey, "This Time, Russia is in Afghanistan to Win," *Foreign Policy*, July 1, 2020.

developments that had the potential to bring back its ideological rival to power. Despite their ideological and historical hitches, all these regional states provided the Taliban with military and diplomatic support. The shared US threat in the region spliced these diverse factions together and garnered a united front against their common adversary. However, the withdrawal of American forces has untethered the deeply tied strings of unity in support of the Taliban, and it appears that the unabated support behind the Taliban has gradually waned. Their mutual histories reinforce this imperative and provide ample explanation for their current outlook.

The Taliban: Then and Now

Contrary to all expectations, the regional states have lurched toward recognizing the Taliban regime. History holds plausible reasons for the hesitance of the regional states. In the mid-1990s, the Taliban regime promoted Islamist militancy and terrorism. It allowed Afghanistan to be used as a launching pad for other militant organizations such as al-Qaida, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Harkat ul-Mujahedin, and so forth. The then Taliban regime hosted ostracized militant organizations, harboured international terrorists, including Saudi extremist Osama bin Laden, and ran militant training camps. With the financial and military help of Osama bin Laden, Taliban-ruled Afghanistan became an epicentre of militants, who were trained with the Taliban forces before returning to their homes to spread instability across the region.¹⁶

Taliban and Iran

Iran frequently oscillated between the two extreme poles of supporting the Taliban and fighting them. In the late 1990s, the Taliban's violation of international diplomatic norms brought Iran and the Taliban to the brink of war. In 1998, a small group of Taliban led by Mullah Dost Mohammed entered the Iranian consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif and gunned down 11 Iranian diplomats, intelligence officers, and a journalist.¹⁷ To avenge its diplomats, the Iranian government deployed 70,000 troops on the Iran-Afghan border that further intensified tensions between the two countries.¹⁸ After 9/11, Iran had extended full support to U.S. Special Operations Forces and CIA in supplying the commanders of the Northern

¹⁶ Ahmed Rashid, *Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 7.

¹⁷ Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 74.

¹⁸ Douglas Jehl, "For Death of Its Diplomats, Iran Vows Blood for Blood," *The New York Times*, September 11, 1998.

Alliance to defeat al-Qaida and the Taliban.¹⁹ Its concessions to the United States failed to fix US-Iran relations, which pushed Iran to the other extreme. Adapting to the precarious situation, Iran operated in grey areas, supporting the reconstruction process in Afghanistan and supplying weapons and shelter to the Taliban. In the war against the United States, Tehran provided shelter, training, and weapons to the Taliban, which often resented the Afghan government.²⁰ However, now the establishment of a Sunni theocratic regime in close proximity to the Shia theocracy in itself is a source of concern for the policy circle in Tehran.²¹ An ongoing process of reconciliation between them may work in the short term, but in the long term, the ideological and political influence of one depends on the negation of the other. The nature of sectarian schism runs beyond religion and goes deep into cultural and historical differences. The 21st century's Persianate Tehran and Arabicized Kabul share nothing worthy but a common lexicon of Islam to brand their diverse, distinct, and dissimilar religious perspectives.

Taliban and Central Asia

The Taliban's relations with Central Asian republics have not been peaceful. Afghanistan had served as a haven for Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP) and the IMU members. Based in Afghanistan and under the charismatic leadership of Juma Namangani, the IMU launched terror attacks deep inside Uzbekistan to dislodge then-president Islam Karimov. From Afghanistan, Juma Namangani extended his jihad to Central Asia and established his cult in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. He enlisted dissidents from every significant ethnic group in Central Asia, as well as Chechens and Dagestanis from the Caucasus and Uyghurs from China's Muslim province of Xinjiang, who were critical of their ruling regimes.²² Over the past century, Afghanistan has sheltered the fleeing Basmachis and IMU fighters, who used their bases in Afghanistan to wreak havoc in their homelands. Even today, reasonably, Central Asians fear that the return of the Taliban will be an aspiration for other regional extremist groups.²³

Taliban and China

¹⁹ Barnett R. Rubin, and Sara Batmanglich, "The U.S. and Iran in Afghanistan: Policy Gone Awry," *MIT Center for International Studies*, October 2008 .

²⁰ Alireza Nader et al., "Iran's Influence in Afghanistan: Implications for the U.S. Drawdown," *Rand Corporation*, 2014.

²¹ Kevin Lim, "Afghanistan Is a Bigger Headache for Tehran Than It Is Letting On," *Foreign Policy*, September 15, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/09/15/afghanistan-iran-taliban/>

²² Rashid, *Jihad*, 9.

²³ Richard Weitz, "Central Asia's Taliban Surprise," *Middle East Institute*, 16, 2021, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/central-asias-taliban-surprise>.

Even China failed to escape the terror the Taliban regime inspired. The ETIM became an asset for the Taliban, and Uyghurs constituted the front lines of the Taliban's assault on northern Afghanistan. Worrisome China reached out to the Taliban through Pakistan, but the initiative yielded nothing worthy.²⁴ In the late 1990s, Uyghur renegades set off a wave of violence in Xinjiang. In the face of the rising wave of Islamist militancy at its doorsteps, China, too, joined the US crusade of war on terror by supporting UN Security Council resolutions against the Taliban regime. Today, twenty years apart, the return of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan coincides with the Uyghurs' growing predicament with China. In Washington, democracy and human rights issues are once again elevated as policy tools. So, as a result, the paradigm shift prompts the US to take active notice of so-called human rights abuses in Xinjiang. China's efforts to re-educate its citizens in concentration camps are tantamount to human rights violations in the West.

The Absence of Hegemon & Pluralistic Political Ideology

The role of the regional hegemon in international economic stability has long been the subject of discussion in academic circles. Kindleberger argued, "for the world economy to be stabilized, there has to be a stabilizer, one stabilizer."²⁵ A stable, open international economic system can only be established under a hegemonic power structure, which is characterized by a single state having a predominance of power. Kindleberger based his argument on the 'logic of collective goods' since all the countries benefit from the hegemon irrespective of whether they can contribute or not.²⁶ Political stability is one of the prerequisites for economic growth that the hegemon takes into account, and ensures to sustain it for robust economic growth. This public good of international stability does much to stabilize weak states of the bloc. A hegemon also gives the normative foundations for political behaviour, blueprints for the economic system, and a complete set of strategic principles to guide, regulate, and monitor the national behaviour of the allied states. To sustain its hegemony in times of crisis, it must maintain market momentum, invest in allied states, acquire the ability to harmonize the political ideologies of its alliance members and provide security guarantees to the weaker allies. Robert Gilpin argued that "a wider set of resources- ideological and status appeals- are integral to the perpetuation

²⁴ Rashid, *Jihad*, 176.

²⁵ Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression: 1929-1939* (California: University of California Press, 1933), 305.

²⁶ Michael C. Webb and Stephen D. Krasner, "Hegemonic Stability Theory: An Empirical Assessment," *Review of International Studies* 15, no. 2 (1989): 184.

of hegemonic order."²⁷ Provision of these essentials enables hegemon to exercise "adjudicative and preventive diplomacy," whereby the hegemon ensures that group interests should take precedence over individual interests in any internal conflict. Such composition and accomplishment pave the way for consensus building, which burgeons an environment where the zero-sum game supplants the positive-sum game in the hegemon's sphere of influence.

The peaceful power transition from Great Britain to the US was grounded in some commonalities: a shared civilization, a common political ideology, and a way of life. In the course of its rise to hegemony, the United States not only benefited from commonalities with the previous world order but also innovatively entwined various international regimes, spearheaded the project of liberal democracy, and positioned itself as the custodian of humanity. It weaved a credible chain of security alliances, garnered the golden age of capitalism, promoted democracy, and made these elements the basis of the new system through various institutions. The Bretton Woods system was supported by the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NATO, a new set of initiatives designed to revive and protect an American sphere of influence run along liberal lines.²⁸ The U.S.-led ordering mechanism- change in the governance of an international system²⁹- evolved in the western half of the European continent, and Moscow replicated the same attitude in the eastern half. The U.S.-led order rallied upon reciprocal, consensual, and institutionalized relations and has acquired the status of constitutional hegemony.³⁰ These arrangements effectively reduced the possibility of instability in the hegemon's sphere and provided a reliable platform for coordination and consensus in times of crisis and opportunity. The pattern helped the US emerge as a regional hegemon-first in the Western Hemisphere and Europe in a bipolar world - and later as a global hegemon in the post-Cold War era. It enabled the US to keep its alliance system cohesive and united under one roof of common political ideology in the face of any threat or crisis.

The World Order and Dispute Resolution Mechanism

The US-led ordering mechanism offered a credible platform for conflict resolution in the post-war period in Western Europe. Its first test came was a form of a territorial dispute over Germany's reintegration into

²⁷ Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 34.

²⁸ Gideon Rose, "The Fourth Founding: The United States and the Liberal Order," *Foreign Affairs* 98, no. 1 (January/February 2019): 14.

²⁹ Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, 42.

³⁰ Gilford John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 22.

the international arena following WWII. In the context of the Cold War, beginning in 1950, it was evident that the United States sought to reintegrate federal Germany as much as possible into the international arena.³¹ However, on the Rhur-Rhineland Question, the French did not share the US policy approach. The French were bent on stripping Germany of its coal resources and industrial heartland and openly called "for the internationalization of the Ruhr and the political separation of the Rhineland from the rest of Germany."³² However, the ordering mechanism of the liberal world set the stage for a consensus political ideology and institutional mechanism to reach consensus decisions in light of the positive-sum game. A single political system, guided by a hegemon, acted as a blanket to cover the political, economic, and strategic schisms.

The Eurasian Balkans: The Region without a Hegemon

The Eurasian Balkans either remained devoid of a true hegemon or, during Pax Americana, fell out of US interest. The United States had good reasons for disengaging from the region. The region consisted of anti-American regimes; many were deemed "black boxes" due to their airtight regimes. Without a hegemon, it remained retarded in modern-era diplomacy and hesitant to intermingle with the outside world concordant with modern-day requirements. In various aspects, some regional states still play by the 19th century rulebook. Deprived of a hegemon and a direction setter, the region strayed in search of political ideology, security guarantees, and a distinct economic system. Economically, the regional states benefited from the blueprints of the Western economic system, but politically, they duped Western democracy with national ideals while exhibiting vagrant instincts in security field. The security mistrust flourished, pushing regional states toward internal and external balancing mechanisms, reliance on proxies, and, in extreme cases, state-sponsored terrorism. These patterns, such as national insecurities, ideological divisions, and religious schisms within regional states, are reemerging in their foreign policy choices since the Taliban's takeover of Kabul. Not a single and coherent step has been taken to deliberate on the Afghan question under a single leadership or in light of regional consensus for the common good. Regional forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) hold a vague charter for conflict resolution and do not have the teeth to implement or discuss security-related issues, as do NATO or the European Union. Ironically, the region exhibits a mosaic of conflicting political ideologies with revisionist agendas. Its political texture

³¹ Constantin Chira-Pascanut, "Discreet Players: Jean Monnet, Transatlantic Networks and Policy-Makers in International Co-operation," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 52, no. 6 (2014): 1252.

³² Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945-1963* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 67.

ranges from theocratic, authoritarian, and totalitarian to military-dictated regimes and semi-democratic setups, contrary to each other in fundamentals.

Following the Taliban's take-over, regional states are racing to set and put forward their own agendas. Iran hosted a meeting of all of Afghanistan's neighbours- China, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan- plus Russia in October 2021.³³ The third round of the Moscow format, which focused on respecting Afghan sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, was held in Russia during the same month. The press communiqué seemed more concerned with preventing mutual interference than formulating a plan of action.³⁴ The two arch-rivals Pakistan and India held two separate summits on the same day: the former under the banner of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the latter under the name of the Central Asia Dialogue. It also manifested the deeper division between both sides about Afghanistan.³⁵ China has its arrangement and has called for a two-day summit on March 30, 2022. Even the first summit of the SCO after the fall of Kabul on September 17, 2021, in Dushanbe on its twentieth anniversary, failed to provide a comprehensive road map or a joint mechanism for dealing with the Afghan question.³⁶ Unlike the German question, in the Afghan case, the power is so diffused within regional states, that it precludes the rise of a true hegemon to manage the regional issues for the collective good. The two leading regional states, China and Russia, project an appearance of coordination, but in practice, their differing regional interest and identities set absolute limits.³⁷

Regional Defiance to the Liberal World Order

Presently, a short-lived unipolar world with American predominance comes to an end. The declining ability of America to act unilaterally against the rise of China as a peer competitor, and the emergence of smaller power poles heralds the dawn of a multipolar world.

³³ Maziar Motamedi, "Iran to Host Multilateral Conference on Afghanistan," *Al Jazeera*, October 18, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/18/>

³⁴ Elena Teslova, "Moscow Format Meeting on Afghanistan Adopts Joint Statement," *Anadolu Ajansı (AA)*, October 21, 2021, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/>

³⁵ Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "India, 5 Central Asia Nations to Jointly Combat Afghan Terror," *The Economic Times*, December 20, 2021, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/>

³⁶ Dushanbe Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the SCO, <http://eng.sectesco.org/news/20210917/782639.html>.

³⁷ Ron Synovitz, "Regional Powers Seek To Fill Vacuum Left By West's Retreat From Afghanistan," *Radio Free Europe*, December 25, 2021, <https://www.rferl.org/a/>

In the 21st century, the power transition is no longer an exclusive matter of the European continent. Asian states have been outpacing their European counterparts in many aspects. The nominal GDP of Asia is predicted to increase from \$33 trillion in 2021 to \$39 trillion in 2023, surpassing that of the United States (\$34 trillion) and Europe (\$26 trillion).³⁸ Despite its dynamic growth, the Asian continent remains highly fragmented in terms of alliances and political ideals. It also hosts various flashpoints capable of escalating into wars and the anti-American bloc is internally divided.

In Donald Trump's National Security Strategy, America's foreign policy focus swung from terrorism to the new threats to its national security coming out of Moscow and Beijing. The Biden administration is struggling against rising autocracy. The world has once again bifurcated into autocratic and democratic blocs. In this division, China and Russia take the lead in rallying around smaller authoritative states and other quasi-democracies in the region. The dissatisfied group is more inclined towards autocracy and poses severe threats to the liberal components of the world order. Although the liberal economic system benefits the economies of the autocratic states, liberal elements such as democracy and universal human rights standards put major obstacles in their politics. It appears that these states, in general, and China, in particular, want to be the beneficiary of the global economic order without abiding by the spirit of its liberalism in many ways.³⁹ So they strive for a radical transformation that could accommodate their autocratic needs.

Are Human Rights Universal?

Human rights organizations, NGOs, and the European Union accused many members of the dissatisfied group of a poor record of human rights standards, twisted democratic practices, and press censorship.^{40 41 42} The argument of cultural relativism, on the other hand, is quite dominant in the challengers' discourse against the Western-chartered human rights protocols. They regard them as a product of the

³⁸ Chetan Ahya, "Asian Economic Growth to Outstrip Americas and Europe," *Financial Times*, January 31, 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/>

³⁹ Michael J. Mazarr et al., *Understanding the Current International Order*, (California: RAND Corporation, 2016), <https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/>

⁴⁰ Kenneth Roth, "World Report 2021: Rights Trends in Russia," Human Rights Watch, January 13, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/>

⁴¹ Kenneth Roth, "World Report 2021: Rights Trends in China," Human Rights Watch, January 13, 2021, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/>

⁴² Amnesty International, "Amnesty International Report 2021/22," (London, 2022), 197.

decadent West with no relevance in Asian societies.⁴³ Various debates in their political circles and academia question the universal applicability of human rights standards and dismiss them as individualistic Eurocentric products that do not fit into collectivist Asian societies. According to universal human rights standards, there are cases in China, Russia, Iran, and Taliban-ruled Afghanistan that implicate them as human rights violators.

