

Balochistan Think Tank Network



BTTN Review

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About BTTN

Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) was established at Quetta, on March 1, 2021. It is an autonomous, non-profit, non-partisan, and multidisciplinary Research Center with a focus not limited to Balochistan only but includes the regional and global dynamics which can influence Pakistan. Broadly, BTTN endeavors to undertake in-depth research of provincial issues with a view to developing the socio, political, and economic status of the province. Its interests also include issues of Energy, Regional Stability, Strategic Stability, Peace and Security, Arms Control and Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Technology, Conflict Resolution, Regional Connectivity, and Socioeconomic development at the national level. Geopolitically, besides South Asia, BTTN's research areas also include regions of Europe and Africa.

BTTN OP-EDs

Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) Faculty of Research has been writing op-eds on a regular basis on different contemporary issues that are published on various international and national platforms. The opinions expressed in this edition are the authors' individual views and do not reflect the official policy of BTTN or any governmental organization. This electronic review is compiled monthly.

SUMMARY OF Op-Eds

Trump's Climate Skepticism and South Asia

Harsa Kakar

March 02, 2025

Donald Trump's climate skepticism and withdrawal from global climate agreements, including the Paris Climate Agreement, have hindered international efforts to address climate change. This has particularly affected South Asia, a region highly vulnerable to climate-induced disasters despite contributing little to greenhouse gas emissions. The suspension of US climate finance exacerbates the region's challenges, with countries

relying on international support for adaptation and mitigation efforts. To address these issues, South Asia must enhance regional cooperation, and developed nations, particularly the EU, need to increase their contributions to climate finance.

India-US Relations in Trump's Second Term

Shah Meer

March 06, 2025

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US during Donald Trump's second term has underscored a bipartisan consensus in Washington on deepening strategic engagement with India, and positioning New Delhi as a counterbalance to shared Chinese assertions while simultaneously reducing New Delhi's historical reliance on Moscow. The visit locked expanded US military sales to India, commitments to double bilateral trade within a record five-year period, sales of US oil and gas, close cooperation in emerging technologies and cooperation in space. The visit highlights India's importance in Washington's grand strategy amidst growing threats to the US dominance, and New Delhi's alacrity to leverage from Trump's reckless initiatives which are perceived to jettison western order. How will the renewed engagement evolve is at the core of the piece.

Evolving Cracks in the US-India Relations

Atta Ullah

March 15, 2025

This piece highlights inherent divergences in the growing US-India partnership. Both countries face mistrust and vulnerability while navigating their political, economic, and defense ties.

Indo-US Saga

Musavir Hameed Barech

March 16, 2025

The new US administration under President Donald J. Trump is reshaping the country's foreign policy, primarily shifting its focus from Europe to Asia Pacific. By ending the Ukraine war, Trump is trying to peel away Moscow from China's influence. Similarly, by supporting India in the domain of military and diplomacy, creating uncertainty in the region in general and for Pakistan's relationship with the US in particular.

Balochistan: The Boiling Question

Asad Ullah Raisani

March 17, 2025

India's involvement in Pakistan's 1971 disintegration and its active role in Balochistan today highlight a recurring pattern of interference. While Pakistan must counter externally threats, addressing internal grievances—rather than suppressing them—is crucial for stability. Ensuring locals benefit from mega projects, restoring trust in electoral politics, and upholding constitutional rights can prevent foreign exploitation. Ultimately, resolving Balochistan's issues through dialogue and development is key to Pakistan's unity and progress.

Balochistan's future depends on education reforms

Hamza Nasir

March 22, 2025

This piece discusses how Balochistan's progress depends on urgent education reforms addressing underfunding, poor infrastructure, and teacher shortages, especially in rural areas. Equitable access, increased budget allocation, and skill-based learning are essential to bridge regional disparities. Strong policy implementation and collaborative efforts are vital for unlocking the province's youth potential.

Reviving Iran`s Nuclear Deal

Sher Ali

March 22, 2025

Since Donald Trump has returned to the Oval Office as the 47th President of the United States, curbing Iran's nuclear program has increasingly occupied foreign policy agendas. On many important issues — trade wars, the economy, the future of NATO, mass deportation, ending the Ukraine war, and the Iran nuclear deal, the trump administration has announced ambitious policy shifts. Trump's approach towards the Iran nuclear deal is driven by its interest in the Middle East and Israel's lobbying rather than its commitments to the global non-proliferation regime. Trump has presented Tehran with a choice between negotiations or military action. The new US administration policies could significantly affect the broader regional and international interests.

Lessons From Pakistan Day

Zafar Khan

March 22, 2025

The article evaluates the historical value of the Pakistan Resolution alongside its founding principles while tracing Pakistan's development during independence with regional wars and global diplomatic shifts. The essay emphasizes Pakistan's advantageous geographical location together with security challenges from within and abroad while emphasizing the importance of democratic principles and social-economic developments and social tolerance.

Tariff Game: The Delusion of Liberal Economic Order

Naseem Sabzal

March 25, 2025

Donald Trump's return to power and renewed tariff policies threaten to reignite global trade tensions, particularly with China, risking another economic slowdown like the 0.9% drop in global growth during his first term. While aiming to protect U.S. industries, these tariffs disproportionately harm developing economies in the Global South, disrupting supply chains and worsening unemployment. The COVID-19 pandemic already exposed the fragility of interconnected economies, and further trade restrictions could deepen recession risks, inflation, and dollar instability. Despite liberalism's promise of equal opportunity, tariffs reinforce Western dominance, leaving poorer nations vulnerable. Ultimately, such protectionist measures risk destabilizing the global economy, benefiting few while punishing the most dependent.

India's growing missile capabilities

Zafar Khan

March 26, 2025

This piece discusses India's rapid modernization of its nuclear and missile capabilities, driven by power projection, strategic partnerships, and technological advancements. It highlights the growing regional security imbalance, particularly with Pakistan, and warns of increased escalation risks. The need for responsible global engagement to maintain strategic stability in South Asia is emphasized.

Nuclear Deterrence Vs Nuclear Disarmament

Nomeen Kassi

March 28, 2025

The article examines the debate between maintaining nuclear arsenals for deterrence and pursuing global disarmament. It highlights that while nuclear deterrence aims to prevent conflicts through the threat of retaliation, it also poses significant risks, including accidental launches and escalating arms races. The piece underscores the ethical and humanitarian concerns associated with nuclear weapons, advocating for disarmament as a path to global security. It also discusses various international treaties and efforts aimed at reducing nuclear stockpiles, emphasizing the need for collective international commitment to achieve a nuclear-free world. The article concludes that true global stability can only be achieved through comprehensive disarmament rather than reliance on deterrence strategies.