US Renewed Commitment to Democracy and Human Rights

As the United States' foreign policy shifts to a new paradigm centered on China containment, the promotion of democracy and human rights are once again chosen as powerful tools for distinguishing between "good" and "evil" empires. This current is quite visible in the policies of the Biden administration. President Biden has been emphatic about democracy and human rights in his key policy speeches and also declared the launch of the "Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal."⁴⁴ This rings an alarm bell for states with poor implementations of human rights protocols and a disruptive record of democracy. In the politics of "democracy versus autocracy," "sanctions and incentives" go hand in hand to punish the violator and reward conformance.

Against the backdrop of strategic competition between the US and China, this region can be termed the equivalent of Cold War Eastern Europe, which is transforming into a sort of zone of interdiction for America. Geographically, it is adjacent to China and Russia, falls within their spheres of influence, and constitutes their backyard. It is infested with authoritarian regimes where America has no or poorly committed ally. Several regional states may find it challenging to maintain Western standards of democracy and human rights. Instead, under the catchy slogan of 'non-interference' in the internal affairs of other states, China gravitates more toward these authoritarian regimes and quasi-democracies. Although the region is riddled with conflicting political ideologies, as a whole, it emerges as a challenge to the liberal norms of the U.S.-led world order. The motivation for resistance to the US liberal world order is entrenched in their revolutionary ideals, which once steered them toward self-determination or revolutions.

US Influence Over the International Economic System

America carries great clout over the international financial institutions—the IMF, WB, and WTO—which gives it a greater ability to

⁴³ Thomas M. Franck, "Are Human Rights Universal?" *Foreign Affairs*, 80 (1), 80, no. 1 (2001): 195.

⁴⁴ "Announcing the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal," *The White House*, December 9, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/09/>

sanction or reward those who defy or comply with its principles. Across the bipolar and unipolar eras, the United States has been simultaneously a system maker and privilege taker.⁴⁵ The US has often exercised its economic influence by sanctioning those who showed defiance and refused to play by the rules. North Korea, Iran, Iraq, China, Russia, and others have been sanctioned in the last fifty years. In some cases, sanctions have solely been successful in deterring the violators in Poland in 1981, against Iraq in 1990-91, and in 2003 in Myanmar's case. In other cases, sanctions were used in conjunction with other factors to achieve the desired result.⁴⁶

After the Taliban took over Kabul, another hostile regime fought against the US in Afghanistan for twenty years. The American response was swift, resulting in sanctions that initially froze more than 9.5 billion dollars in assets held by the Afghan Central Bank. Later, by executive order, half the money was allocated for the families of the 9/11 victims and the other half for ongoing humanitarian aid in Afghanistan.⁴⁷ By recruiting global financial institutions in its sanctions program, the IMF delayed the release of \$ 370 million scheduled for August 23, 2021.⁴⁸ The Washington-based World Bank has suspended its funding for developmental projects in Afghanistan. Since 2002, the institution has committed more than \$5.3 billion (£3.9 billion) to reconstruction and development projects in Afghanistan.⁴⁹ Ironically, the wealthy donors belong to the global north and are aligned with the US vision for global governance, where the global south either has a subtle say or is excluded. China still seems reluctant to offer a Marshall Plan-like vision for reconstructing Afghanistan; given its financial needs, Afghanistan is compelled to gaze at the Western world for aid. Although the West has been responding on a humanitarian basis, its efforts have fallen short of the magnitude of the disaster.

To avert a humanitarian disaster, the EU pledged €1 billion in aid to Afghanistan.⁵⁰ In November 2021, the U.N. Development Program (UNDP)

⁴⁵ Michael Mastanduno, "System Maker and Privilege Taker: U.S. Power and the International Political Economy," *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 122.

⁴⁶ Lee Jones, *Societies Under Siege: Exploring how International Economic Sanctions (Do Not) Work* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2015), 52.

⁴⁷ "Executive Order on Protecting Certain Property of Da Afghanistan Bank for the Benefit of the People of Afghanistan," *The White House*, February 11, 2022.

⁴⁸ Beth Timmins, "IMF Suspends Afghanistan's Access to Funds," *BBC News*, August 18, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-58263525>

⁴⁹ Silvia Amaro, "World Bank Halts Aid to Afghanistan, 'Deeply Concerned' on Prospects for Women," *CNBC*, August 25, 2021.

⁵⁰ European Union, "Afghanistan: Commission Announces €1 Billion Afghan Support Package," *European Commission*, October 12, 2021, <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/>

set up a special trust fund to avoid a humanitarian crisis. In response to the appeal, Germany contributed \$56.4 million, Sweden \$34 million, Norway \$32 million, Turkey \$3 million, Luxembourg \$2 million, and the UN Development Program \$6 million.⁵¹ In September 2021, the UN hosted a donor conference to raise \$606 million, which ended up with pledges of over \$1 billion, with most of the contributors coming from the western world.⁵² Although, until now, the Western countries' contribution in aid has outpaced that of China, Pakistan, Russia, and other former sympathizers of the Taliban regime. However, the Western response is paltry compared to its contributions to the global war on terror, the Western response is paltry. The meagre aid from the western donors might cap the unfolding humanitarian disaster, but drastic measures need to be taken in the long run.

During the war on terror, the West remained an important lifeline for Afghanistan. The wealthy donors of the West fall into the democratic quarter in its war on autocracy. As the US withdrew and Kabul fell, Afghanistan fell off the economic radar of these donors, at least for the time being. In contrast, the dissatisfied group lacks a number of quality actors. Most of them are struggling with their economies, facing security threats from one another and democratic clubs. By and large, they have little capacity and experience in the nation-building process and lack the resources to sponsor such undertakings, and in China's case, a strong commitment can overburden its nascent standing on the global horizon.

Area for Further Research and Recommendation

The article uses an outside perspective to contextualize the Afghan question. Further research will pave the way for more concrete policy recommendations. Academic research that explores realistic regional integration options is the most crucial area to investigate in this regard. Post-World War II Europe holds profound lessons for the Eurasian Balkans on "coping with regional turmoil in the aftermath of a protracted war despite divergences". The establishment of supranational institutions will be a one-stop remedy for the Afghan question's thriving pathogens. Comprehensive research regarding regional integration of the Eurasian Balkans on the EU model can be a worthwhile academic exploration in the direction of policy recommendations. A supranational setup can help states, with diverse strategies, converge on a consensus point for the region's greater good of the region.

⁵¹ MPTF Office, "Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan," UNDP, 2021, <https://mptf.undp.org/fund/>

⁵² Jamey Keaten and Edith M. Lederer, "Donors Pledge \$1.2 Billion in Emergency Funds for Afghans," *AP NEWS*, September 13, 2021,

Conclusion

The article raises the question of Afghanistan's regional fix and employs the concept of the Eurasian Balkans to analyze the Afghan question in a regional context. Thomas Barfield's concept of the Turko-Persia region and Zbigniew Brzezinski's Eurasian Balkans draw the same perimeter for the region in which Afghanistan fits as a unit. Four attributes of the Eurasian Balkans, such as a sense of perpetual insecurity in its units, the absence of a hegemon in a region proliferated with diverse ideologies, an entire region with a revisionist agenda, and relative dependence on Western economic clout, are continually shaping and reshaping the dynamics of the Afghan question. The Afghan question is rooted in the structural configuration of the Eurasian Balkans. In the absence of a proactive regional hegemon, the regional units become unable to regulate the Taliban's behavior, as once the US regulated the French in the German question, and the provision of aid to cope with the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe. On the one hand, the Taliban's stringent behavior towards an inclusive government stoked the suspicions of regional states. On the other hand, the condemnation of universal human rights, the abhorrence of liberal democracy, and strict regulations for women fuel Western anger. Mistrust and conflicting regional regimes contribute another punch of instability to Afghanistan's destabilizing affairs. For a long time, structural problems like covert intervention by regional states, inconsistent regimes with liberal democracy, and an aid-dependent economy plagued Afghanistan.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE GOVERNANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN PAKISTAN

Muneer Ahmed* & Shafei Moiz Hali**

Abstract

The study analyzes the perception of university teachers in Pakistan about accountability, transparency, research environment, funding for the welfare of employees, and hiring regular faculty members. These are the main parameters of higher education governance. To achieve this a sample consisting of 443 faculty members out of around 50,000 faculty members was selected. The survey questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used for data collection. Personal visits and Google forms were used for data collection and IBM SPSS 24.0 was used for analysis. Results show a significant difference between public and private institutions in terms of transparency, accountability mechanism, workload policy, research environment, preferences for regular hiring, and funds for employee welfare. The mean score for the above-mentioned factors among Basic Pay Scale (BPS) and Tenure Track System (TTS) institutions is not statistically significant. The faculty members with different years of experience have different perceptions regarding accountability processes of governance in the Universities.

Keywords: Higher Education, Accountability, Teachers, Perspective, Quantitative

Introduction

Education and training are important for national development. A higher literacy rate and more effective use of skill-based education ensure growth and sustainability. Over the last several decades, demand for public sector higher education has increased and at the same time, state-wide standards are imposed on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), and there is an also call for increased accountability raised by various stakeholders. The assessment of higher education accountability

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systems emphasises the requirement for state wide systems to enhance performance and broaden programme access. This involves setting objectives, standardising institutions, and improving stakeholder performance.¹ Quality assurance processes are necessary for all countries including developing countries to ensure excellence in higher education as increasing the number of private higher education institutions increases concerns about quality of education.² Since its recognition as an academic subject, accountability has been an essential keystone in public administration specifically in HEIs. Accountability will create more transparency and hold public officials answerable to standards, resulting in better service and stops the exercise of unreasonable power practices³. This near-paradigm shift from traditional governance (i.e. It is a method of making decisions based on cultural, social, and historical settings and emphasising elders, elder involvement, holistic viewpoints, local sovereignty, and customary law. It has always handled local matters, promoted social harmony, and preserved cultural integrity. It fosters diversity, sustainability, and cultural preservation to include traditional governance practises into larger governance frameworks) beliefs to a "new accountability" standard is now more performance-focused than focused on compliance only.

Governance is defined as ensuring institutions' authority and collaboration to assign sources and manage or monitor societal activity to strengthen the institution to achieve its objectives.⁴ It is crucial in determining how well the government performs in higher education institutions. The Task Force for Higher Education 2002 recommended the creation of a new governing body called the Higher Education Commission in 2002. This new institution would oversee and regulate various aspects of higher education in the respective jurisdiction. The commission was established through an ordinance in 2002, allowing it to make recommendations related to higher education. This institution aims to

¹ Jeroen Huisman and Jan Currie, "Accountability in Higher Education: Bridge over Troubled Water?" *Higher Education* 42, no. 4 (2004): 529-551.

² Darwin D Hendel ,and Darrell R. Lewis, "Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Transition Countries: Accreditation-Accountability and Assessment, " *Tertiary Education and Management* 11, no.3 (September 2005):239- 258.

³ Salahuddin Aminuzzaman, Harald Baldersheim, Ishtiaq Jamil, "Talking Back! Empowerment and Mobile Phones in Rural Bangladesh: A Study of the Village Phone Scheme Of Grameen Bank," *Contemporary South Asia* 12 (3), (2003): 327-348.

⁴ Stephen Keith McGrath, and Stephen Jonathan Whitty, "Redefining Governance: From Confusion to Certainty and Clarity," *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, vol. 8, Issue 4 (2015) :755 – 787.

facilitate universities in achieving their objectives of providing quality education for the country. Multiple international ranking bodies such as Times Higher Education and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) rank universities yearly against established criteria. Pakistani Universities remained in the Top 1000 Universities list, whereas Indian and other Universities in the region have acquired top positions. HEC focuses on the enhancing quality of research culture in universities which is a major criterion of these rankings. Stakeholders i.e. University Administration, Faculty members, students Supporting Staff at University and external actors of Higher Education institutions have created robust requirements for strengthening accountability in Higher Education.⁵ Due to multidimensional nature of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the ever-changing outcome requirements. in Pakistan, developing a good operational accountability structure is challenging Accountability is most important in low-performing higher education institutions where learners are already at risk. The academic world may react tactically to further accountability as it is important to increase institutional positions in terms of performance.⁶ Like faculty members have reservations on their teaching and learning evaluation by the students during each semester or term. As it is mandatory for the Universities to get student evaluation for each faculty members through a Questionnaire which is part of Self-Assessment mechanism introduced by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan.

Access to higher education is likely to increase due to changes in social structures, cultural values, and the market's demand for highly educated human resources. According to Online Labor Index published by Oxford Institute of Internet in 2017, Pakistan is fifth largest country which is contributing to freelancing.⁷ These factors compel higher education institutions to become more accountable, effective, and beneficial by utilizing publicly resources.⁸ Accountability commenced with a rise in policy interest blended with a technocratic passion for assessing and

⁵ Nikos Macheridis Paulsson, and Alexander , "Tracing Accountability in Higher Education," *Research in Education* 110, no. 1 (2021)

⁶ David J Deming, and David Figlio, "Accountability in US Education: Applying Lessons from K-12 Experience to Higher Education," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 303 (3) (2016) : 33-56.

⁷ "Pakistan 4th Most Popular Country for Freelancing," e-Rozgaar, accessed August 21, 2023, <https://erozgaar.pitb.gov.pk/Pakistan-4th-freelancing-country>

⁸ F. King. Alexander, "The Changing Face of Accountability: Monitoring and Assessing Institutional Performance in Higher Education," *The Journal of Higher Education* 71(4) (2000) : 411-431.

tracing educational effects. The current situation in higher education is challenging, but measuring and tracing the performances of all stakeholders is essential. It will be possible with proper academic accountability. However, an important question is about how an accountability system should be constructed and whether such a system can satisfactorily be anticipated to accomplish its objectives.⁹ External actors and stakeholders repeatedly put enormous weight on accountability for improving institutional performance and term the support by the administration an essential ingredient. The absence of community support, economic efficiency, and quality assurance has a direct impact on accountability whereas exogenic changes, such as the internationalization and massification of higher education, have supplemented increased accountability in higher education. It implies that an accountability approach to higher education could open new avenues and start new thoughts for research programs.¹⁰

The regulatory analysis allows a richer interpretation of state-higher education institutions. Country distinctions may explain divergences.¹¹ A contractual agreement may control, enforce, or impose the obligation to be accountable to the public.¹²

Higher education is a confluence of corresponding, mutually exclusive public, and private benefits; it consists of two sets of rights. One, with freedom of choice and competition required to access quality education, two, market mechanisms in education are becoming increasingly important.¹³ Consciousness is associated with accountability, dependability, carefulness, flexibility, and timesaving. It emphasizes the growing importance of market-based systems and consciousness, which includes responsibility, dependability, wisdom, flexibility, and efficiency. Higher education is influenced by market dynamics, accessibility, rivalry,

⁹ Bianco-Ramirez, et al. "Criticality in International Higher Education Research: a Critical Discourse Analysis of Higher Education Journals," *Springer* (76) 6 (2018): 1091-1107.

¹⁰ Jessica Allyson Skene, and Laura Chittle Arief, "Accountable to Whom, for What, and through What : Educational Developers in the Audit Culture," *International Journal for Academic Development*, doi101080/1360144X.2021.

¹¹ Roger Patrick King, "Governance and Accountability in the Higher Education Regulatory," *State Higher Education* 53(4) (2007): 411-430.

¹² Amina Buallay, and Jasim Al-Ajmi, "The Role Of Audit Committee Attributes in Corporate Sustainability Reporting: Evidence From Banks in the Gulf Cooperation Council," *Journal of Applied Accounting Research*, 21(2) (2019)

¹³ Pedro Mateus Das Neves, "Literature Review on Sustainable Development the Spirit and Critics of Sd And Sdgs," *Research Gate*.

and conscientious consumers.¹⁴

The World Bank Project TESP (2014-2016) also suggests improving access, relevance, and higher education quality. In Vision 2025 document, the Government of Pakistan focuses on human resource development for the indigenous and international job market. Good Governance at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) can help the existing higher education system. There is a need to provide an enabling environment for the stakeholders i.e. faculty members and students to explore their potential in terms of creativity, knowledge generation and as a solution provider to the market and society. Accountability is a contentious topic in Higher Education. Mostly, governments do not have a direct hold to make academics accountable as HEIs are autonomous. Some philosophers believed that governments may not give complete freedom to HEIs which results in loosely managed processes.¹⁵ For intellectual growth and high-quality education, it is essential to achieve academic freedom and responsibility in higher education. Inadequate accountability can result in the waste of resources, the incoherence of curricula, and detrimental effects on financing, equality, the integrity of research, global competitiveness, employability, innovation, and staff morale.

In Pakistan, the number of research publications in well-known journals were around 400 in 2002, which crossed to 10000 in 2010. The increase in number of publications was result of different incentive-based programs and projects launched by the Government through HEC for HEIs and faculty members. These initiatives helped to develop a better image of the country and reflected that youth have potential to become professionals in different disciplines. International bodies and organizations like Quality Assurance Agency UK (QAA), Nature, APQN, etc., appreciated the Quality Assurance criteria and other reforms of HEC. After introducing reforms at all levels, it is necessary to assess the efficiency of the current reforms and recommend a framework for Governance at Universities in Pakistan. According to Ololube ¹⁶ the one of the studies,

¹⁴ Mohamad Ridhuan Saat, Mat Dangi, Maisarah Mohamed, "Interaction Effects of Situational Context on the Acceptance Behaviour and the Conscientiousness Trait towards Intention to Adopt," *Educational Technology & Society* 24 (3)(2021): 61-84.

¹⁵ Jeroen Huisman, and Currie, "Accountability in Higher Education: Bridge over Troubled Water."

¹⁶ Nwachukwu Prince Ololube, Oboada A Uriah, Johnny Undutimi, and Dudafo, "The Role of University Management in Sustainable National Development Through Innovation And Entrepreneurial Nosiness," *International Journal of Educational Foundations and Management* 2 (1)(2014): 13-24.

higher education potentially contributes to political and social transformation that supports institutional reinforcement. According to the World Bank (2000)¹⁷ report, good Governance provides better ways for managing higher education. Accountability has been recognized as a discipline from organizations to the education system. The World Bank's report linked aid to governance issues in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁸ Good Governance is a mandatory component that influences international agencies which are involved with third-world countries for various development projects. Good Governance is defined as managing a country's Open, transparent, accountable, equitable, and responsive behavior. Governance is essential for sustainable development and change.¹⁹ It involves a democratic structure, human rights, freedom of media, etc.²⁰ Governance must prioritize transparency, accountability, justice, and equity, essential values to ensure citizens have basic needs and dignity. States must create an effective higher education funding system to improve student success.²¹ Performance reporting measures must be extended to all educational institutions including public colleges and universities. Higher Educational Institutions have autonomy and independence from government to carry out teaching, learning and research activities. In an electronic age, transparency needs to be carefully managed, and as expectations of benefits may be too high. Higher education institutions (HEIs) with autonomy enjoy academic freedom, research quality, flexibility, and local relevance. However, managing expectations and transparency in the digital era can be challenging. Despite these challenges, autonomy promotes creativity, critical thinking, and social advancement.). Transparency is essential in higher education for accountability, moral behavior, and informed choices. Excessive transparency can harm institutions, causing misunderstandings and harming their image. Balancing openness and preserving sensitive information is crucial for success and integrity. and why this is so

¹⁷ World Bank, *Corporate Governance: A Framework for Implementation*, Public (Washington, D.C. :World Bank, 2000),15.

¹⁸ Malena, Reiner Forster, and Janmejy Singh, *An Introduction to the Concept and Emerging Practice* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2004)

¹⁹ Salahuddin Aminuzzaman, Harald Baldersheim, Ishtiaq Jamil 2003. "Talking back! Empowerment and mobile phones in rural Bangladesh.

²⁰ Megan M. Farwell Handy,Micheal L. Shier, Femida,"Explaining Trust in Canadian Charities: The Influence of Public Perceptions of Accountability, Transparency, Familiarity and Institutional Trust," *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 30 (4)(2019): 768-782.

²¹ Yiqun Shen, "Philanthropic Foundations and Higher Education Finance," (Phd Dissertation : University of Oklahoma, 2018)

important because information and Communications Technology (ICT) has permeated Government and society.²²

Accountability can increase trust and is often moderated by transparency. Transparency is the literal value of accountability, emphasizing its importance in assessing organizational performance.²³ Transparency must be ensured to improve the accountability system in Higher Education institutions. Accountability is also interconnected to efficacy, efficiency, and product evaluation, necessitating demonstrating that Higher Education efficiently attained strategic outcomes and performances. For evaluating higher education, implementing accountability, and improving the quality is necessary. For strengthening quality assurance through an accountability culture in higher education, governance evaluation is needed.²⁴ An increase in accountability demands balances institutional autonomy. Performance governance and management in higher education have become increasingly important due to increased hierarchical leadership, data collection, and reporting systems.²⁵ Universities should be self-governing to improve accountability and performance, but on-ground government control limits innovation and progression. Management of university education can be analyzed from two dimensions: external and internal. The HEC ensures adequate financing and maintains law and order, performing functions such as accreditation, approval, maintenance of standards, monitoring of universities, and preventing illegal campuses.²⁶ Higher education's complicated relationship between university autonomy and governmental oversight has an impact on openness and accountability. While government regulations assure quality, fairness, access, and policy alignment, self-governance has benefits including academic freedom, responsiveness, and institutional identity. It is vital to combine self-governance with governmental oversight and proper checks and balances. Accountability is improved through transparency techniques like

²² Jeroen Huisman Bjørn "Performance governance and management in higher education revisited: international developments and perspectives *Quality in Higher Education* 28(1): 106-11.

²³ Megan M. Farwell, Micheal L. Shier, Femida, "Explaining Trust in Canadian Charities: The Influence of Public Perceptions of Accountability, Transparency, Familiarity and Institutional Trust."

²⁴ Jessica Raffoul, Allyson Skene, Laura Chittle, "'Accountable to Whom, for What, and through What Means'," 2021.

²⁵ Jeroen Huisman Bjørn, "Performance Governance and Management in Higher Education Revisited."

²⁶ Obinnaya Lucian Chukwu, "Neoliberalism and the University: An Analysis of," (MA Thesis :University of York, 2021), 23.

consistent reporting and stakeholder involvement. A functional higher education system depends on a collaborative approach that respects institutional autonomy while sustaining national educational standards.

This study determined faculty members' perceptions of accountability in higher education governance. The research question was to what extent is a University and its governing structure i.e. Syndicate/BBoG, accountable for organizational actions, authorizing all final judgments on issues of utmost importance falling under its purview? For identifying accountability mechanism and its perception among faculty members of higher education institutions, the study highlighted accountability parameters: Transparency, Accountability mechanism, Workload policy, Research environment, and Preferences for regular hiring over visiting faculty, through quantitative data.

The Government of Pakistan has spent billions of rupees since 2002, through Higher Education Commission to increase access to quality, and relevant qualifications to its masses. For this, higher education institutions must improve Governance in a dynamic way to bridge the gap created due to conventional management practices. The study recommendations may help the institutions to prioritize their objectives according to the market's demand. The accountability approach in decision-making and running affairs of the institutions will help develop quality research and academic culture in the Universities. Accountability has been a recurring theme since the earliest days of higher education, but its importance has risen and fallen due to external pressures. Governments need to be assured that higher education institutions are meeting societal needs and providing research and services to improve citizens' lives. Governments should provide information about educational alternatives and hold providers accountable for their performance relative to educational outcomes.²⁷

Literature Review

Higher education has traditionally been self-regulated, but in recent years, accountability has changed to include non-educational groups, e.g., the media, and the public. Accrediting groups and educational bodies are under attack for their ineffectiveness in protecting students, and when accrediting groups attempt to uphold standards, they are sued. Higher education should be closely evaluated, and criticized in the future. This will affect the central university's relationship with all its colleges and

²⁷ Hendel, Darwin D, and Darrell R Lewis. 2005. "Quality assurance of higher education in transition countries: Accreditation - accountability and assessment." *Tertiary Education and Management* 11 (3): 239-258.

programs.²⁸ Higher education institutions (HEIs) are implementing transparency and accountability reforms to provide human capital and establish a global presence. They have establishing and assurance departments, modified program designs, and promoted governance through quality matrix and transparency.²⁹ Nandi in his study highlighted that Faculty meetings reveal teachers' treatment based on seniority and experience, with junior instructors facing heavy workloads and limited research time. Senior instructors prioritize student recruitment and job placement connections.³⁰

However, addressing the lack of women in senior management roles is crucial. Institutional autonomy is critical to transforming higher education institutions, and reforms focus on improving public sector efficiency, effectiveness, and quality. In most of institutions, much favoritism is given to the male when it comes to appointing a higher position. Similarly, the opinion for accountability mechanism, transparency, and workload policy of male and female put greater impact in this study. Theoretical perspectives and expectations are important for understanding the relationship between governance reforms and strategic capacity, drawing on instrumental and cultural perspectives from organizational theory.³¹

Accountability in Higher Education is proposed to be explored with organizational and policy reforms, as these reforms are often brought about by techno-economic and political changes in the Higher Education landscapes. The text discusses the diverse range of forums to which HEIs are held accountable, including administrators who ask for quality assurance systems and performance measurement instruments. The new public-management-inspired accountability arrangements demonstrate that HEIs are held accountable in two ways: processual issues, such as internal evaluations, and outcome issues, such as rankings. The low degree of autonomy in these examples, combined with expectations on education

²⁸ John L. Lahey Janice C. "Recent Trends in Higher Education: Accountability, Efficiency, Technology, and Governance *Association of American Law Schools* 544 528-539.

²⁹ M. Salameh-Ayanian, & D Kozaily, "The Role of Governance in Promoting the Presence of Woman in Higher Education Institutions in the Arab World," In *Higher Education Governance in the Arab World*, 147-170. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-52060-5_8

³⁰ Suman Nandi, "Governance, Performance and Quality in Higher Education: Evidence from a Case Study," *Contemporary Education Dialogue* 19, no.1 (2021):37-58, DOI:1177/09731849211056380.

³¹ Holzer, "A Race to the in Public Higher Education to Improve Education and Employment Among the Poor, " *Russell Sage Foundation* 3: 8499.

and research results, means that accountability forums can be internal and external at the same time.³² HEIs are accountable for their social relationships, which can be financial, procedural, ethical, or involve other aspects. Professional accountability is associated with quality or financial management, fair and equal treatment of students, and political and social accountability arrangements.³³ An organized democratic voice is a key requirement for enhancing accountability in education, creating chances for stakeholders to express their opinions and enhance the policy-enabling environment, leading to increased policy ownership and successful implementation.³⁴ Reforms in higher education have been aimed at modernizing institutions, with the transformation of governmental tools, outcome-based funding systems, and stronger accountability measurements. External representation has increased, and new models for appointing academic leadership have been introduced. Reform efforts are often ideologically driven, but there are also national variations due to institutionalized characteristics of higher education institutions, regulation, and bargaining traditions.³⁵ Through adjustments to teaching strategies, curriculum design, and research procedures, reforms in higher education seek to modernize institutions and enhance accountability. Systems of financing that are outcome-based put an emphasis on quantifiable results, while improved accountability procedures and external representation increase openness. Innovation and academic freedom are fostered by striking a balance between institutional autonomy and student-centric strategies.

Colonialism has had a strong influence on post-independent Pakistan, leading to a lack of accountability, abuse of power, and rejection of reform initiatives. The administrative and governmental frameworks of the colonial era have hampered accountability in Pakistan after independence. This problem has been made worse by centralized bureaucracy, authoritarian control, and restricted municipal and provincial government authority. Patronage and clientelism in politics still exist, and it might be difficult to implement reforms because of resistance. Local language and identity erasure and repression under traditional

³² William C. Smith Aaron, "Improving Accountability in Education: the Importance of Structured Democratic Voice," *Asia Education Review*.

³³ Macheridis and Alexander Paulsson "Tracing Accountability in Higher Education," *Research in Education*: 78–1101.

³⁴ Sarjinder, *Advanced Sampling Theory with Applications: How Michael "Selected" Amy*. 2 vols, Kluwer Academic.

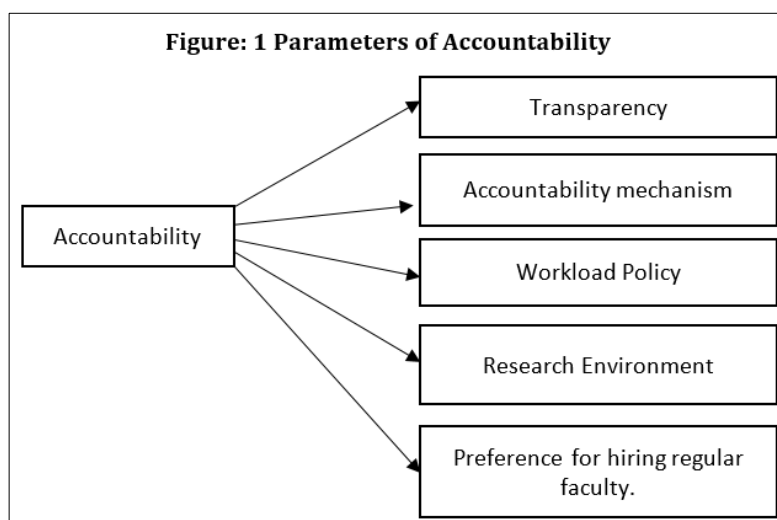
³⁵ Nicoline Frølich, and Tom Christensen Bjørn, "Strengthening the Strategic Capacity of Public Universities: The Role of Internal Governance Models, " *Public Policy and Administration*, 1-16.

institutions also influence social views towards accountability and government. Good Governance needs to be "indigenized" into humane governance, and education is of dire importance for economic growth and development.³⁶ Higher education institutions have both intrinsic and extrinsic factors that determine their quality. The Chancellor must appoint a Governing Board and an independent system of management to ensure accountability. Reforms have been introduced to ensure quality assurance, such as faculty development and structural changes in governance and management.³⁷ Accountability is essential for the nonprofit sector due to its low barriers to entry and lack of costless mechanisms to distinguish between trustworthy and untrustworthy organizations. It can include performance evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and internal commitment to the mission.³⁸ Committee of University Chairs (CUC) Code for Governance in Higher Education was taken as the baseline of this study. As HEIs of UK are significantly contributing towards knowledge generation and commercialization along with other developed countries. As most of the Pakistani students prefer to move to UK for further education or employment, therefore, it would appropriate to follow governance standards set by the UK. The CUC is a non-profit body for the Chairs of UK universities which provides learning and development opportunities to members. The CUC code of governance has six elements and Accountability in Governance of Higher Education is one of the elements. There are six key elements, Accountability, Sustainability, Reputation, Inclusion and Diversity, Effectiveness, and Engagement. For this research paper accountability element is considered which is further composed of Transparency, Accountability mechanism, Workload policy, Research environment, Preferences to regular hiring over visiting Faculty, and Funds for the welfare of employees' parameters.