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Trump's Climate Skepticism and South Asia

Harsa Kakar

March 02, 2025

Donald Trump's second term as the US President has once again given rise to concerns over his administration's climate skepticism. As the world struggles with crises such as rising temperatures, unpredictable weather patterns, and resource scarcity, Trump's "America First" policy stands to undermine global efforts to combat climate change. In this situation, South Asia is among the regions that are most vulnerable to climate-induced disasters. The primary reasons are the region's geographic position and its transboundary environmental issues. The US's withdrawal from global climate finance is a blow for countries of this region due to their reliance on climate finance to adapt to and mitigate the catastrophic impacts of climate change.

US's Climate Skepticism and Hindered International Climate Efforts:

In his last term in 2017, Trump announced US's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement. This agreement aimed to keep global temperature rise well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Trump's decision back then revolved around the notion of freeing America of the economic burdens of developing nations including those of South Asia. This decision was justified by the White House as part of its "America first" policy. While this policy might have benefited America, it has been disastrous for global climate efforts, directly impacting developing nations.

This decision shocked the international community and undermined their collective efforts to address the challenges of climate change. As the largest greenhouse gas emitter, it is the moral responsibility of the US to lead climate action plans. The present leadership's climate skepticism, however, signals US' retreat from moral responsibility and has become a threat to the international community's efforts to combat the crisis. Countries like China and the European Union have played a positive role, but their efforts do not fully compensate for the loss of US support. This may in turn encourage other major greenhouse-emitting countries like China and India to withdraw from climate commitments.

South Asia and its Climate Vulnerabilities:

Despite contributing the least towards greenhouse gas emissions, South Asia is positioned among the most vulnerable climate change regions. According to a World Bank report climate change could push the region into severe poverty, reducing its GDP by up to 2% annually by 2050. South Asian countries like Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan are evidences to this estimate. For example, Bangladesh faces the displacement of millions of its people each year due to flooding. India and Pakistan, on the other hand, face water shortages and increasingly deadly heatwaves each year.

Suspension of Climate Finance:

The international community has introduced global climate finance to help developing nations counter the effects of climate change. Paris Climate Agreement and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) were key mechanisms and lifeline to South Asia's efforts to transition to sustainable development. For GCF, the US initially committed to the aid of \$3 billion but contributed only \$1 billion during President Obama's term. In the following term, the Trump administration stopped contributions, hindering projects worldwide. For South Asia, the withdrawal of US's climate aid to the GCF is particularly catastrophic. Among other South Asian countries, Nepal and Sri Lanka relied on climate finance to develop early warning systems, manage excessive water, and strengthen their coastal defense systems.

Without the aid, these countries are yet again exposed to climate-concerning vulnerabilities with reliance over none, which will further result in a spike in inequality and resource crisis. The withdrawal of climate aid from South Asia will have a ripple effect, extending beyond national borders. Climate change-induced migration and resource scarcity will fuel geopolitical tensions, destabilizing the global political order.

Recommendations and Policy Alternatives:

Firstly, South Asian countries need to prioritize their mutual regional cooperation to address climate challenges. The role of organizations like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) can be utilized to foster collaborations. Joint efforts can be made in water resource sharing, renewable energy establishment, and disaster management to overcome the loss of international climate funding.

Secondly, developed nations must extend their contributions to fill the void left by the US. The European Union, in particular, needs to take a leading role, as it is one of the largest emitters and has the resources to support climate adaptation and mitigation. They can also impose carbon taxing and green bonds as sources of alternative revenue to support climate financing.

Moreover, the US needs to be held accountable by the international community and persuaded to reaffirm its responsibility towards fighting climate action. It should be made clear that climate finance is not mere charity, it is an obligation and a necessary investment for global stability and security. US's role in this can help climate-vulnerable regions such as South Asia overcome migration, mass displacement, crisis, and economic collapses. The US and other developed nations should help developing and underdeveloped nations transition to the usage of clean energy.

Lastly, South Asian nations need to realign their domestic policies with climate-sustainable goals. Their governments need to prioritize investments in renewable and clean energy, sustainable infrastructure, and empower climate-vulnerable areas of their countries. They need to evolve towards technology and innovations. Such as, Generative Artificial Intelligence for early disaster prediction and, adopting climate-friendly models and software. This will enhance their preparedness for any kind of climate challenges in the future.

In a nutshell, President Trump's withdrawal from global climate financing is a big blow to the climate-affected regions around the world, especially in South Asia. South Asia, being economically, is exposed to climate vulnerabilities and the situation keeps worsening with each passing year. This situation can be overcome by cooperation within South Asia and other vulnerable regions, the international community stepping up its climate efforts, the US reaffirming its pledge to fight climate change, and South Asian nations prioritizing climate-friendly policies.

<https://strafasia.com/trumps-climate-skepticism-and-south-asia/>

India-US Relations in Trump's Second Term

Shah Meer

March 06, 2025

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the US during Donald Trump's second term has underscored a bipartisan consensus in Washington on deepening strategic engagement with India and positioning New Delhi as a counterbalance to shared Chinese assertions while simultaneously reducing New Delhi's historical reliance on Moscow. India-US ties strengthen with military sales, trade expansion, and cooperation in emerging technologies and space under Trump's second term.

The two sides have agreed to expand US military sales to India, double bilateral trade within a record five-year period, increase sales of US oil and gas, and cooperate closely in emerging technologies and outer space. The visit highlights India's importance in Washington's grand strategy amidst growing challenges to the US dominance and New Delhi's alacrity to leverage from Trump's reckless initiatives, which are perceived to jettison western order. How will the renewed engagement evolve?

While India and the US share a strategic convergence in countering the perceived Chinese assertiveness, their interests diverge in several key areas. Even on balancing China, the ways, means, and ends are quite different of both sides due to India's economic ties with China, which remains its largest trading partner. Second, India's sheer emphasis on strategic autonomy in its conduct, especially when engaging with the great powers.

Also, it is a pertinent reason that makes New Delhi less reliable for Washington. For instance, the Indian diaspora, Ashley J. Tellis, a senior fellow and inaugural chair at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has already warned Washington that American efforts to utilize India as counterbalance against China is nothing less than 'a bad bet', as New Delhi will pursue its independent course of actions amidst Sino-US confrontation.

Furthermore, India's longstanding ties with Russia and its reliance on Russian military exports and fossil fuels will also test the resilience of this renewed engagement. As of January 2025, Russia remains India's largest oil supplier, accounting for approximately

1.58 million barrels per day. The Kremlin also remains India's largest arms supplier despite India's continuous efforts to build its indigenous arms industry and to diversify its arms imports.

During the Russia- Ukraine war, despite Western pressure, New Delhi did not condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine and kept importing Russian oil. Given India's asymmetries with China, another reason New Delhi is unlikely to antagonize Moscow is Russia's potential role in diplomatically influencing China in India's favor in any possible Sino-Indian confrontation. Despite alignment against China, India's economic ties with Beijing and strategic autonomy limit Washington's influence over New Delhi.

Similarly in the Middle East, New Delhi has key strategic interests which diverge with the US. India signed a 10-year agreement with Iran for the operation of Chabahar Port. Under the agreement, India is to invest \$120 million in the development of the terminals of the port. New Delhi signed the deal to increase trade with landlocked Central Asian nations, including Afghanistan.