³⁶ Syed Sohaib Zubair, "Governance Context of Higher Education Sector of Pakistan," *Pakistan Vision*, vol.20 (1) (2019): 1-13.

³⁷ Usman, "Governance and Higher Education in Pakistan: What Roles do Boards of Governors Play in Ensuring the Academic Quality Maintenance in Public Universities versus Private Universities in Pakistan," *International Journal of Higher Education* 3(2) (2014): 38-51.

³⁸ Megan M. Farwell Handy, Micheal L. Shier, and Femida, "Explaining Trust in Canadian Charities: The Influence of Public Perceptions of Accountability, Transparency, Familiarity and Institution."



Research Methodology

This study aimed to assess faculty members' perceptions regarding the accountability of Higher Education Governance in Pakistani universities. The quantitative research method was used to collect data from teachers. Solvin's formula adopted for selecting a sample of faculty members. Solvin's formula is $N/(1+Ne^2)$ where: n = the number of samples N = the total population.

Stakeholder	Population	Sampling technique	% of sample	Sample size
Faculty Members	50,852	Slovin's formula	$n=N/(1+Ne^2)$	396

In this research paper, we focused on the perception of Pakistani University teachers from Higher Education Institutions regarding the Accountability factor. For this purpose, 443 respondents were included in the study.

Data Collection Tool

The researcher developed a questionnaire based on the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) code of governance in higher education³⁹ for data collection from university teachers in Pakistan. A questionnaire developed for assessing perception of faculty members in Pakistan was customized keeping in view the nomenclature and structure of University bodies. It was validated by the experts relevant

³⁹ Committee of University Chairs, Accessed December 2, 2020, <https://www.universitychairs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/CUC-HE-Code-of-Governance-publication-final.pdf>.

to the discipline of educational leadership and governance in education. The pilot testing was conducted initially, and reliability was also assessed. The Crohn's Bach Alpha of the questionnaire was 0.968, which shows excellent coherence among initially questionnaire items. In the questionnaire teacher's perception was sought to understand about the accountability mechanism in higher education institutions. Does the transparency is ensured in teaching learning and research processes are ensured. Is there any workload policy specified in their institution, is there proper research environment ensured for faculty members and students within the institution. Are there any specified policy for appointments on hiring faculty members on regular basis.

Table 1 : Respondents' Demographics

Demographic items	Frequency	Percentile
Type of institution		
Public	355	80.1%
Private	88	19.9%
Gender		
Male	284	64.1%
Female	159	35.9%
Structure of service		
BPS (Basic Pay Scale)	318	71.8%
TTS (Tenure Track System)	122	27.5%
Others	3	.7%
Experience		
5years	195	44.0%
10years	17	3.8%
More than 10 years	29	6.5%
More than 15 years	202	45.6%
Qualification		
Undergraduate	22	5.0%
Graduate	98	22.1%
Postgraduate	323	72.9%
Age		
21-25	16	3.6%
26-30	75	16.9%
31-35	109	24.6%
36-40	137	30.9%
41-45	106	23.9%

Source: Authors

The Table 1 above shows that the participants of the study were selected through a purposive sampling technique. The table shows the 122 female teachers and 318 male teachers aimed to receive distinct perspectives and experiences in the educational situations. The Majority had five to 15 years of experience, showing a mix of early-career educators and moderate expertise. A subset had over 15 years of teaching experience, potentially contributing institutional knowledge and insights.

Data Analysis

These data were analysed with the statistical package of Social Science (SPSS) software for Mean and t-tests, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Standard Deviation. For data analysis of variables of the participants' gender, the structure of service, type of institutions, and essentials, the t-tests were used for independent samples. Where one-way analysis of Variance (One-way ANOVA) analyzed faculty members' experience, qualifications, and age-wise respondents' perception of Accountability in Higher Education was measured. The T-test and ANOVA were applied for finding the difference among all the above-stated accountability parameters to assess significance of the responses.

Table 2: Independent Samples t-test Results on the Faculty Perceptions of Accountability in Higher Education at Public and Private Universities

Factor of Accountability	Type of Institution	N	Mean	Sd	Df	T	P-Value
Transparency	Public	355	2.90	1.223		1.268	.953
	Private	88	2.72	1.250	441		
Accountability mechanism	Public	355	3.06	1.187		2.834	.806
	Private	88	2.66	1.221	441		
Workload policy	Public	355	2.60	1.178		-.662	.888
	Private	88	2.69	1.197	441		
Research environment	Public	355	2.84	1.166		3.397	.005
	Private	88	2.39	.952	441		
Preferences to regular hiring over visiting faculty	Public	355	2.87	1.237		3.495	.003
	Private	88	2.38	1.021	441		
Funds for the welfare of employees	Public	355	2.77	1.202		1.175	.561
	Private	88	2.60	1.150	441		

There is a statistically significant difference in the opinion of faculty members regarding **Transparency, Accountability mechanism**

($t(441) = .953; p > .05$), **Workload policy** ($t(441) = .806; p > .05$), and, **Research environment** ($t(441) = .005; p > .05$), whereas, **Preferences to regular hiring than visiting faculty** ($t(441) = .003; p > .05$), **Funds for the welfare of Employees** ($t(441) = .561; P > .05$), and in the overall scale ($t(441) = .201; p > .05$). Results indicate that there is no statistically significant difference found regarding factors of accountability between the perception of faculty members from public and private sector institutions.

Table 3: Gender-based Variations in Faculty Perceptions of Accountability in Higher Education Using an Independent Samples T-Test.

Factors of Accountability	Gender	n	Mean	Sd	Df	T	Sig.
Transparency	Male	284	2.80	1.243	441	-1.415	.233
	Female	159	2.97	1.201			
Accountability mechanism	Male	284	2.97	1.197	441	-.235	.919
	Female	159	3.00	1.217			
Workload policy	Male	284	2.60	1.174	441	-.388	.665
	Female	159	2.65	1.197			
Research environment	Male	284	2.85	1.089	441	2.492	.067
	Female	159	2.57	1.209			
Preferences to regular hiring over visiting faculty	Male	284	2.90	1.223	441	3.020	.365
	Female	159	2.55	1.162			
Funds for the welfare of employees.	Male	284	2.70	1.180	441	-.913	.833
	Female	159	2.81	1.214			

It demonstrates that Transparency ($t(441) = -1.415; p > .05$), Accountability mechanism ($t(441) = -.235; p > .05$), Workload policy ($t(441) = -.388; p > .05$), Research environment ($t(441) = 2.492; p > .05$), Preferences to regular hiring than visiting Faculty ($t(441) = 3.020; p > .05$), Funds for the welfare of Employees ($t(441) = -.913; P > .05$), and in the overall scale ($t(441) = .240; P > .05$). Teachers' perceptions of transparency, accountability mechanisms, workload policies, research environments, and regular hiring are similar, but perceptions of Funds for the Welfare of Employees differ significantly. However, there was a significant difference in the overall scale, with females having a higher mean score than males.

Table 4: The Results Of An Independent t-test Analyzing Faculty Views on Accountability in Higher Education, Specifically in Relation to the Type of Faculty Appointment

Factor of Accountability	Type of Faculty Appointment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	T	Sig.
Transparency	BPS	318	2.97	1.23	438	2.98	0.31
	TTS	122	2.59	1.162			
Accountability mechanism	BPS	318	3.13	1.19	438	4.02	0.35
	TTS	122	2.62	1.138			
Workload policy	BPS	318	2.63	1.189	438	0.35	0.32
	TTS	122	2.58	1.156			
Research environment	BPS	318	2.87	1.167	438	3.57	0.02
	TTS	122	2.44	1.021			
Preferences to regular hiring over visiting faculty	BPS	318	2.81	1.201	438	1.06	0.71
	TTS	122	2.67	1.236			
Funds for the welfare of employees.	BPS	318	2.75	1.212	438	0.37	0.13
	TTS	122	2.7	1.155			

Above table shows **Transparency** ($t(438) = .309$; $p > .05$), **Accountability mechanism** ($t(438) = 2.98$; $p > .05$), **Workload policy** ($t(438) = 4.02$; $p > .05$), **Research environment** ($t(438) = 0.35$; $p > .05$), **Preferences to regular hiring than visiting Faculty** ($t(438) = 3.57$; $p > .05$), **Funds for the welfare of employees** ($t(438) = 1.06$; $p > .05$). and in the overall scale ($t(438) = 0.37$; $p > .05$) The T-Test results show that there is no significant difference between the Mean scores of the faculties working under the structure of BPS and TTS in the universities

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA Test Results on The Faculty's Perception of Accountability in Higher Education in Terms of their Experiences

Factor of Accountability	Faculty's Experiences	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	F	Sig.
Transparency	5years	195	2.89	1.125	3 439	.695	.556
	10years	17	2.71	1.404			
	> 10 years	29	3.14	1.329			
	> 15 years	202	2.82	1.297			
	Total	443	2.86	1.229	442		

Accountability mechanism	5years	195	2.93	1.146	3 439	4.740	.003
	10years	17	2.53	1.125			
	> 10 years	29	3.72	1.066			
	> 15 years	202	2.97	1.247			
	Total	443	2.98	1.203	442		
Workload policy	5years	195	2.79	1.130	3 439	2.769	.041
	10years	17	2.53	1.375			
	> 10 years	29	2.34	1.143			
	> 15 years	202	2.50	1.202			
	Total	443	2.62	1.181	442		
Research environment	5years	195	2.89	1.106	3 439	2.900	.035
	10years	17	2.41	.507			
	> 10 years	29	3.00	1.336			
	> 15 years	202	2.61	1.163			
	Total	443	2.75	1.140	442		
Preferences to regular hiring than visiting Faculty	5years	195	2.93	1.220	3 439	3.342	.019
	10years	17	3.29	1.105			
	> 10 years	29	2.62	1.374			
	> 15 years	202	2.61	1.167			
	Total	443	2.77	1.212	442		
Funds for the welfare of employees.	5years	195	2.87	1.222	3 439	3.470	.016
	10years	17	2.76	1.200			
	> 10 years	29	3.10	1.448			
	> 15 years	202	2.55	1.097			
	Total	443	2.74	1.192	442		

Table 5 illustrates the F-Value for transparency was 0.695 and the P-Value was greater than 0.05. Workload policy research showed a significant difference between groups with an F-value of 2.769 and a P-Value less than or equal to 0.05. The research environment's F-value was 2.900 and the preference for regular hiring over visiting faculty had an F-value of 3.342. The P-Value was greater than 0.05. **Transparency** ($F(3-439) = .695; p > .05$), **Accountability mechanism** ($F(3-439) = .352; p > .05$), **Workload policy** ($F(3-439) = 2.769; p \leq .05$), **Research environment** ($F(3-439) = 2.900; p > .05$), **Preferences to regular hiring than visiting Faculty** ($F(3-439) = 3.342; p > .05$), **Funds for the welfare of employees** ($F(3-439) = 3.470; p > .05$) and in the overall scales ($t(438) = ; p > .05$).

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA Test Results on the Faculty's Perception of Accountability in Higher Education in Terms of their Qualifications

Factor of Accountability	Qualification wise respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	F	Sig.
Transparency	Undergraduate	22	3.18	1.220	2 440	1.754	.174
	Graduate	98					
	Postgraduate	323					
	Total	443	3.00	1.300	442		
Accountability mechanism	Undergraduate	22	2.80	1.205	2 442	.103	.902
	Graduate	98					
	Postgraduate	323					
	Total	443	2.86	1.229	442		
Workload policy	Undergraduate	22	3.09	1.109	2 440	2.234	.108
	Graduate	98					
	Postgraduate	323					
	Total	443	2.99	1.256	442		
Research environment	Undergraduate	22	2.97	1.196	2 440	1.283	.278
	Graduate	98					
	Postgraduate	323					
	Total	443	2.98	1.203	442		
Preferences to regular hiring over visiting faculty	Undergraduate	22	3.09	1.019	2 440	2.880	.057
	Graduate	98					
	Postgraduate	323					
	Total	443	2.68	1.223	442		
Funds for the welfare of employees.	Undergraduate	22	2.57	1.173	2 440	1.182	.308
	Graduate	98					
	Postgraduate	323					
	Total	443	2.62	1.181	442		

Table 6 of One-Way ANOVA test results on the faculty's perception of Accountability in Higher Education in terms of their qualifications present that **Transparency** ($F(2-442) = 1.754$; $p > .05$), **Accountability mechanism** ($F(2-442) = .103$; $p > .05$), **Workload policy** ($F(2-442) = 2.234$; $p \leq .05$), **Research environment** ($F(2-442) = 1.283$; $p > .05$), **Preferences to regular hiring than visiting Faculty** ($F(2-442) = 2.880$; $p > .05$), **Funds for the welfare of employees** ($F(2-442) = 1.182$; $P > .05$) and in the overall scale $t(2-442) =$; $p > .05$). Statistics show that there is no discernible difference between the groups in terms of transparency, accountability mechanism, workload policy, research

environment, regular hiring preferences, and regular hiring preferences over visiting faculty. The P-Value of transparency is greater than 0.05, the F-Value of accountability mechanism is 0.103, the F-Value of workload policy is 2.234, the F-Value of research environment is 1.283, and the P-Value of regular hiring preferences is greater than 0.05.

Table 7: One-Way ANOVA Test Results on the Faculty's Perception of Accountability in Higher Education Regarding Age-Wise Respondents.

Factor of Accountability	Age-wise Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Df	F	Sig.
Transparency	21-25	16	2.81	1.377	4 438	.833	.505
	26-30	75	2.88	1.196			
	31-35	109	2.97	1.093			
	36-40	137	2.72	1.266			
	41-45	106	2.94	1.315			
	Total	443	2.86	1.229	442		
Accountability mechanism	21-25	16	2.88	1.628	4 438	.528	.715
	26-30	75	3.07	1.256			
	31-35	109	3.05	1.100			
	36-40	137	2.87	1.156			
	41-45	106	3.02	1.265			
	Total	443	2.98	1.203	442		
Workload policy	21-25	16	3.13	1.088	4 438	1.115	.349
	26-30	75	2.61	1.293			
	31-35	109	2.61	1.178			
	36-40	137	2.51	1.164			
	41-45	106	2.69	1.133			
	Total	443	2.62	1.181	442		
Research environment	21-25	16	3.38	1.147	4 438	2.307	.057
	26-30	75	2.87	1.256			
	31-35	109	2.72	1.155			
	36-40	137	2.58	1.102			
	41-45	106	2.83	1.055			
	Total	443	2.75	1.140	442		
Preferences to regular hiring than visiting Faculty	21-25	16	3.44	1.153	4 438	2.180	.070
	26-30	75	2.59	1.187			
	31-35	109	2.77	1.230			
	36-40	137	2.69	1.198			
	41-45	106	2.69	1.212			
	Total	443	2.92	1.212	442		

Funds for the welfare of employees.	21-25	16	2.69	1.138	4	1.693	.151
	26-30	75	2.61	1.218			
	31-35	109	2.95	1.220			
	36-40	137	2.59	1.154			
	41-45	106	2.79	1.185			
	Total	443	2.74	1.192	442		

Table 7 of One-Way ANOVA test results on the Faculty's Perception of Accountability in higher education regarding Age-wise presents that **respondent. Transparency** ($F(4-438) = .833; p > .05$), **Accountability mechanism** ($F(4-438) = .528; p > .05$), **Workload policy** ($F(2-442) = 1.115; p \leq .05$), **Research environment** ($F(4-438) = 2.307; p > .05$), **Preferences to regular hiring than visiting Faculty** ($F(4-438) = 2.180; p > .05$), **Funds for the welfare of employees** ($F(4-438) = 1.693; P > .05$) and in the overall scale ($t(4-438) = ; P > .05$). The F-Value for transparency, accountability mechanism, workload policy research, research environment, and regular hiring over visiting faculty had no discernible difference between the groups. The F-Value for transparency was 0.833 and a P-Value greater than 0.05, while the F-Value for accountability mechanism was 0.528 and a P-Value greater than 0.05.

Findings

The study found that public institutions have higher levels of accountability than private institutions, with significant differences in transparency, accountability mechanism, workload policy, research environment, and employee welfare funds. Females have a higher mean score than males, and the BPS structure is statistically better in terms of accountability compared to the TTS group. Faculty members' qualifications did not show significant differences, but workload policy had a significant difference. Age groups did not show significant differences in perceptions of transparency, accountability mechanism, workload policy, research environment, and employee welfare funds. However, there was a significant difference in research environment and preferences for regular hiring, with age groups 21-25 and 41-45 having the greatest average ratings.

The study indicates that faculty members perceive the Syndicate/Board of Governors (BoG) as having joint accountability for higher education governance actions and decision-making processes. This perception varies between public and private institutions, suggesting the state government controls preferences and outcomes rather than internal budgetary processes. Nordic countries have introduced new accountability mechanisms in the last decade, aiming to increase effectiveness, efficiency, and caliber. Higher education is facing four broad trends that could

redefine it as an industry: contract steering, governance reform, merger reform, and accreditation.

Conclusion and Recommendations

1. There is a potential difference in the research environment, although it falls just short of statistical significance. The results depict that, there was a significant difference in the overall scale, with females having a higher mean score than males. It is recommended that promoting mentorship, role models, collaboration, teamwork, inclusivity, and gender equality in research can create an environment where all participants feel welcome and supported.
2. Findings revealed that public institutions have higher accountability in a research environment. Therefore, it is recommended that the research environment in both sectors may foster public-private partnerships, provide incentives for private-sector involvement in research activities, facilitate knowledge transfer, streamline regulatory processes, and encourage industry-focused research to increase private-sector involvement while maintaining accountability and transparency.
3. Findings revealed that the post-graduate group had a higher mean score for accountability than the undergraduate group in workload policy. Therefore, it is recommended to strengthen the undergraduate workload policy to ensure clarity, fairness, and transparency. Provide training and education to both undergraduate and postgraduate students, enhance communication channels, implement mentorship programs, provide academic support resources, conduct regular workload assessments, encourage student involvement in policy development, monitor and address potential disparities, and take appropriate measures to address them. Monitor and analyze workload distribution and accountability among undergraduate and post-graduate students.
4. The age groups of 21-25 and 41-45 have the highest average ratings for the research environment. To improve the research environment for other age groups, it is important to identify strengths and best practices, promote intergenerational collaboration, provide tailored support and resources, and foster a culture of continuous learning. The most important details are to offer workshops, seminars, and training programs that address the evolving needs and skills required in the research field, create inclusive social and networking opportunities, ensure fair and equitable opportunities, encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration, seek feedback, and adapt to identify areas for improvement.

Book Reviews

Title: Military Strategy in the Twenty-First Century – The Challenge for NATO

Author: Janne Haaland Matlary and Rob Johnson (EDS)

Publisher: C Hurst & Co, London; Oxford University Press, New York, 2022, 586.

Military Strategy in the new millennium has experienced major upheavals driven by the global dynamics, evolving nature of the threat and quantum leaps in military technologies. The term Revolution in Military Affairs acquires newer meanings as we tread farther in twenty first century.

Great powers and regional military alliances are adapting to these rapid transformations in global strategic dynamics. NATO, the last remaining vestige of Bi-polar Cold War alliances, is compelled to redefine its role as a cohesive military entity, as the strategic priorities shifted between symmetric and asymmetric threats. The shift of threat perception and strategic priorities from Warsaw Pact to the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan and back to Ukraine conflict at the doorstep of NATO, demand a comprehensive reappraisal of the dynamics of NATO's threat perceptions and strategies to meet the existing and emerging challenges.

From NATO's perspective, this is a timely book aimed at addressing these very questions. Matlary and Johnson, two leading names among Western strategists, have brought together the work of twenty-seven prominent Western strategists from across the NATO member countries. Their work compiled as a book, provides an interesting mix of perspectives at organisational, regional, sub-regional and country-specific levels.

The book includes brief information about the authors, and a detailed introduction which elucidates the purpose of the book. It presents several themes, covering at times divergent ideas and empirically supported models, for crystallising thoughts to address alliance's strategy for twenty-first century.

The book's introduction, titled: *Military Strategy: Missing in Action?* is co-authored by the editors. This book is divided into three parts, containing twenty-three chapters. Part I, *Political and Military Strategy*, focuses on conceptual issues related to military strategy, and how it can be defined in the context of NATO's strategic setting and difficulties faced in transatlantic relationship and strategy-making. Part II, *Parameters of Military Strategy*, seeks to explain how Europe, and NATO in particular, ought to think about strategy today. Part III, *Military Strategy in NATO Countries*, considers whether NATO states should develop their own national strategies and whether such strategies should complement that of NATO. Should threats below the Article 5 level be tackled by an individual state? and how to relate the same to NATO?

Part I consist of eight chapters: (i) *The Strategic Importance of the Transatlantic Link*; (ii) *US Grand Strategy in the Era of Great Power Competition*; (iii) *Political Risk and Military Strategy: Can Europe Deter and Coerce?*; (iv) *Strategy in the National Security Context: Time for an Adaptive Approach?*; (v) *An Adaptive Approach to Military Strategy*; (vi) *The Making of Military Strategy: The Gravity of an Unequal Dialogue*; (vii) *Why Small European States Need Military Strategy: Theory and Practice*; and (viii) *NATO's Maritime Strategy and Technological Challenges*.

This part analyses the historical and contemporary context of strategic relationship and commonality of interests between NATO member states and the US. The US expects increased commitment and burden-sharing by European states, as it gets increasingly engrossed in its Indo-Pacific (Asia-Pacific) strategy in the changing global security environment. It also focuses on the will and ability of NATO states to fulfil their expected strategic role and address their tendency of risk averseness.

A key area this part focuses on is the nature of strategy and conceptualisation of modern strategic thought. It includes the processes of making military strategy and investigates the missing link between politics and military operations, particularly in Europe. Argument is put forth that a statesman and a military officer may not conceptualise strategy in the same way, as they have different understanding and context of the term. It further argues that the use of force is politically constrained, but not politically directed.

Part II contains six chapters: (i) *Nuclear Strategy: The Politics of NATO's Nuclear Use Decision-making*; (ii) *Military Strategy and Conventional Warfare*; (iii) *Military Strategy for Hybrid Confrontation and Coercion*; (iv) *Enhancing European Security? The Strategy of Military Assistance*; (v) *Regional Defence Integration in Scandinavia: Strategic Advantage and Economic Imperative*; and (vi) *Fighting in the Shadows: Between Military Strategy and Muscular Policing*.

This part examines types of threats and strategic needs, and discusses the full scope and parameters of military strategy. The conventional side of military strategy encompasses the cutting-edge evolving technologies and significant effects of hybrid warfare. This part also includes nuclear threat and risks, conceptual problems of evaluating distinctive NATO nuclear decision making, and the role of respective leadership within NATO, compared to national one. How it will affect the credibility, and posits that the process is deliberately kept vague and unresolved, to avoid complexities arising from constraints and preconditions that would threaten to paralyze the decision maker and the Alliance. This part also focuses on the concepts of credibility, deterrence and effects on NATO's nuclear posture, in the aftermath of Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014.

An interesting scenario discussed in this part relates to conventional war between NATO and Russia based on Kaliningrad enclave,

and possible outcomes to negotiate a lasting settlement with Russia. In this part, the authors assert that conflict will be marked by Military Coercion through low-intensity operations, irregular and grey zone activities that include hybrid threats like sabotage, and use of proxies. While assessing military integration between NATO states in Chapter 14, the author cites absence of simultaneous existential threat comparable to that of Soviet Union as the cause of regionalisation of strategy within Europe.

Part III comprises nine chapters: (i) *Strategic Thinking in NATO and the New 'Military Strategy' of 2019*; (ii) *Military Strategy in the United States: The Complexity of National Strategy*; (iii) *UK Military Strategy: The Maritime Pivot*, Tim Benbow; (iv) *French Military Strategy under Macron*; (v) *German Military Strategy: Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast*; (vi) *Polish Military Strategy: Watching the Suwalki Gap*; (vii) *Military Strategy in Denmark: Retaining 'Best Ally' Status with Minimum Spending*; (viii) *Norway's Military Strategy after the Cold War: Between Demise and Revival*; and (ix) *Turkish Military Strategy-making in the 21st Century: Politics, Contexts and Prospects*.

The last part covers country specific strategies vis-à-vis new NATO strategy 2019. This strategy, though classified, is generally considered to encapsulate the so-called 360-degree perspective focusing on Russia, terrorism and other potential 'strategic shocks'. This part examines the structure of the US military strategy, its global responsibilities and demands it places on the US. The part also encompasses UK's strategy and its approach to use of military power. From non-confinement of French strategy to either NATO doctrine or collective European defence, to Germany's renewed focus on collective defence of NATO, to Poland's concerns emanating from threats of global nature and unstable neighbourhood on NATO's eastern flank. This part also focuses on efforts by Scandinavian countries to develop appropriate strategy to defend themselves against Russian aggression subsequent to Russian annexation of Crimea.

There are three central themes that underpin the entire discussion in this book: (i) The new strategic situation facing the NATO, including global and regional instability, which either effects its collective interests or which could be exploited by rival powers; (ii) Nature of various strategic issues that the governments and militaries will have to solve; and (iii) how military force can achieve strategic ends.

This book offers a unique window to students of strategy into the dynamics and variables that govern the formulation of military strategy, particularly NATO and European military strategy and how the collective strategy is affected by regional and country specific strategic exigencies.

Reviewed by Lt Col (Retd.) Azfar Bilal Qureshi TI(M), Associate Director Research, Center for International Strategic Studies, Sindh.

Title: Rethinking International Political Economy
Author: Benjamin J. Cohen
Publisher: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2022, 192.

University of California, Santa Barbara's Benjamin J. Cohen is a distinguished professor emeritus of political science. He is a well-known expert in the field of international political economy and has written extensively on a variety of subjects, including theories of economic imperialism, sovereign debt, international monetary relations, U.S. foreign economic policy, currency integration, including the field of political economy, additionally has written eighteen novels. In 1963, Cohen graduated with a Ph.D. in Economics from Columbia University and served and held appointments in a number of prestigious academic institutions.

In his introduction to *Rethinking International Political Economy*, Cohen argues that the field of International Political Economy (IPE) is facing a number of challenges, including fragmentation, a lack of consensus, and a lack of policy relevance. He argues that these challenges can be traced back to three core questions: the purpose of the field, the role of diversity, and the agenda of the field. Cohen concludes by arguing that the health of IPE can be restored by addressing these three core questions in a thoughtful and deliberate way. This will require a concerted effort from scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, but it is essential if IPE is to remain a vibrant and relevant field of study. The various perspectives and dispersed research traditions in the subject of IPE, which obstruct effective addressing of global concerns, are highlighted as a crisis in the book. In order to close the gap between economics and political science and to reenergize the discipline for the future, it makes the case for reevaluating IPE's objectives. IPE has numerous confrontations, including animosity between theoretical frameworks, ideological contrasts between orthodox and heterodox approaches, methodological issues, and unresolved arguments over the influence of materialism vs cognition on behavior. Additionally, it is more difficult to predict global trends due to the illogicality between historical and futuristic perspectives. Despite these difficulties, IPE has made notable advancements, such as its global growth into academic institutions, adding new views to the discipline. It has also made tremendous progress in comprehending the operating characteristics of the global economy, producing useful insights.

The book suggests a thorough action plan to treat IPE's ailments and encourage its revival. The book offers a thorough analysis of the problems and successes in the discipline IPE. The author emphasizes the varied and fragmented nature of IPE by examining historical instances, empirical evidence, and theoretical frameworks. The intricacy of the topic is shown via the comprehensive exploration of the various paradigms, theoretical approaches, and research traditions that have influenced IPE. Painstaking analysis is done of both conflicts resulting from various

ideologies and common difficulties influencing IPE. The book explores how methodological variations have restricted the breadth of analysis and inhibited research aims. This dynamic makes it difficult for the discipline to predict and address new global trends and produces conflict between historical and prospective viewpoints.

The book emphasizes the urgent need to revitalize IPE by reevaluating its objectives in light of the challenges highlighted. The author suggests a well-thought-out strategy to deal with these issues. The plan supports cooperation amongst academics with various perspectives and research traditions while acknowledging both the advantages and disadvantages of IPE. Diversity acceptance and public engagement are emphasized as vital components of growth. It is acknowledged that gatekeepers, such as professors, committees, donors, and editors, are important in defining the future of the field. The strategy makes use of rewards and accountability methods to promote diversity and transparency within IPE. The author maintains a rigorous and objective approach throughout the book, which is sufficiently supported by academic research and theoretical frameworks. The broad investigation of various elements in IPE ensures a comprehensive understanding of its complexity. The primary point is reinforced by a detailed analysis of IPE's difficulties and triumphs that reveals its flaws. Taking into account the strengths and flaws of the field, the suggested plan of action provides a potential route for reviving IPE and developing a more involved and cohesive discipline. The book's academic rigors and fair-minded perspective increases its legitimacy and enable it to be a useful addition to the field of international political economy.