India might achieve a number of other objectives by outfitting and leasing the Chabahar port, such as bypassing China, competing with Pakistan's neighboring Gwadar port, and exerting influence over Afghanistan. However, Tehran is under American sanctions due to its nuclear program that prohibits any country from effectively engaging with Iran. Since the return of Donald Trump, his administration has intended to impose additional sanctions on Iran to end its nuclear program and curtail its ballistic missile program.

There is also friction on India's surplus trade and New Delhi's high tariffs on American goods. As of 2024, the US reports a goods trade deficit of \$45.7 billion with India, positioning India among the top ten countries with which the US has the largest trade deficit. Even worse, New Delhi has levied high tariffs on American goods, causing Trump to criticize India as the "tariff king" and urging New Delhi to lower its tariffs; otherwise, a failure to do so would result in reciprocal tariffs by the US.

However, The Times of India notes that Trump's reciprocal tariffs on Indian exports will have little impact, giving India a hedge to stagnate the deficit in its favor. Finally, The Hindu notes that the US has consistently raised concerns about India's bureaucratic

hurdles, arguing that they can create significant barriers for American business and investors, and urged India to foster an 'attractive and reliable' investment environment. India's continued reliance on Russian oil and arms challenges US efforts to reduce New Delhi's dependence on Moscow.

In sum, the American efforts to engage India cannot serve its long-term strategic interests against China, given a number of divergences in their bilateral relations. However, such concessions to India will affect South Asia's geopolitical environment in two possible ways. First, it will prevail a sense of insecurity in Pakistan and increase Pakistan's threat perceptions. As a result, it will further push Islamabad towards China and increase Beijing's footprints in the region. Second, the US will end up having no credible partner or ally in South Asia.

<https://stratheia.com/india-us-relations-in-trumps-second-term/>

Evolving Cracks in the US-India Relations

Atta Ullah

March 15, 2025

For India geographical decoupling is impossible, and geopolitical and economic decoupling may prove to be self-defeating. In its quest to become the voice of the Global South, India seems to exclude China from the Global South since it cannot compete with it and take a shift from shared neighborhoods to distinct friends. Its shifting instance on the Ukraine-Russia and Hamas-Israel conflict and drift from the global south to the west, especially the US, may alienate the Global South and alter its strategic and security calculations. If a country has a trade surplus, including India, it imposes tariffs irrespective of the country. And if a country has high defense spending, the US just has another customer to sell military hardware. Conversely, for the US, even though India is underweighted to China, it is an important customer to buy military hardware and enrich the US defence industry.

Recently, US President Trump imposed 100% tariffs on three countries, including India, with effect from 2 April, by saying, "India charges us 100% tariffs: the system is unfair". Trump further added that "if they use non-monetary tariffs to keep us out of their market, then we will (also) use non-monetary barriers to keep them out of our market". Indian PM Modi's recent visit to the US was hailed as a major success because of the signing of several key agreements by the former to buy military hardware from the latter. However, some analysts suggest that Modi's visit "to strike a deal and stave off tariffs has been unfruitful", by and large.

Likewise, it is generally known that President Trump starts most of his briefing with two important agendas: trade deficit/surplus with any country, and defense spending of that country, including its allies. If a country has a trade surplus, including India, it imposes tariffs irrespective of the country. And if a country has high defense spending, the US just has another customer to sell military hardware. India counts on both: it has a trade surplus with the US, so it invites tariffs, and it has one of the highest defense spendings in the world, so it would attract the US military-industrial complex (MIC). Article 9 of the Sino-Russia Treaty says, that when a situation arises in which one of "the parties deem that peace is being threatened and undermined or its security interests are involved or

when it is confronted with the threat of aggression”, both the parties shall hold “contact and consultation” to “eliminate such a threat”

China and India seem distant from fighting an American war against each other, a war of their fighting on the Himalayas would be more challenging for India than for China. Because India does not have a legally binding treaty with the US obligating it to assist in an armed conflict. The only option for India is to depend on its capabilities which may fall short compared to China`s military might. In addition, India has a Friendship Treaty with Russia (1971) and Russia has a similar Treaty of Friendship with China (2001), both the defense pacts share a common article.

Article 9 of the Russia-India Treaty says, “Each High Contracting Party undertakes to abstain from providing any assistance to any third party that engages in armed conflict with the other Party” and in the event of either party being subjected to threat, both high contracting parties shall enter into consultations “to remove such a threat and take measures to ensure peace and security of both countries”.

Similarly, Article 9 of the Sino-Russia Treaty says, that when a situation arises in which one of “the parties deem that peace is being threatened and undermined or its security interests are involved or when it is confronted with the threat of aggression”, both the parties shall hold “contact and consultation” to “eliminate such a threat”. Given this Triangular entanglement, India’s de-coupling and engagement with the US has severe constraints on its strategic partnership with the latter. The one-sided agreements India has signed have increased its susceptibility in terms of interoperability and the risk of sensitive information leakage

India’s Stance on the global divide between the South and the North is that “It is neither non-Western nor anti-Western”. In attempting to bridge this divide- sitting on the fence and navigating complexities- India is increasing its interdependence, further heightening its sensitivities and vulnerabilities accordingly. This shift represents a departure from its Nehruvian policy of non-alignment towards becoming less-non-aligned by bandwagoning the US.

Moreover, under the guise of diversification, its security and economic relations further entangle India between the West and the Rest. In addition to the challenges of growing vulnerability and sensitivity associated with this interdependence with the US, the one-sided agreements India has signed have increased its susceptibility in terms of interoperability and the risk of sensitive information leakage. These challenges, so far, have also impeded the transfer of technology (ToT) by the US to India.

For India, the US is an unreliable partner, while for the US, India is the shaky one when it comes to supporting US efforts in ensuring international peace and security. India's primary goal of achieving prestige, through US support, attached to the UN Security Council permanent membership, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) designation of a Nuclear Weapons State, and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) full membership has faced utter disappointment so far. On inclusion in the NPT and the UNSC, the US has been clear with two "without" caveats: India can join, according to the US, the NPT without its nuclear weapons, and the UNSC without veto power, while the NSG-wavier short of Enrichment and Reprocessing (ENR) Technology is mere lollypop. The frictions may arise from eroding religious freedom, human rights violations in India, its descent into an illiberal democracy, and transcontinental terrorism

In short, India's decoupling is marred with uncertainties. When it comes to its partnership with the US, there is a greater divergence between both than convergence. The skeptics in the US suggest that this partnership is fundamentally fragile, while some skeptics in India assert that it is moving from estrangement to engagement, which could potentially lead to entanglement. The frictions may arise from eroding religious freedom, human rights violations in India, its descent into an illiberal democracy, and transcontinental terrorism. These factors may significantly affect the future of India-US relations.