The book recognizes that the area of international political economy has a variety of paradigms and viewpoints, some of which can be viewed as competitors. Academics have different perspectives on the optimal strategy for reviving IPE. To develop a more unified and cohesive discipline, others advocate for a more focused concentration on a single paradigm. They are of the opinion that this would result in specific research programme and theoretical framework. Critics, on the other hand, disagree with this notion, contending that such a strategy can marginalize significant ideas and impede intellectual variety. They contend that adopting a set agenda can hinder innovation and prevent the study of novel concepts. Additionally, sceptics warn against employing gatekeepers as leverage out of concern about how it can affect academic work's independence and objectivity. They raise concerns about the potential unintended consequences and difficulties in coordinating efforts among stakeholders. These opposing views challenge the viability of the proposed plan. While the book's proposed strategy presents a thorough and well-considered approach to address IPE's challenges, it is essential to consider these counterarguments and engage in productive debates within the

academic community. Embracing open dialogue and exploring alternative strategies can lead to a more inclusive and effective revitalization of IPE.

The book makes a strong argument for revisiting the objectives and course of International Political Economy in order to successfully address the concerns of the field. It emphasizes the pressing need for field renewal brought on by disparate points of view and scattered research traditions. The goal of the book is to develop a more involved, inclusive, and united IPE discipline by implementing the suggested course of action, which promotes public engagement, values diversity, and engages gatekeepers. The recommended approach should be evaluated seriously, taking into account any potential flaws and practical challenges. The book's lofty ambitions may be opposed by long-standing beliefs and practices in the field, and overcoming hostility among scholars with opposing opinions may need a lot of work and cooperation. Compelling concierges might face societal and cultural barriers to change. Despite potential obstacles, the book makes a valuable contribution to the discipline with its thorough examination of IPE's current state and well-considered plan for its future development. The author's academic rigor and fair-minded approach enhance the book's legitimacy, and the proposed course of action provides a platform for productive discussions and cross-disciplinary partnerships.

Reviewed by Sajjad Hussain Awan, Ph.D. Scholar, IR Department, National Defence University, Islamabad.

Title: **Downfall: Lessons for our Final Century**

Author: **Ilhan Niaz**

Publisher: **CSCR, Islamabad, 2022, 126.**

Ilhan Niaz gives an insightful analysis of the most significant threats facing humanity in the 21st century. The writer is a historian and provides a compelling argument for studying the past to understand the present and prepare for the future. He covers topics related to, climate change, nuclear war, pandemics, and artificial intelligence. He argues that these threats are not distinct issues but interrelated. The author argues that the Global North has thrived at the expense of the Global South, and blames capitalism for the inequality and disasters faced by the latter. Ilhan Niaz's book "Downfall: Lessons for our Final Century" is a collection of seven essays that analyze the reasons behind humanity's impending downfall, with a focus on the exploitation of natural resources by corporations and industrialized states.

In first essay author draws upon the works of four great thinkers to provide insight into this issue. The first is Ibn Khaldun, a 14th-century Arab philosopher who explained how regimes lose rationality in decision-making. The second is Thomas Malthus, an 18th-century English economist who warned about the problem of population growth exceeding the planet's carrying capacity. The third is John Stuart Mill, a 19th-century English philosopher who theorized on the dangers of unlimited economic growth. The fourth is Charles Darwin, a 19th-century English biologist whose work on evolutionary biology demonstrated how human behavior can lead to fatal errors. Through these essays, Niaz provides a historical mirror for the present and predicts a potentially bleak future if humanity does not change its ways.

In 2nd Essay, Niaz argues that a small group of wealthy individuals possess as much wealth as nearly four billion impoverished people, and individuals work harder and longer for comparatively less compensation. 70% of greenhouse gas emissions are produced by 100 large corporations, while those responsible for these injustices converge annually at Davos. Our world is currently in a pre-apocalyptic dystopian state, and without change, we will transition to a post-apocalyptic dystopian state. The high growth model presented by economists will lead to the destruction of planet earth.

The 3rd Essay is about the decision-making ability of humans. Niaz states that there is typically a direct correlation between a state's decision-making and its level of reasoning or logic. The more a state prioritizes logic in its decision-making process, the more likely it is to make sound judgments. On the other hand, if a state places less emphasis on logic and reasoning, there is a greater risk of negative consequences. Leaders who possess wisdom make an effort to understand and acknowledge reality, whereas those who lack wisdom tend to ignore it, often leading to

disastrous outcomes. However, the difficulty arises because optimistic leaders, who usually lack the ability to make wise decisions, are more relatable to individuals who prioritize their own convenience over careful consideration.

In the fourth essay, author argues that optimism can be lethal if it is not grounded in reality. He suggests that people's tendency to see the world through rose-tinted glasses, and to ignore the negative aspects of life, can lead to disastrous consequences. He discusses the history of optimism, from the philosopher Leibniz's belief that we live in the "best of all possible worlds" to the more recent trend of positive psychology. The author contends that such optimism can lead to a false sense of security, causing people to overlook potential threats and dangers. He concludes that a more balanced view of the world, one that acknowledges both the good and the bad, is necessary.

The 5th Essay discusses the significance of environmental and geographic factors in the survival of societies. The writer criticizes the economists' belief that nature will supply resources required for growth, leading to disastrous consequences. He argues that the climate apocalypse will impact international relations and politics. The Free market economy and democracy have failed because it compromised habitability of the earth. The essay predicts the return of power competition and colonial powers in this neo-Malthusian world. Global warming will incite migration and create an uninhabitable region near equator, leading to crises of agriculture, refugees, water, hatred, and war. The essay concludes with suggestions for national climate policy, maximum logistic and diplomatic support, and investment in nuclear weapons to deter countries from exploiting resources and causing problems for refugees.

The sixth essay argues that complex systems, including economies and societies, are subject to face cycles of growth and decline. The author suggests that when a system reaches a high level of equilibrium, it becomes vulnerable to disruption, its downfall is inevitable. He cites historical examples, such as the collapse of the Roman Empire and the decline of the British Empire, to explain this point.

The author also notes that the modern global economy is highly interconnected and interdependent, making it even more vulnerable to disruption. The chapter concludes by suggesting that policymakers and businessman should focus on building flexibility and adaptability into their systems to reduce risks of collapse and ensure long-term stability.

The 7th Essay explores the concept of government in the face of societal collapse. He examines how governments can become ineffective and how individuals and groups can rise to power after such downfall. Niaz argues traditional forms of government may not be sufficient to deal because after collapse new forms of governance may emerge.

Niaz also discusses the role of power in a post-collapse society, and how it can be wielded by both traditional and non-traditional players. He

notes that while traditional governments may become ineffective, other groups, e.g. warlords or religious leaders, may fill the power vacuum. Niaz concludes that in the face of societal collapse, it is important to consider alternative forms of governance and to be aware of the potential for new power structures to emerge.

One of the strengths of "Downfall" is Niaz's ability to break down difficult concepts and ideas into easy-to-understand language. He provides a clear explanation of the science behind climate change and the dangers of nuclear war, for example, without overgeneralizing or dumbing down the information. He has mentioned history, concepts of Environmental Science, philosophy and many others to make the reader understand. His technique of writing is descriptive in nature. This style allows the writer to create a vivid image of events for the reader. Therefore, a reader can easily connect to the events painted in such a descriptive form which Niaz does. The book is accessible to a wide audience and will appeal to anyone interested in the future of humanity.

Niaz concludes his book and argues that there are several steps that can be taken to prevent this downfall, including: Recognizing the interconnectedness of global issues such as climate change, inequality, and political instability, and developing holistic solutions. Addressing the root causes of issues such as poverty, corruption, extremism and concentration of wealth rather than their symptoms. We need to refrain from false hope rather we should focus on heroic realism. Promoting values such as tolerance, empathy, and respect for human rights. Reforestation is required and stop fantasizing about sustainable growth. We need to understand the real enemy is ecocide not each other. He believes in abolishing neoliberal globalization and forcible de-carbonization of society will help.

Reviewed by Kamil Baksh and Adnan Khan, Associate Lecturers, University of Central Punjab, Lahore.

Documents

Document: 1

PM Modi's State Visit to US: Joint Statement from the United States and India, June 22, 2023, Washington D.C.

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. and Prime Minister Narendra Modi today affirmed a vision of the United States and India as among the closest partners in the world – a partnership of democracies looking into the 21st century with hope, ambition, and confidence. The U.S.-India Comprehensive Global and Strategic Partnership is anchored in a new level of trust and mutual understanding and enriched by the warm bonds of family and friendship that inextricably link our countries together. Together, we will build an even stronger, diverse U.S.-India partnership that will advance the aspirations of our people for a bright and prosperous future grounded in respect for human rights, and shared principles of democracy, freedom, and the rule of law. Our cooperation will serve the global good as we work through a range of multilateral and regional groupings – particularly the Quad– to contribute toward a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific. No corner of human enterprise is untouched by the partnership between our two great countries, which spans the seas to the stars.

Charting a Technology Partnership for the Future

2. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi affirm that technology will play the defining role in deepening our partnership. The leaders hailed the inauguration of the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) in January 2023 as a major milestone in U.S.-India relations. They called on our governments, businesses, and academic institutions to realize their shared vision for the strategic technology partnership. The leaders recommitted the United States and India to fostering an open, accessible, and secure technology ecosystem, based on mutual confidence and trust that reinforces our shared values and democratic institutions.

3. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi set a course to reach new frontiers across all sectors of space cooperation. The leaders applauded our growing cooperation on earth and space science, and space technologies. They welcomed the decision of NASA and ISRO to develop a strategic framework for human spaceflight cooperation by the end of 2023. The leaders hailed the announcement by NASA to provide advanced training to Indian astronauts at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, with a goal of mounting a joint effort to the International Space Station in 2024. The leaders celebrated the delivery of the NASA-ISRO

Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite to ISRO's U.R. Rao Satellite Centre in Bengaluru, India, and looked forward to NISAR's 2024 launch from India. Welcoming India's Space Policy – 2023, the leaders called for enhanced commercial collaboration between the U.S. and Indian private sectors in the entire value chain of the space economy and to address export controls and facilitate technology transfer. President Biden deeply appreciated India's signing of the Artemis Accords, which advance a common vision of space exploration for the benefit of all humankind.

4. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi committed their administrations to promoting policies and adapting regulations that facilitate greater technology sharing, co-development, and co-production opportunities between U.S. and Indian industry, government, and academic institutions. The leaders welcomed the launch of the interagency-led Strategic Trade Dialogue in June 2023 and directed both sides to undertake regular efforts to address export controls, explore ways of enhancing high technology commerce, and facilitate technology transfer between the two countries.

5. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi hailed the signing of an MoU on Semiconductor Supply Chain and Innovation Partnership as a significant step in the coordination of our countries' semiconductor incentive programs. This will promote commercial opportunities, research, talent, and skill development. The leaders welcomed an announcement by Micron Technology, Inc., to invest up to \$825 million to build a new semiconductor assembly and test facility in India with support from the Indian government. The combined investment valued at \$2.75 billion would create up to 5,000 new direct and 15,000 community jobs opportunities in the next five years. The leaders also welcomed Lam Research's proposal to train 60,000 Indian engineers through its Semiverse Solution virtual fabrication platform to accelerate India's semiconductor education and workforce development goals, and an announcement by Applied Materials, Inc., to invest \$400 million to establish a collaborative engineering center in India.

6. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi share a vision of creating secure and trusted telecommunications, resilient supply chains, and enabling global digital inclusion. To fulfill this vision, the leaders launched two Joint Task Forces on advanced telecommunications, focused on Open RAN and research and development in 5G/6G technologies. Public-private cooperation between vendors and operators will be led by India's Bharat 6G Alliance and the U.S. Next G Alliance. We are partnering on Open RAN field trials and rollouts, including scaled deployments, in both countries with operators and vendors of both markets, backed by U.S.

International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) financing. The leaders welcomed participation of Indian companies in the U.S. Rip and Replace Program. They endorsed an ambitious vision for 6G networks, including standards cooperation, facilitating access to chipsets for system development, and establishing joint research and development projects. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi also stressed the need to put in place a “Trusted Network/Trusted Sources” bilateral framework.

7. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi welcomed the establishment of a joint Indo-U.S. Quantum Coordination Mechanism to facilitate collaboration among industry, academia, and government, and our work toward a comprehensive Quantum Information Science and Technology agreement. The United States welcomes India’s participation in the Quantum Entanglement Exchange and in the Quantum Economic Development Consortium to facilitate expert and commercial exchanges with leading, like-minded quantum nations. The United States and India will sustain and grow quantum training and exchange programs and work to reduce barriers to U.S.-India research collaboration. The leaders welcomed the launch of a \$2million grant program under the U.S.-India Science and Technology Endowment fund for the joint development and commercialization of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and quantum technologies, and encouraged public-private collaborations to develop high performance computing (HPC) facilities in India. President Biden also reiterated his government’s commitment to work with U.S. Congress to lower barriers to U.S. exports to India of HPC technology and source code. The U.S. side pledged to make its best efforts in support of India’s Center for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) joining the U.S. Accelerated Data Analytics and Computing (ADAC) Institute.

8. The leaders welcomed 35 innovative joint research collaborations in emerging technologies funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Indian Department of Science and Technology (DST). Under a new implementation arrangement between NSF and DST, both sides will fund joint research projects in computer and information science and engineering, cyber physical systems, and secure and trustworthy cyberspace. Furthermore, NSF and India’s Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology will bring fresh funding for joint projects in applied research areas such as semiconductors, next generation communication, cyber security, sustainability and green technologies and intelligent transportation systems.

9. Both President Biden and Prime Minister Modi acknowledge the profound opportunities and significant risks associated with AI. Accordingly, they committed to develop joint and international

collaboration on trustworthy and responsible AI, including generative AI, to advance AI education and workforce initiatives, promote commercial opportunities, and mitigate against discrimination and bias. The United States also supports India's leadership as Chair of the Global Partnership on AI. The leaders applauded Google's intent to continue investing through its \$10 billion India Digitization Fund, including in early-stage Indian startups. Through its AI Research Center in India, Google is building models to support over 100 Indian languages.

10. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi hailed our deepening bilateral cooperation on cutting-edge scientific infrastructure, including a \$140 million in-kind contribution from the Indian Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) to the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) Fermi National Laboratory toward collaborative development of the Proton Improvement Plan-II Accelerator, for the Long Baseline Neutrino Facility — the first and largest international research facility on U.S. soil. They also welcomed the commencement of construction of a Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) in India. The leaders called on their administrations to extend these partnerships to advanced biotechnology and bio-manufacturing, and enhance biosafety and biosecurity innovation, practices, and norms.

Powering a Next Generation Defense Partnership

11. The U.S.-India Major Defense Partnership has emerged as a pillar of global peace and security. Through joint exercises, strengthening of defense industrial cooperation, the annual "2+2" Ministerial Dialogue, and other consultative mechanisms, we have made substantial progress in building an advanced and comprehensive defense partnership in which our militaries coordinate closely across all domains. The leaders appreciated the strong military-to-military ties, mutual logistics support, and efforts to streamline implementation of foundational agreements. They noted that information sharing and placement of Liaison Officers in each other's military organizations will spur joint service cooperation. They also reiterated their resolve to strengthen maritime security cooperation, including through enhanced underwater domain awareness. The leaders welcomed the launch of dialogues in new defense domains including space and AI, which will enhance capacity building, knowledge, and expertise.

12. Expressing their desire to accelerate defense industrial cooperation, the leaders welcomed the adoption of a Defense Industrial Cooperation Roadmap, which will provide policy direction to defense industries and enable co-production of advanced defense systems and collaborative research, testing, and prototyping of projects. Both sides are committed to

addressing any regulatory barriers to defense industrial cooperation. The leaders also noted the decision of India's Ministry of Defense and the U.S. Department of Defense to commence negotiations for concluding a Security of Supply arrangement and initiate discussions about Reciprocal Defense Procurement agreement.

13. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi hailed the landmark signing of an MoU between General Electric and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for the manufacture of GE F-414 jet engines in India, for the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited Light Combat Aircraft Mk 2. This trailblazing initiative to manufacture F-414 engines in India will enable greater transfer of U.S. jet engine technology than ever before. The leaders committed their governments to working collaboratively and expeditiously to support the advancement of this unprecedented co-production and technology transfer proposal.

14. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi also welcomed India's emergence as a hub for maintenance and repair for forward deployed U.S. Navy assets and the conclusion of Master Ship Repair Agreements with Indian shipyards. This will allow the U.S. Navy to expedite the contracting process for mid-voyage and emergent repair. As envisaged in the Defense Industrial Roadmap, both countries agree to work together for the creation of logistic, repair, and maintenance infrastructure for aircrafts and vessels in India.

15. The leaders welcomed the setting up and launch of the U.S.-India Defense Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X). As a network of universities, startups, industry and think tanks, INDUS-X will facilitate joint defense technology innovation, and co-production of advanced defense technology between the respective industries of the two countries. The U.S. Department of Defense's Space Force has signed its first International Cooperative Research and Development Agreement with Indian start-up 114 AI and 3rdiTech. Both companies will work with General Atomics to co-develop components using cutting edge technologies in AI and semiconductors respectively.

16. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi welcomed India's plans to procure General Atomics MQ-9B HALE UAVs. The MQ-9Bs, which will be assembled in India, will enhance the ISR capabilities of India's armed forces across domains. As part of this plan, General Atomics will also establish a Comprehensive Global MRO facility in India to support of India's long-term goals to boost indigenous defense capabilities.

Catalyzing the Clean Energy Transition

17. As climate action and clean energy leaders, the United States and India share a common and ambitious vision to rapidly deploy clean energy at scale, build economic prosperity, and help achieve global climate goals. They recognize the critical role of the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act and India's ambitious production-linked incentives scheme for cutting-edge clean and renewable technologies. The leaders highlighted the U.S.-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership and Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP) as reflective of this commitment. The leaders welcomed joint efforts to develop and deploy energy storage technologies, including through the establishment of a new task force under SCEP. The leaders welcomed the launch of the U.S.-India New and Emerging Renewable Energy Technologies Action Platform, which will accelerate cooperation in green hydrogen, offshore and onshore wind, and other emerging technologies. They will collaborate to achieve their respective national goals to reduce the cost of green/clean hydrogen under India's National Green Hydrogen Mission and the U.S. Hydrogen Energy Earthshot. The United States welcomed India's decision to co-lead the multilateral Hydrogen Breakthrough Agenda. The leaders called for the development of joint efforts in carbon capture, utilization, and storage, given its role in reducing emissions. The leaders welcomed India's VSK Energy LLC's announcement to invest up to \$1.5 billion to develop a new, vertically integrated solar panel manufacturing operation in the United States and India's JSW Steel USA's plans to invest \$120 million at its Mingo Junction, Ohio, steel plant to better serve growing markets in the renewable energy and infrastructure sectors.

18. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi underscored the importance of decarbonizing the transportation sector, including by accelerating the deployment of zero emissions vehicles, continued collaboration to promote public and private financing for electric transportation, and the development of biofuels, including sustainable aviation fuels. To this end, the leaders lauded the creation and development of the Global Biofuels Alliance, which will be launched in July 2023, with the United States as a founding member. Both leaders welcomed the signing of an MOU under which the U.S. Agency for International Development will support Indian Railways' ambitious target to become a "net-zero" carbon emitter by 2030. The United States and India also announced plans to create a payment security mechanism that will facilitate the deployment of 10,000 made-in-India electric buses in India, augmenting India's focused efforts in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving public health, and diversifying the global supply chain.

19. India and the United States committed to create innovative investment platforms that will effectively lower the cost of capital and attract international private finance at scale to accelerate the deployment of greenfield renewable energy, battery storage, and emerging green technology projects in India. The United States and India will endeavor to develop a first-of-its kind, multibillion-dollar investment platform aimed at providing catalytic capital and de-risking support for such projects.

20. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi reaffirmed their support for the mission of the International Energy Agency (IEA), and President Biden pledged to continue working with the Government of India, IEA members, the IEA Secretariat, and other relevant stakeholders toward IEA membership for India in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement on an International Energy Program.

21. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi affirmed the intention of the two governments, as trusted partners, to work together to ensure that our respective markets are well-supplied with the essential critical minerals needed to achieve our climate, economic and strategic technology cooperation goals. The leaders pledged to hasten bilateral collaboration to secure resilient critical minerals supply chains through enhanced technical assistance and greater commercial cooperation, and exploration of additional joint frameworks as necessary. The United States enthusiastically welcomes India as the newest partner in the Mineral Security Partnership (MSP), to accelerate the development of diverse and sustainable critical energy minerals supply chains globally while agreeing to the principles of the MSP including environmental, social, and governance standards. The leaders lauded the announcement of India's Epsilon Carbon Limited's plans to invest \$650 million in a U.S. greenfield electric vehicle battery component factory.

22. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi underscored the important role nuclear energy plays in global decarbonization efforts and affirmed nuclear energy as a necessary resource to meet our nations' climate, energy transition, and energy security needs. The leaders noted ongoing negotiations between the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and Westinghouse Electric Company (WEC) for the construction of six nuclear reactors in India. They welcomed intensified consultations between the U.S. DOE and India's DAE for facilitating opportunities for WEC to develop a techno-commercial offer for the Kovvada nuclear project. They also noted the ongoing discussion on developing next generation small modular reactor technologies in a collaborative mode for the domestic market as well as for export. The United States reaffirms its support for India's membership in the Nuclear

Suppliers Group and commits to continue engagement with likeminded partners to advance this goal.

23. The leaders recognize that addressing sustainable consumption and production is a key component to achieving of the development, environment and climate ambitions of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs. In this regard, President Biden welcomed Prime Minister Modi's Lifestyle for Environment initiative (LiFE) as a successful national model to address the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification and land degradation, and resolved to work together to implement the G20 High Level Principles on Lifestyles for Sustainable Development.

Deepening Strategic Convergence

24. As global partners, the United States and India affirm that the rules-based international order must be respected. They emphasized that the contemporary global order has been built on principles of the UN Charter, international law, and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states.

25. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi expressed their deep concern over the conflict in Ukraine and mourned its terrible and tragic humanitarian consequences. The leaders underscored the serious and growing impacts of the war on the global economic system, including on food, fuel and energy security, and critical supply chains. They called for greater efforts to mitigate the consequences of the war, especially in the developing world. Both countries further pledge to render continuing humanitarian assistance to the people of Ukraine. They called for respect for international law, principles of the UN charter, and territorial integrity and sovereignty. Both countries concurred on the importance of post-conflict reconstruction in Ukraine.

26. The United States and India reaffirmed their resolve to counter any attempts to unilaterally subvert the multilateral system. The leaders underscored the need to strengthen and reform the multilateral system so it may better reflect contemporary realities. In this context both sides remain committed to a comprehensive UN reform agenda, including through expansion in permanent and non-permanent categories of membership of the UN Security Council. Sharing the view that global governance must be more inclusive and representative, President Biden reiterated U.S. support for India's permanent membership on a reformed UN Security Council(UNSC). In this context, President Biden welcomed India's candidature as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for the 2028-29 term, in view of India's significant contributions to the UN system

and commitment to multilateralism, as well as its active and constructive engagement in the Inter-Governmental Negotiations process on Security Council reforms, with an overall objective of making the UNSC more effective, representative, and credible.

27. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi recommitted themselves to empowering the Quad as a partnership for global good. The two leaders welcomed the progress made at the Hiroshima Summit last month among the four maritime democracies to further advance a positive and constructive agenda for peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. The leaders welcomed progress on the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness, through which Quad partners are providing maritime domain data across the Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific regions. The Quad to be hosted in India in 2024 would be another opportunity to continue the dialogue and consolidate cooperation. The leaders committed to continue working in partnership with regional platforms such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association, Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, and ASEAN to achieve shared aspirations and address shared challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region. Prime Minister Modi welcomed the United States joining the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative and President Biden welcomed India's continued participation as an observer in the Partners in the Blue Pacific.

28. The leaders also welcomed the depth and pace of enhanced consultations between the two governments on regional issues including South Asia, the Indo-Pacific and East Asia and looked forward to our governments holding an inaugural Indian Ocean Dialogue in 2023.

29. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi reiterated their enduring commitment to a free, open, inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous India-Pacific region with respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, and international law. Both leaders expressed concern over coercive actions and rising tensions, and strongly oppose destabilizing or unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo by force. Both sides emphasized the importance of adherence to international law, particularly as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and the maintenance of freedom of navigation and overflight, in addressing challenges to the maritime rules-based order, including in the East and South China Seas.

30. The leaders expressed deep concern about the deteriorating situation in Myanmar, and called for the release of all those arbitrarily detained, the establishment of constructive dialogue, and the transition of Myanmar toward an inclusive federal democratic system.

31. The leaders also condemned the destabilizing ballistic missile launches of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), which violate relevant UN Security Council resolutions and pose a grave threat to international peace and security. They reaffirmed their commitment to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and urged DPRK to comply with its obligations under these resolutions and engage in substantive dialogue. They stressed the importance of addressing the concerns regarding DPRK's proliferation linkages related to weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery, and related items in the region and beyond.

32. The United States and India stand together to counter global terrorism and unequivocally condemn terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi reiterated the call for concerted action against all UN-listed terrorist groups including Al-Qa'ida, ISIS/Daesh, Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), and Hizb-ul-Mujhahideen. They strongly condemned cross-border terrorism, the use of terrorist proxies and called on Pakistan to take immediate action to ensure that no territory under its control is used for launching terrorist attacks. They called for the perpetrators of the 26/11 Mumbai and Pathankot attacks to be brought to justice. They noted with concern the increasing global use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), drones and information and communication technologies for terrorist purposes and reaffirmed the importance of working together to combat such misuse. They welcomed the cooperation between our two governments on counterterrorism designations and homeland security cooperation, including in intelligence sharing and law enforcement cooperation, and called upon the Financial Action Task Force to undertake further work identifying how to improve global implementation of its standards to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

33. The leaders reiterated their strong support for a peaceful, secure, and stable Afghanistan. They discussed the current humanitarian situation and concurred on the need to continue to provide immediate humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan. The leaders urged the Taliban to abide by UNSC Resolution 2593 which demands that Afghan territory should never be used to threaten or attack any country, shelter or train terrorists, or plan or finance terrorist attacks. Committing to continue close consultations on the situation in Afghanistan, the leaders emphasized the importance of formation of an inclusive political structure and called on the Taliban to respect the human rights of all Afghans, including women and girls, and to respect freedom of movement.

34. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi looked forward to strengthening a long-term strategic partnership between the I2U2

countries of India, Israel, United Arab Emirates, and the United States to leverage markets to build more innovative, inclusive, and science-based solutions to enhance food and energy security, improve movement of people and goods across hemispheres, and increase sustainability and resilience.

35. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi reaffirmed their countries' commitment to an open, secure, inclusive, safe, interoperable, and reliable Internet, and to continuing cooperation on a range of cybersecurity issues, including preventing and responding to cyber threats, promoting cybersecurity education and awareness and measures to build resilient cyber infrastructure. Both the United States and India are committed to sharing information about cyber threats and vulnerabilities, and to working together to investigate and respond to cyber incidents.

36. The United States and India reaffirm and embrace their shared values of freedom, democracy, human rights, inclusion, pluralism, and equal opportunities for all citizens. Both countries have a tradition of recognizing the diversity represented in their nations and celebrating the contributions of all their citizens. They reasserted that democracy, freedom, and rule of law are the shared values that anchor global peace and sustainable development. In keeping with the spirit of leaving no one behind, both leaders committed to working towards ensuring that fruits of economic growth and well-being reach the underprivileged. They also committed to pursue programs and initiatives that would facilitate women-led development, and enable all women and girls to live free from gender-based violence and abuse. President Biden underscored his appreciation for India's participation in the Summit for Democracy process, and for efforts made by India toward sharing knowledge, technical expertise, and experiences with electoral management bodies of other democracies. The leaders also welcomed the re-launch of the Global Issues Forum, which would hold its next meeting at an appropriate time.

Propelling Global Growth

37. As two of the world's largest democratic economies, the United States and India are indispensable partners in advancing global prosperity and a free, fair, and rules-based economic order. President Biden highlighted the impactful participation of Prime Minister Modi in the G7 Hiroshima Summit and looks forward to the G20 Summit in September in New Delhi. He applauded India's leadership in its ongoing G20 Presidency, which has brought renewed focus on strengthening multilateral institutions and international cooperation to tackle global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, fragility and conflict, along with work to

accelerate achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and lay the foundation for strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth.

38. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi are united in their determination to use the G20 to deliver on shared priorities for the G20 Leaders' Summit, including improving the sovereign debt restructuring process; advancing the multilateral development bank evolution agenda, including mobilizing new concessional financing at the World Bank to support all developing countries; and raising the level of ambition on mobilizing private sector investment for quality, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure, including through the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment. The United States looks forward to hosting the G20 presidency in 2026, nearly two decades after the first full-scale G20 Leaders' Summit in Pittsburgh.

39. The United States and India recognize the potential of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) approaches for enabling open and inclusive digital economies. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi intend to work together to provide global leadership for the implementation of DPI to promote inclusive development, competitive markets, and protect individual rights. In this regard, the United States and India will explore how to partner together and align our efforts to advance the development and deployment of robust DPIs, including appropriate safeguards to protect, privacy, data security and intellectual property. They will explore developing a U.S.-India Global Digital Development Partnership, which would bring together technology and resources from both countries to enable development and deployment of DPIs in developing countries.

40. The leaders are committed to pursuing ambitious efforts to strengthen Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to address shared global challenges of the 21st century. In this regard, they emphasized the need for comprehensive efforts by MDBs to evolve their vision, incentive structure, operational approaches and financial capacity so that they are better equipped to address a wide range of SDGs and trans-boundary challenges including climate change, pandemics, conflicts and fragility. Recognizing multilateral efforts in this area, the leaders acknowledged the ongoing work under the Indian presidency of the G20 on strengthening MDBs including the report of the G20 Expert Group on Strengthening MDBs. By the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi, the United States and India will work together to secure G20 commitment to create a major new dedicated pool of funds at the World Bank to deploy concessional lending for global challenges, and to enhance support for crisis response in International Development Association recipient countries.