<https://stratheia.com/evolving-cracks-in-the-us-india-relations/>

Indo-US Saga

Musavir Hameed Barech

March 16, 2025

The new US administration under President Donald J. Trump is reshaping the country's foreign policy, primarily shifting its focus from Europe to Asia Pacific. By ending the Ukraine war, Trump is trying to peel away Moscow from China's influence. Similarly, by supporting India in the domain of military and diplomacy, creating uncertainty in the region in general and for Pakistan's relationship with the US in particular.

Most recently, President Trump hosted Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Washington. The meeting brought into limelight issues related to oil and gas supply from the US, including the export of US military equipment, high tariffs and illegal immigration. Surprisingly, the joint statement from the meeting raised eyebrows among policy makers of Pakistan; The statement called on Pakistan to take action against those responsible for 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks and approved the extradition of Pakistani-origin Chicago businessman and Canadian citizen Tahawwur Rana.

Pakistan's Foreign Office responded quickly, calling the statement was one-sided and misleading. Pakistan has shown concerns about India's growing military power and its impact on regional security.

In retrospect, Pakistan has played a crucial role in the global fight against terrorism. According to government, Pakistan has lost 35 trillion rupees and 83 thousand lives including civilian and military personnel. Pakistan continues to bear the brunt of US war against terrorism started back in 2001. The resurgence of a new wave of terrorism has resulted in the daily loss of civilian and military lives. However, these efforts are often not recognized or appreciated.

The US-Pakistan relationship has been complex and often described as transactional. Pakistan and the US have a long history of cooperation. The two countries have worked together on a range of issues, including counterterrorism, military buildup, and trade. The relations were strengthened in the cold war and the Afghan Jihad. Pakistan has also been a key partner in the US efforts to stabilize Afghanistan although they have had significant disagreements on their relations with India and China. The US has been

critical of Pakistan's handling of terrorist groups and consistently alleged that Pakistan is playing a double game, while Pakistan has been frustrated with the US lack of understanding of the country's security challenges, mainly emerging from India.

Similarly, the Trump administration's foreign policy approach has created new challenges for Pakistan. The administration's emphasis on "America First" has led to a more isolationist approach to international relations. This has created uncertainty for countries like Pakistan that rely heavily on international cooperation.

Apparently, Trump's efforts to end the Ukraine war have also led the US administration to shift its focus from Europe to the Asia Pacific region. To achieve this, Trump aims to distance Moscow from Beijing and provide full support to India in the region. It is noteworthy to mention that during Trump last tenure, US signed three foundation agreements with India which include Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement LEMOA for the utilization of ports for both military and civilian purposes, Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement BECA for sharing satellite information and Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement COMCASA for sophisticated communication technology. Furthermore, the US also has declared India as a net security provider for the Asia-Pacific region.

Intriguingly, it was President Trump who revived the dead horse--Quadrilateral Security Dialogue QUAD in Asia Pacific and making India one of the key partners in this security alliance along with Japan and Australia.

In order to address these challenges, Pakistan needs to develop a more proactive and nuanced approach to its foreign policy. Pakistan must deepen military and nonmilitary partnership with friendly countries like China and Turkey to enhance its military capability and acquire advance military technologies and further efforts are needed to build trust and cooperation with other countries in the region. It must also prioritize its national interests and be willing to take a stand when necessary.

To sum up this debate, the future of Pakistan-US relations remains uncertain, further unexpected initiatives can be expected from the Trump- led US administration as its

shift from Europe to Asia-Pacific. Given these developments, the forthcoming four years of Donald Trump are going to be challenging for Pakistan.

<https://bexpress.com.pk/blog/67dafdc1772a2cd9c83c9a4a>

Balochistan: The Boiling Question

Asad Ullah Raisani

March 17, 2025

There is no doubt anymore about India's involvement in the disintegration of Pakistan in 1971. This guilty act has been openly confessed by the Indian ruling class, both in the past and present. The people of Bangladesh have also become increasingly aware of this reality and have been vocal about it, particularly since the ouster of the India-backed Sheikh Hasina Wajid last year.

Therefore, there is a need to understand the specific challenges in Balochistan as India is quite actively involved in the region and the pattern is almost the same as it was in Dhaka. Also, there is a need to learn lessons from the past. The capturing of Kulbhushan Yadav, an Indian spy, from Balochistan, war-lord Uzair Baloch's confession of being backed by Indian intelligence agencies, and the Indian media's frequent highlighting of even trivial incidents in Balochistan reflect a strong desire among the Indian ruling elite, and many others in the country, for Pakistan's further disintegration. For instance, Ajit Doval, the National Security Advisor of India, openly declared in a public gathering— almost as if fulfilling his own wishful fantasy— that Pakistan may lose Balochistan. Then came the Jaffr Express outrage. Therefore, they should continue pursuing their legal rights through lawful means, and the authorities should respect these rights instead of countering themous Pakistan runs through Balochistan

Indian YouTubers quickly amass millions of views by creating content on Balochistan, often aligning with India's ruling elite or promoting narratives that portray Pakistan's disintegration as a solution. While interest in Balochistan is not problematic itself, such content ignores India's own separatist movements, like Khalistan. Even Canada's leadership has criticized India's interference in their country, accusing it of targeting activists. This highlights the contradiction in promoting separatism abroad while downplaying internal secessionist challenges. On the surface, Indian rulers, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself, portray an air of indifference toward Pakistan, claiming it is "dying its own death" and asserting

that they are focused on other priorities. They publicly dismiss Pakistan as no longer a rival worth their concern. The Indian media, along with many content creators, echo this sentiment, mocking Pakistan and its citizens while repeatedly declaring that its collapse is inevitable.

However, this facade of indifference is contradicted by their actions and persistent involvement in Pakistan, which serve as clear confessions that they still perceive this struggling nation as a formidable resistance to New Delhi's hegemonic ambitions. While many Indians oppose Pakistan's disintegration, India's leadership views Pakistan as a key obstacle to regional dominance, regardless of its economic or technological progress.

Nonetheless, it cannot be ignored that certain misunderstandings and mistakes in the past, and even in the present, have provided foreign powers with soft entries into the internal matters of Pakistan. As it is rightly said, we learn from history that we do not learn from history. India and other powers interested in breaking Pakistan for various reasons will continue to look for loopholes in Pakistan's policies. However, policymakers in this country must address how to stop such leakages in policies, particularly concerning Balochistan.

First and foremost, the trend or menace of "counter-ism" should end right here. Everything cannot and should not be countered. If there are people who have disagreements or differences with certain policies, they should not be countered but instead seen as Pakistani citizens who have differences to certain approaches and policies. The consistent policies of countering instead of understanding those who have grievances had and will only cause further boiling of this province. And who does not like to fish in the troubled waters? Instead of countering the growing grievances of the people of Balochistan, where not only the Baloch but also the Pashtuns have begun expressing their concerns openly, issues should be approached through the lens of solutions and improvement. A starting point could be ensuring the right to life, and state authorities should constitutionally

uphold the writ of the state. No citizen's right to life should be violated. Pakistan's oldest federal party, claiming to uphold democracy and resistance, should also respect peaceful protestors instead of suppressing them. Heavy-handed tactics only attract negative attention, worsening Pakistan's image and highlighting oppressive responses to dissent.