41. The leaders reaffirmed that the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) is an important pillar of our collective and collaborative efforts to build resilience in our supply chains, harness transformations in clean energy, and accelerate progress of our economies through anti-corruption efforts, efficient tax administrative practices, and capacity building measures. The leaders welcomed the substantial conclusion of negotiations on the proposed IPEF Supply Chain Agreement and committed to working with other partners expeditiously to conclude negotiations of the agreements under the clean economy and fair economy pillars to deliver concrete benefits that enhance the economic competitiveness and prosperity of countries in the Indo-Pacific. President Biden invited India to attend the APEC Summit in San Francisco in November 2023 as a guest of the host.

42. The U.S.-India trade and investment partnership is an engine for global growth, with bilateral trade exceeding \$191 billion in 2022, nearly doubling from 2014. The leaders applauded the reconvening of the U.S.-India Commercial Dialogue and CEO Forum in March in New Delhi. They encouraged respective industries to take action on the recommendations from the CEOs for greater engagement and technical cooperation to build resilient supply chains for emerging technologies, clean energy technologies, and pharmaceuticals; promote an innovative digital economy; lower barriers to trade and investment; harmonize standards and regulations wherever feasible; and work towards skilling our workforces. The leaders support continued active engagement between the U.S. Treasury Department and the Indian Ministry of Finance under the Economic and Financial Partnership dialogue. They encouraged the U.S. Federal Insurance Office and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India to advance areas of mutual interest in the insurance sector under their existing MoU framework.

43. The United States and India have also taken steps toward deepening bilateral cooperation to strengthen our economic relationship, including trade ties. Underscoring the willingness and trust of both countries in resolving trade issues, the leaders welcomed the resolution of six outstanding WTO disputes between the two countries through mutually agreed solutions as well as their understandings on market access related to certain products of significance to the bilateral trade relationship. They also looked forward to reconvening the India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum before the end of 2023 to further enhance the bilateral trade relationship by addressing trade concerns and identifying further areas for engagement. India highlighted its interest in the restoration of its status under the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences program, which could be considered in relation to eligibility criteria determined by the U.S.

Congress. The leaders supported intensifying the work to advance progress on issues related to the eligibility criteria. Prime Minister Modi also expressed India's interest towards being recognized as a Trade Agreements Act-designated country by the United States to further enhance the integration of both economies and to further promote trade and investment between two countries. In this regard, the leaders welcomed the initiation of discussions between both sides at an official level on issues related to bilateral government procurement.

44. The leaders welcomed focused efforts under the re-launched U.S.-India Commercial Dialogue to expand cooperation in the areas of Talent, Innovation, and Inclusive Growth. President Biden expressed appreciation for the significant workforce development efforts undertaken by several of the Indian companies taking part in the U.S.-India CEO Forum to upskill more than 250,000 employees and promote STEM learning within local communities across the United States. Both leaders applauded the concept of an "Innovation Handshake" under the Commercial Dialogue that will lift up and connect the two sides' dynamic startup ecosystems, address specific regulatory hurdles to cooperation, and promote further innovation and job growth, particularly in emerging technologies. The Innovation Handshake demonstrates the resolve on both sides to further bolster their shared vision of an elevated strategic technology partnership, leveraging the strength and ingenuity of their respective private sectors to identify new innovations and match them with industry requirements across the priority sectors identified under the iCET framework.

45. Recognizing the essential role that micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) play in advancing inclusive growth, expanding exports, and boosting employment across our respective cities, towns, and rural areas, the leaders welcomed plans under the Commercial Dialogue to organize a forum to promote the role and scope of MSMEs in bilateral trade and a digital commerce showcase to strengthen the engagement of women-owned and rural enterprises in particular. They commended the work of the U.S. Small Business Administration and the Indian Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, which are pursuing increased cooperation and intend to formalize their work through a MoU to support entrepreneurs and MSMEs.

46. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi again welcomed Air India's historic agreement with Boeing to acquire more than 200 American-made aircraft. This purchase will support more than one million American jobs across 44 states and contribute to ongoing efforts to modernize the civil aviation sector in India. Boeing has announced a \$100 million investment on infrastructure and programs to train pilots in India,

supporting India's need for 31,000 new pilots over the next 20 years. The leaders also welcomed Boeing's announcement of its completion of a C-17 aftermarket support facility for MRO and a new parts logistics center in India to capture future synergies between defense and civil aviation.

Empowering Future Generations and Protecting the Health of our People

47. President Biden and Prime Minister hailed the growing bilateral education partnership between the United States and India. Indian students are on pace to soon become the largest foreign student community in the United States, with an increase of nearly 20 percent in Indian students studying in the United States last year alone. The leaders welcomed the establishment of a new Joint Task Force of the Association of American Universities and leading Indian educational institutions, including the Indian Institutes of Technology, and the nomination of councils on each side, and noted their interim recommendations for expanding research and university partnerships between the two countries. They also welcomed the establishment of Indo-U.S. Global Challenge Institutes to spark deeper research partnerships and people-to-people exchanges between a range of diverse institutions in the U.S. and India in semiconductors, sustainable agriculture, clean energy, health and pandemic preparedness, and emerging technologies.

48. The leaders welcomed an announcement by the U.S. Department of State that it would launch a pilot to adjudicate domestic renewals of certain petition-based temporary work visas later this year, including for Indian nationals, with the intent to implement this for an expanded pool of H1B and L visa holders in 2024 and eventually broadening the program to include other eligible categories.

49. The leaders affirmed that the movement of professional and skilled workers, students, investors and business travelers between the countries contributes immensely to enhancing bilateral economic and technological partnership. While acknowledging the important steps taken to augment processing of visa applications, they noted the pressing need to further expedite this process. The leaders also directed officials to identify additional mechanisms to facilitate travel for business, tourism, and professional and technical exchanges between the two countries.

50. Concomitant with the rapid growth in our strategic partnership and demand for travel, both sides intend to open new consulates in each other's countries. The United States intends to initiate the process to open two new consulates in India in the cities of Bengaluru and Ahmedabad. India will take steps to operationalize its new consulate in

Seattle later this year, and open two new consulates at jointly identified locations in the United States.

51. The leaders recognized the role of asocial security totalization agreement in protecting the interests of cross border workers and reaffirmed the intent to continue ongoing discussions concerning the elements required in both countries to enter into a bilateral social security totalization agreement.

52. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi celebrate the historic and active collaboration across the full expanse of our respective health sectors. They welcomed the opportunity for deeper collaboration to secure pharmaceutical supply chains. The leaders encouraged their administrations to continue their strong collaboration on pandemic preparedness, supported by epidemiology training; laboratory strengthening and point of entry surveillance; and food safety and regulation. The leaders applauded collaborations between research institutes of both countries on affordable cancer technology programs, including for the development of AI enabled diagnostic and prognosis prediction tools, and on diabetes research. The leaders committed to holding a U.S.-India Cancer Dialogue, hosted by President Biden's Cancer Moonshot, to bring experts together from both countries to identify concrete areas of collaboration to accelerate the rate of progress against cancer. They also called for expanded collaboration on digital health platforms including responsible use of cutting-edge technologies like AI, and to explore cooperation in research and the use of traditional medicine. President Biden lauded Prime Minister Modi's plan to eliminate tuberculosis in India by 2025, five years ahead of the target set by the UN's sustainable development goals, hailing it as a big step forward that will inspire other countries to action.

53. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi welcomed the opportunity for deeper collaboration to secure, de-risk, and strengthen pharmaceutical supply chains, with a focus on active pharmaceutical ingredients, key starting materials, and key vaccine input materials. They also underscored the need for strengthening global collaboration network on research and development in medical countermeasures, vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics to promote access to safe, effective, and innovative medical products in an affordable manner.

54. President Biden and Prime Minister Modi committed to work toward a broader and deeper bilateral drug policy framework for the 21st century. Under this framework, both countries aspire to expand cooperation and collaboration to disrupt the illicit production and

international trafficking of illicit drugs, including synthetic drugs, such as fentanyl and Amphetamine Type Stimulants and illicit use of their Precursors. Toward this end, they committed to a holistic public health partnership to prevent and treat illicit drug use, address workforce shortages and skilling requirements, and showcase a secure, resilient, reliable and growing pharmaceutical supply chain as a model for the world.

55. Prime Minister Modi conveyed his deep appreciation for the repatriation of antiquities to India by the United States. Both sides expressed strong interest in working quickly toward a Cultural Property Agreement, which would help to prevent illegal trafficking of cultural property from India and enhance cooperation on the protection and lawful exchange of cultural property.

56. The Leaders welcomed the establishment of the Tamil Studies Chair at the University of Houston and reinstating the Vivekananda Chair at the University of Chicago to further research and teaching of India's history and culture.

57. Prime Minister Modi looked forward to the visit of President Biden to the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi in September 2023.

58. Taken together, the leaders today affirmed that this document, in its breadth and depth, represents the most expansive and comprehensive vision for progress in the history of our bilateral relationship. Still, our ambitions are to reach ever greater heights, and we commit both our governments and our peoples to this endeavour, now and into the future.

Source: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/06/22/joint-statement-from-the-united-states-and-india/>

Document: 2**India-UAE Joint Statement during the Visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to UAE, July 15, 2023, UAE.**

President of the United Arab Emirates His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi met in Abu Dhabi on 15 July 2023.

Both sides noted that this was the fifth visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to the UAE in the last eight years. Prime Minister Modi last visited the UAE in June 2022 when he visited Abu Dhabi to meet HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to convey his greetings as His Highness assumed the presidency of the UAE. In 2015, Prime Minister Modi became the first Prime Minister of India to visit the UAE in 34 years. This visit was followed by the visit of HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to India in 2016, then in 2017, when HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan was the Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebrations. Moreover, the India-UAE relationship was formally elevated to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during the visit of HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to India in 2017.

The leaders expressed satisfaction that UAE-India relations have witnessed tremendous progress on all fronts. India-UAE trade rose to USD 85 billion in 2022, making the UAE India's third-largest trading partner for the year 2022-23 and India's second-largest export destination. India is the UAE's second largest trading partner. In February 2022, India became the first country with which the UAE signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Bilateral trade has increased by approximately 15% since the entry into force of the CEPA on 1 May 2022.

The leaders noted the significant global roles played by both countries in 2023, with India's presidency of the G20 and the UAE's presidency of COP28. The UAE side appreciated the hosting of the Voice of Global South Summit by India in January 2023. The Indian side also commended the UAE for its instrumental role in promoting the Global South's interests at COP28 and making COP28 a "COP of action." Both sides also looked forward to further cooperation in plurilateral fora such as I2U2 and the UAE-France-India trilateral cooperation initiative. They noted that such platforms provide greater opportunities for both countries to elevate the partnership to new heights.

Today, in Abu Dhabi, the President of the UAE HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi witnessed the following: I. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of a framework to promote the use of local currencies (INR-AED) for cross-border transactions by Governors of the respective Central Banks.

II. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on interlinking payment and messaging systems by Governors of the respective Central Banks.

III. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding for planning to establish Indian Institute of Technology – Delhi in Abu Dhabi.

The leaders discussed that developing the Local Currency Settlement System between the two countries to settle bilateral trade is a reflection of mutual confidence. Moreover, it underlines the robustness of the economies in both countries and enhances the economic engagement between the UAE and India. The leaders expressed their interest in strengthening cooperation in the payment systems area by enabling integration between their instant payment systems to process cross-border transactions between the UAE and India more efficiently. Such cooperation will also include the mutual acceptance of domestic card schemes by interlinking national card switches. Integration between these systems will enhance access to payment services for the benefit of the citizens and residents of the two countries.

The leaders reiterated their resolve to further strengthen investment ties between the two countries. In this context, they appreciated the efforts of the bilateral High-Level Joint Task Force of Investments. They acknowledged that the UAE became the fourth largest investor in India in 2022-2023, compared to the seventh in 2021-2022. They appreciated the plan of Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) to set up a presence in Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City), a financial free zone in Gujarat, in the next few months. This will further facilitate investment opportunities for the UAE in India.

The leaders also discussed the significance of the tripartite MoU between the Ministry of Education of India, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT Delhi) and Abu Dhabi Department of Education & Knowledge (ADEK) for the establishment of IIT Delhi – Abu Dhabi. In February last year, during the Virtual Summit between the two leaders, they agreed to establish the Indian Institute of Technology in the UAE. Both sides have worked tirelessly over the past two years to make this vision a reality. The two

leaders expressed their endorsement and approval that IIT Delhi – Abu Dhabi will become operational by January 2024 by offering a Master's program in Energy Transition and Sustainability. Other Bachelor, Master's and Ph.D. Level programs are expected to be offered from September 2024, in addition to establishing research centers in the fields of sustainable energy, climate studies, computing, and data sciences.

The leaders resolved to further enhance bilateral partnership in the energy field, both in oil, gas, and renewable energy. Both sides will take forward their cooperation in Green Hydrogen, solar energy and grid connectivity. Both sides also agreed to increase investment across the energy spectrum, including in India's Strategic Petroleum Reserve Programme.

The leaders acknowledged the joint work on issues of climate change, particularly during India's presidency of the G20 and the UAE's presidency of COP28. They resolved to work together to make COP28 a success for all.

Recognizing the importance of food security, the leaders reiterated their resolve to promote the reliability and resilience of food supply chains and expand food and agriculture trade, including through food corridors projects in India. The UAE side will complete its consultations with various Indian stakeholders swiftly for the early realization of projects in this area.

The leaders highlighted the importance of the health sector and scope of cooperation bilaterally and in third countries by energizing ongoing health cooperation and further diversifying it. The potential of both countries to become a reliable alternative in global health supply chains of vaccines and medicines was highlighted. Opportunities for collaboration in the growing health infrastructure in the UAE and India were also discussed.

The leaders noted that people-to-people contacts, which date back centuries, are one of the strongest and most important pillars of the historic India-UAE ties. The UAE expressed appreciation that the large Indian diaspora continues to play a significant role in the society and economy of the UAE and further reinforces bilateral relations.

The leaders agreed to further strengthen bilateral collaboration to strengthen maritime security and connectivity in the region to promote prosperity in India, the UAE, and the shared neighborhood. They also agreed to enhance defense exchanges, sharing of experiences, training, and capacity building.

The leaders reaffirmed their joint commitment to the fight against extremism and terrorism, including cross-border terrorism, in all forms, at both the regional and international levels. They agreed to further deepen their bilateral cooperation in the fight against terrorism, terrorist financing, and extremism. In this context, they emphasized the importance of promoting the values of peace, moderation, coexistence, and tolerance among peoples and stressed the need for all forms of extremism, hate speech, discrimination, and incitement to be renounced.

Both leaders emphasized the importance of multilateralism and called for collective action to promote a just, rules-based global order. The two leaders also expressed satisfaction on the coordination between the two sides on UN Security Council matters, especially in 2022, when both countries served as non-permanent members of the UNSC. Prime Minister Modi commended the UAE's achievements during the UAE's term as an elected member of the Security Council. The UAE reiterated its endorsement of India's bid for permanent membership of the reformed UNSC.

Prime Minister Modi thanked HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for his warm hospitality to his delegation. Prime Minister Modi is looking forward to the participation of HH Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in the G20 Leaders' Summit on 9-10 September 2023 in New Delhi.

Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, exploring emerging areas of collaboration, and promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in the region and beyond.

Source: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1939795>

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