In the long run, the trust of the masses in electoral politics should be restored through free and fair elections. A significant majority of people living in Balochistan are either indifferent toward elections or have lost faith in electoral politics due to certain reasons, rigging being one of them. The individuals who often win elections are quite clearly not the choice of the majority. Despite Balochistan's small population relative to its vast land area, people, with or without internet access, become aware of rigging, regardless of where it occurs in the province. The pressing question of Balochistan cannot be addressed through counterism; it requires a sophisticated understanding of the will and grievances of the people. Until we bring our house in order, we cannot eliminate the possibilities of, or prevent, foreign involvement in Balochistan.

The locals of the province should be the primary beneficiaries of mega projects, as a significant majority of them are caught between the Sardar and the Sarkar. They deserve a better quality of life and greater opportunities to improve their livelihoods. These projects can attract more friends and stakeholders only if the locals benefit first. For instance, investments in the education and health sectors in Gwadar are already making a positive difference in the lives of the locals. Otherwise, Balochistan will continue to be a stick used by certain powers and elements to beat Pakistan. Those in favour of an independent Balochistan should also consider the obvious possibility of Afghanistan or Iran occupying Balochistan soon after if it gains such independence— which is a big if. The inter-tribal rivalries, lack of cooperation, intense competition, challenging geography, the presence of terrorist organizations as lethal as the so-called Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP) and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and the absence of a visible, mature political class to govern a new

state all suggest that such a state would struggle to survive. India would likely treat the Muslims of this province worse than the treatment Muslims face under the Bharatiya Janata Party in India. This wishful thinking could turn into a dreadful nightmare that future generations of the province's people would neither forget nor recover from. Therefore, they should continue pursuing their legal rights through lawful means, and the authorities should respect these rights instead of countering them through various tactics. Only then can this pressing issue be resolved positively, and Balochistan can be transformed into a more valuable asset for Pakistan. Indeed, the road to a stable and prosperous Pakistan runs through Balochistan.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/03/17/balochistan-the-boiling-question/>

Balochistan's future depends on education reforms

Hamza Nasir

March 22, 2025

Education functions as the basic foundation which advances progress through economic expansion, social development and international marketplace success. The educational problems that exist in Quetta and the rest of Balochistan intensify because of meagre government funding and weak policy execution together with inadequate facilities. The coming years demand focused efforts on education and new awareness-driven policy strategies for providing comprehensive educational facilities to all people.

Underfunding education in Balochistan produces direct negative effects which I have experienced personally. I knew one of my friends during his childhood years. His ambition to study for higher education was blocked by tuition fees that he could not afford. He stopped his education because no financial assistance or school scholarships existed and began doing manual work to keep his family afloat. Similar to his situation, many young people across Balochistan struggle because of inadequate educational opportunities.

The Balochistan education sector suffers from chronic insufficient budget allocation even though the government has made multiple funding promises. The 2024-25 budget from the province allocated Rs 146.9 billion to education which amounted to 15.37 percent of the total budget expenditure. The current budget allocation fails to adequately solve institutional problems within the system. The budget allocation for education from Punjab and Sindh surpasses the funding in Balochistan so the province finds it difficult to provide even minimal educational standards. The UNESCO endorses the GDP proportion at 4-6 percent for education funding yet Pakistan devotes only 1.7 percent of its GDP resulting in heightened differences across regions.

The educational exclusion rate in Pakistan is highest in Balochistan province. A miserable 22.1 percent of educational institutions in the province do not function whereas rural populations face severe educational access barriers. The schools located in urban Quetta provide better access to education, but the educational quality is compromised through outdated study programmes, scarce teaching facilities and

crowded learning environments. According to UNICEF the education crisis in rural Balochistan is massive since 70 percent of primary-age children do not attend school which requires immediate action.

One of the most glaring issues in Balochistan's education system is the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR). UNESCO recommends a PTR of 30:1 for primary schools but in Balochistan this figure often exceeds 50:1. The province faces an acute shortage of trained teachers, particularly female educators, which further restricts girls' enrollment. The Higher Education Commission's plan to certify 200,000 new teachers nationwide by 2030 is a step in the right direction but targeted efforts are required to recruit and train teachers specifically for Balochistan's underserved areas.

The urban population growth in Pakistan has reached 55 percent and Quetta experiences a rising demand for superior educational opportunities. Current literacy statistics reveal that Quetta measures at 64 percent literacy yet certain isolated districts demonstrate rates as scant as 35 percent. Basic educational facilities, such as electricity, clean water and proper sanitation services, are not available in rural schools resulting in low enrollment and retention numbers. Dedicated rural education infrastructure investments together with digital technology tools serve as necessary components for narrowing down educational disparities between urban and rural regions. The advancement of Balochistan as a prosperous region requires education to assume the primary position. Every child across Quetta and beyond requires access to quality education coupled with skilled teachers along with equal opportunities for success due to which policymakers and civil society together with the private sector need to create this national agenda. Achieving complete youth potential in Balochistan requires this fundamental step towards better education facilities in the province.

The unachievable Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015 combined with the sluggish progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) demonstrates that Pakistan needs new education policies. Through its National Education Policy Framework (NEPF) 2024 the government seeks to resolve these issues by pursuing a 30 percent decrease in student dropout levels from 2027 while establishing one standardized educational framework across the country to normalize learning

opportunity access and certifying educators to enhance educational quality with new capabilities. The certification of novice educators' functions to enhance educational standards. Youth need access to skill-based education for employment preparedness.

While these measures are commendable their implementation remains uncertain due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and financial constraints.

The funding of education should be recognized as a strategic financial investment. As countries invest in education they achieve faster economic growth accompanied by fewer poor citizens and better democratic administration. The planned allocation must include at least 4 percent of the provincial GDP being directed to education selection with proper resource distribution throughout every district and active reopening of dormant educational institutions. The education sector requires additional female teacher recruitment alongside training while implementing advanced educational technology programs for distant areas. Systemic transparency should exist in all educational budget processes.

The advancement of Balochistan as a prosperous region requires education to assume the primary position. Every child across Quetta and beyond requires access to quality education coupled with skilled teachers along with equal opportunities for success due to which policymakers and civil society together with the private sector need to create this national agenda. Achieving complete youth potential in Balochistan requires this fundamental step towards better education facilities in the province.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/03/22/balochistans-future-depends-on-education-reforms/>

Reviving Iran`s Nuclear Deal

Sher Ali

March 22, 2025

Since Donald Trump has returned to the Oval Office as the 47th President of the United States, curbing Iran`s nuclear programme has increasingly occupied foreign policy agendas. On many important issues — trade wars, the economy, the future of NATO, mass deportation, ending the Ukraine war, and the Iran nuclear deal, the trump administration has announced ambitious policy shifts. Trump`s approach towards the Iran nuclear deal is driven by its interest in the Middle East and Israel`s lobbying rather than its commitments to the global non-proliferation regime. Trump has presented Tehran with a choice between negotiations or military action. The new US administration policies will significantly affect the broader regional and international interests.

President Trump, during his first term back in 2018, withdrew from a landmark deal Iran reached in 2015 with the world powers including the US. Under the agreement, Tehran agreed to halt its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. Since returning to the White House, President Trump has been moving quickly to address Iran`s nuclear issue. Under his `maximum pressure policy`, earlier this month, Trump in a letter to Iran`s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei urged for new talks while warning that the US was within its rights to take military action against Tehran`s nuclear installations. China, Russia and Iran call for an end to US sanctions on Iran and the resumption of nuclear talks

As concerns rise over Iran`s nuclear program, diplomats from Iran, Russia and China met in Beijing to discuss and find a diplomatic solution to Iran`s nuclear issue which could lead to negotiations following years of delay. China, Russia and Iran call for an end to US sanctions on Iran and the resumption of nuclear talks with October 18, 2025, approaching—the tenth anniversary of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the deadline for deciding whether to terminate or extend UN Security Council Resolution 2231. The snapback mechanism is an emergency brake built into the JCPOA – a unique provision that allows for the swift reimposition of United Nations sanctions against Iran if it violates its nuclear commitments. Washington has been

urging for talks while simultaneously threatening additional sanctions and a military strike by Israel or the US against Iranian nuclear sites. Tehran has never been so close to acquiring nuclear capability, and curbing its nuclear advances has never been more urgent for the world powers, especially the US

On the other hand, with no JCPOA and no alternative deal, Tehran could decide to advance its nuclear programme even further. That prospect looks far more likely following a year that has seen Iran's deterrent capability severely undermined. Iran can prioritize advancing its nuclear program given the current strategic challenges the country is facing. For Iran, the pursuit of nuclear weapons capability, though denied officially, fits logically with the country's national security imperatives. With nuclear Iran, any country confronting Iran directly would be risking not just regional war, but a nuclear exchange. Hence, the nuclear capability would drastically enhance deterrence.

Tehran has never been so close to acquiring nuclear capability, and curbing its nuclear advances has never been more urgent for the world powers, especially the US. For Iran, ending the 45-year-old US-led embargo on the country that has crippled its economy profoundly is an urgent need. Meanwhile, engaging in talks with the US which seeks a negotiated deal with Iran that curbs its ballistic missile programme is the question of its national survival. This alongside the escalating tensions in the region casts doubts on the prospects of the nuclear deal. Today, the world has become a dangerous place with the weakening of global nuclear governance

Recent developments in the Middle East and Russia-Ukraine war and threats of nuclear use against Ukraine have induced concerns that other states may seek nuclear weapons. Hinting at this possibility, the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken during the August 2022 review conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), said that Russia's behaviour sends "[t]he worst possible message ... [to] any country around the world that may think that it needs to have nuclear weapons to protect, to defend, to deter aggression against its sovereignty and independence."

This is not the only case in point, since the world has already seen invasions which have threatened the national survival of many sovereign countries. Besides, there are precedents set such as the US-India nuclear deal and the US silence on Israel's nuclear program and its continued military support to Israel. The same is the case of the agendas at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) which only encourages asymmetries between rivals while failing to promote the broader international security interests. Today, the world has become a dangerous place with the weakening of global nuclear governance. Though the non-proliferation efforts have led to some success in the past, the deepening of great power competition and the geopolitical interests of major powers are undermining the existing treaties and hindering progress towards meaningful dialogues and cooperation as they privilege national preference over the collective and commonly accepted approach. Supporting one at the expense of the other's security would only lead to intensifying of threat perceptions and security dilemmas

To conclude, only through an unbiased and balanced approach, the US would be able to achieve success not only in the context of the Iran nuclear agreement but the global non-proliferation efforts. Without addressing biases and promoting a balanced security environment in the region, any successful effort toward regional and global peace could not be anticipated. Supporting one at the expense of the other's security would only lead to intensifying of threat perceptions and security dilemmas.

<https://stratheia.com/reviving-irans-nuclear-deal/>

Lessons From Pakistan Day

Zafar Khan

March 22, 2025

We all know it as part of our history that the Pakistan Resolution previously known as the Lahore Resolution remained a fundamental historical maneuver in the struggle for an independent state. Primarily, the independent and sovereign state, Pakistan, was based on a two-nation theory that the Muslims and Hindus could not live together for a number of reasons.

The Resolution was crafted by Sikandar Hayat Khan and presented by Fazlul Haque on 23 March 1940. The essential ingredients of the Pakistan Resolution were socio-economic justice, freedom, tolerance, and democracy. The Resolution demanded that all Muslim-majority areas of the Sub-Continent should have independence, and this landmark historical imperative led to the creation of Pakistan. If one closely observes the remarkable struggles that Pakistanis went through successfully for an independent Pakistan, you can only marvel at how far it has come

If one closely observes the remarkable struggles that Pakistanis went through successfully for an independent Pakistan, you can only marvel at how far it has come. At the outset, it did not have much at the time of its independence, in terms of infrastructure or financial support. It was an inglorious approach by the then self-defeating and departing Britishers that Pakistan was left behind as an impoverished state. Pakistan still survived. But it soon realized that it would confront many challenges. The unjust distribution of material resources by the Britishers, the territorial disputes with India over the issue of Kashmir, the task of drafting a credible constitution, overcoming political instability and the border skirmishes and short wars with its arch rival in the subsequent years over the long-standing issue of Kashmir understandably took their toll.

Despite all the challenges ahead for developing a viable new country, Pakistan had to overcome these challenges quickly. With the emergence of a bi-polar world in the midst

of the rise of Cold War rivalry between the Soviet Union and the US, Pakistan had to make hard choices for its survival and safeguarding its vital security interests. One of the best options at that difficult time was to be in the US pole. This helped boost Pakistan's defense and economic imperatives and more particularly, it enhanced Pakistan's ability as an industrialized nation. In the 1960s, Pakistan started to emerge as one of the leading countries in the region. Other countries from Asia and the Middle East would rush to Pakistan for its assistance, and guidance. Indeed, it is remembered as the golden age for Pakistan. For its own survival Pakistan had to be with the US for its containment of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan

Nevertheless, the rivalry between India and Pakistan continued to grow as well. Given the sheer size of India, withdrawal from the SEATO and the CENTO for self-reliance, the dismemberment of Bangladesh from Pakistan, and India's nuclear weapons tests in 1974 seriously undermined the security of Pakistan. For its own survival Pakistan had to be with the US for its containment of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The imperatives of the Glenn Amendment for preventing nuclear proliferation in South Asia by the US had to be kept aside for prioritizing the containment of the spread of communism in Afghanistan.

Learning from the harsh realities of history, the Pak-US relations have always been like a roller coaster ride despite Pakistan's support to the US in a number of situations such as the movements of the SEATO and the CENTO, the US containment of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, and the 9/11. The US sought Pakistan's help in toppling the Taliban regime. Since Pakistan borders with Iran and Afghanistan thus it bears both curses and opportunities from its geopolitical and geostrategic location, thus the contemporary competing major powers are eying Pakistan to further their dominance, prestige, and global order. India has been trying to destabilize Pakistan by exploiting many channels including disgruntled groups vying for power in Balochistan

Other regional players, primarily India, will also try to exploit the situation to its advantage. The current unrest in Balochistan is connected with these issues. There is evidence that India has been trying to destabilize Pakistan by exploiting many channels including disgruntled groups vying for power in Balochistan.

The conceptual essentials of Pakistan Resolution teach and encourage us to undertake bold steps in the fight against threats of terrorism, better management of borders with Iran and Afghanistan, to protect the its territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Pakistan is poised to become a seafaring nation because of its unique geographical location. Arabian sea banks at Pakistan's coast and therefore Pakistan can access the broader Indian Ocean region by protecting its maritime security interests.

Since the Resolution teaches us to develop religious tolerance, work for socio-economic prosperity, promote democratic principles aligned with the international community, maintain good governance, and sustain political stability, therefore, it is to be hoped that as we commemorate the Pakistan Day in 2025, Pakistan will navigate through this complex time successfully.

<https://stratheia.com/lessons-from-pakistan-day/>

Tariff Game: The Delusion of Liberal Economic Order

Naseem Sabzal

March 25, 2025

The US President Donald Trump ran a fiery election campaign. After assuming office for a second term, Trump made promises to implement energy security, immigration, ending wars, and major economic reforms. However, Trump's incessant fixation on tariffs and the trade war persists. In his first presidential term, he sparked trade war with China, particularly in the tech industry, accusing Huawei of spying through its equipment on Americans. In the countermeasure of China, the biggest losers of the first trade were, the US tech giants, which were heavily dependent on Chinese consumers. The tariffs affected the global economy as reported by International Monetary Fund, the trade war between US and China slowed down global economic growth by 0.9% resulting in market disruption, infrastructure decline and business shuffles in many countries directly or indirectly associated with US or China. The stern behavior of Trump undermines the economic competition in the international liberal system

Now Trump is back and his obsession with tariffs doesn't seem to be less than before. As promised in his campaign, he announced tariffs on Canada, Mexico, China and other countries with a high or less degree. The stern behavior of Trump undermines the economic competition in the international liberal system. The world is now more globalized than ever before. The tariffs will have impact on the under developing economies specially in the Global South due to disruption in supply chain and market flow of goods and raw materials between North and South. The economic impacts of Covid-19 are nothing but the dark sides of liberal economic structure and globalization which wholly treats all the state economies as a single unit, the "World economy"

The dust of Covid-19 has not settled yet. The pandemic shrunk the global economy by 4.4% in 2020 as estimated by IMF leading to mass unemployment and recession in the world. The economic impacts of Covid-19 are nothing but the dark sides of liberal economic structure and globalization which wholly treats all the state economies as a single unit, the "World economy". Whether Pandemic or the tariffs, in both ways the economies are interconnected and interdependent. The impacts of tariffs are no less than any global crisis. It makes the freedom of trade stagnant on macro and micro level

due to the ideal principles of liberalism which allows individuals to avail equal economic opportunities in the production of goods. Therefore, running the cycle of economic progress contrary to communism, where state becomes the sole competitor and mass producer of goods taking all the load of sanctions. US sanctions prove major blow to developing economies resulting in lower industrial production, unemployment and economic slowdown

The US and China are the two largest economies of the world. The might of their political power is established in their economic supremacy empowered by the import of raw material and export of refined products to dependent economies in Asia, Africa and South America. Tariffs disrupt the global supply chain by limiting their freedom of trade. US sanctions prove major blow to developing economies resulting in lower industrial production, unemployment and economic slowdown. Vietnamese and Malaysian companies in China faced the heat of first trade war. The companies stopped operating in China to avoid tariffs. This is just one case which shows how tariffs affect dependent economies more than the countries which are in an economic tussle.

The years of globalization successfully established liberal economic order, but the trade war between the US-China affects the dependent economies specially in Global South where a large part of their economies is dependent on US and China for tech, medicine, chemicals and fertilizers for agricultural productions. The repercussions of tariffs will also hurt US economy. A commonly shared opinion by the experts is the fact that the US economy will drive into recession and higher inflation rate in the coming years. Every currency is backed by the dollar, the impacts of tariffs and countermeasures will backfire for the other countries. Because currently the only accepted currency in the international trading system is dollar and a fluctuating dollar will affect the currencies exchangeable with it. The decline of global economy will be inevitable in such a scenario of economic shift down, if international trading currency is unstable. Developing economies in the Global South have never been treated equally under the Western lead system

Considering the practice of tariffs and sanctions, it can protect domestic economy for some countries, but disrupts the cycle of global supply chain as seen in the first trade war in the case of Malaysian and Vietnamese companies in China. It sounds more like a political tool to exploit developing countries which halt their economic freedom in the contemporary system. Liberalism advocates for equal opportunities, while making decisions and vice versa. Developing economies in the Global South have never been treated equally under the Western lead system. Poverty, unemployment, instability and the plight of Global South remains in the delusion of liberal economic order. The so-called system of equality has served the interests of Global North.

Therefore, tariffs announced by Trump will rip off under developing economies in Asia and Africa which are dependent on Countries enlisted by Trump to remain under tariffs for the protectionism of US industry. Thus, the overall impacts of tariffs are uncertain, unstable and reckless for the international economy.

<https://stratheia.com/tariff-game-the-delusion-of-liberal-economic-order/>

India's growing missile capabilities

Zafar Khan

March 26, 2025

Like other leading nuclear powers, India has been modernizing its conventional and nuclear forces. Recent reports from the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Arms Control Today, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, International Institute for Strategic Studies and many other leading national and international think tanks reflect how and why India is growing and modernizing its deterrent forces. Scholarly assessments could be a) prestige, b) power projection, c) escalation dominance, and d) temptation for preemptive strikes for winning short and long battles.

It is imperative to note that India has been developing Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) systems, Multiple Independently-Targetable Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs), Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs), the K-series ranging from 700km to expected 5000+km, Brahmos missile series from supersonic to hypersonic with increasing ranges from 500km to 1500km, S-400 sophisticated missile defense systems, and more importantly India's Defence Research & Development Organization has ambitious plans for Hypersonic Glide Vehicle (HGV) ranging up to 15000km.

Technically, all these increasing ranges and lethality goes beyond China reaching up to the Central Asian region, Russia, Canada, the US and the Latin American countries.

That said, India is not only increasing the number of nuclear weapons, but also the delivery systems required for carrying these warheads to assigned targets. The more India increases its warheads, the more delivery systems it would require. One of the sophisticated delivery systems is India's growing nuclear capable missile systems.

It counts from short ranges reaching up to intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). For example, it is reported in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists on "India Nuclear Forces, 2024" that India's new Agni types of missiles could even go beyond ranges of 10,000km. Some scholars even assess that such ranges could further increase up to 16,000km. One wonders if India's growing missile capabilities with increasing ranges and sophistication could threaten regional and global security.

Aforementioned, India's aspiration for power projection comes from its economic wherewithal and its increasing strategic partnership with the leading powers such as the US, Russia and Israel that in turn boosts up its force modernization.

The recent Trump-Modi meeting indicates how the US President might influence the Indian leadership to buy American technology including the US offer for its F-35 aircrafts. Whether or not India gets the F-35, the deterrent force modernization and power maximization emanating out of such an imbalanced strategic partnership increases India's security.

This happens without strategically comprehending how this could potentially decrease the security of Pakistan amidst the acute security dynamics between the two South Asian rivals. India and Pakistan have already fought a number of wars, faced a number of crises and confronted many border skirmishes. Unresolved longstanding issue of Kashmir has become a nuclear flashpoint.

The Balakot crisis on 26 February 2019 reflected India's failed, but escalatory risk for imposing its dominance in the region. However, Pakistan responded with the Swift Retort on the following day. The risk of escalation from conventional to nuclear level continues to exist and the growing strategic imbalance between the two rivals further worsens such escalatory risk in South Asia.

The leading powers need to be cognizant of India's growing missile capabilities that accelerates arms race, security dilemma and crisis instability. The increasing imbalances emanating out of the leading powers growing strategic ventures with India adds fuel to the fire.

Crisis management for the ultimate crisis resolution through the balancing act by major powers may help reduce the risk of escalation. Pakistan continues to retain strategic balance for ensuring its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Such strategic balance is India-specific for deterrence purposes while ensuring broader strategic stability in South Asia.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2536402/indias-growing-missile-capabilities>

Nuclear Deterrence Vs Nuclear Disarmament

Nomeen Kassi

March 28, 2025

Nuclear weapons have been shaping global politics for over seven decades. Introducing itself with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the nuclear weapon has instilled fear and uncertainty for some states while providing a sense of security for others. It has also divided the world into two parts: Nuclear-weapon states (NWS) and Non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS), the haves and the have nots. It possesses the capability of sheer destruction, thereby, initiating talks regarding nuclear arms control and nuclear disarmament. The two terms are often used interchangeably. However, the two carry completely different meanings and cannot be interchanged. Nuclear arms control refers to the reduction of the number of nuclear weapons whereas, nuclear disarmament – the complete elimination worldwide – has been the subject of political debate for decades. Will nuclear disarmament ever happen? “The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded.”

Specifically, Nuclear disarmament refers to the act of eliminating the total number of nuclear weapons worldwide. The end goal of nuclear disarmament is having a nuclear-free world. Although nuclear weapons have only been used twice in warfare, about 12,500 reportedly remain in our world today and there have been over 2,000 nuclear tests conducted to date. Former Secretary-General of United Nations (UN), Ban Ki-moon, at the 62nd Annual United Nations Department of Public Information Conference, in 2009, quoted that “The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded.” He has been an unwavering advocate for disarmament.

Since the UN’s inception in 1945, halting the production, proliferation and testing of nuclear weapons has been a fundamental objective. In fact, the very first resolution passed by the UN General Assembly on 24 January 1946 identified the goal of eliminating atomic weapons from national armaments. It paved the way for

establishment of the UN Atomic Energy Commission. The 3 pillars mentioned in NPT: nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear energy

Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons (NPT) is a landmark which aims to stop the spread of nuclear weapons. It was open for signature in 1968 and entered into force in 1970. The NPT ultimately got an indefinite life extension in 1995. Currently, 191 countries are signatories of the treaty, making it one of the largest treaties in the world. The 3 pillars mentioned in NPT: nonproliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear energy, is the cornerstone of the global nuclear nonproliferation regime.

The changing world politics, mainly geopolitics with the world shifting towards multipolarity, disarmament seems to be a dream. The increasing competition among states is threatening its security, also criticizing the NPT, as five states claim a right to possess nuclear weapons, where nuclear weapons are illegal. This makes it a discriminatory treaty. Let's not forget that India, Pakistan and Israel were not the signatories of the treaty, and still went for acquiring nuclear weapons. Whereas, signatories like North Korea, also withdrew and tested its capability in 2006. These states felt the urge to possess the weapon as more powerful rather than being under the nuclear umbrella of others. The crux of nuclear deterrence plays a significant role in a state's foreign and defense policies

The changing security dynamics gave rise to nuclear politics where states view possession of nuclear weapon as a form of deterrence. Viewing the case study of India and Pakistan, having a nuclear weapon is a must because of the value of nuclear deterrence that creates the perceived fear in the mind of potential adversaries. On the other hand, the contemporary power politics in the Middle East has failed the proposal of declaring Middle East a Nuclear-free zone. The crux of nuclear deterrence plays a significant role in a state's foreign and defense policies. In fact, it is how all nuclear weapon states consider nuclear weapons to be the ultimate savior of their sovereignty

and territorial integrity. Thereby, the increasing association of nuclear weapons with the concept of deterrence has weakened the prospects of disarmament globally. Since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons have not been used

Despite this, nuclear optimists are proud to declare that “two nuclear weapons states do not fight major wars”. This is the result of fear associated with nuclear weapons, contributing towards nuclear deterrence, commonly known as “nuclear peace”. Indeed, since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons have not been used. Notably, the nuclear peace reduced the danger of war and sustained deterrence stability between Cold War powers. Additionally, the nuclear weapons induce nuclear peace in the conflict regions like countries such as India and Pakistan.

Nevertheless, the risk of military escalation to major wars that could include the use of nuclear weapons has not completely diminished. On September 26, 2024, the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres said that “The world must deliver a clear and united message: the only way to eliminate the nuclear threat is to eliminate nuclear weapons. However, on 3rd March 2025, Japan declared that it will not attend the UN Conference on the treaty banning nuclear weapons, noting security as the primary reason. Japan being the only victim of nuclear attack has refused to sign that particular treaty banning nuclear weapons, ringing alarms. Furthermore, they stated that they won’t attend the conference as attending it gives a wrong message of Japan supporting nuclear deterrence. The dream of nuclear disarmament is hard to achieve in the contemporary world politics

Nonetheless, states consider nuclear weapons compulsory for security purpose, survival and existence. This dilemma increases the essence of nuclear weapons in the contemporary nuclear politics. Furthermore, there are no signs of nuclear disarmament between the nuclear weapons states, each makes a convincing argument for retaining

nuclear weapons until their security concerns are fully addressed. Thereby, the dream of nuclear disarmament is hard to achieve in the contemporary world politics.

<https://stratheia.com/nuclear-deterrence-vs-nuclear-disarmament/>