

# WORLD TIMES INSTITUTE

## **Erdogan's Crumbling Superpower Dreams Make Turkey Even More Dangerous**

Last week, after learning that Israel and the UAE were normalizing relations, Turkey's firebrand president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, threatened to recall his ambassador to the UAE and break off diplomatic relations for this "betrayal" of the Palestinians. Erdogan has good reasons to be upset by the emerging Israel-UAE accord, but it has little to do with his concern for Palestinian rights and everything to do with Turkey's crumbling ambitions for regional hegemony.

President Erdogan and his sycophants believe that Turkey's rightful place is as a global power. Erdogan said as much in 2018 when he told his cheering supporters that he will focus his efforts on making Turkey a superpower.

This year, in a speech about the global crisis due to COVID-19, Erdogan declared that the West's prosperity "based on the blood, tears, pain and exploitation of the rest of the world" is coming to an end. Similarly, last month Turkey's Interior Minister, Suleyman Soylu, who was handpicked by Erdogan, said that Turkey will soon become the world's center of attraction.

Such words are matched by deeds. In 2017, Erdogan called for the revision of the Lausanne Treaty of 1923, which demarcated his country's borders, indicating that he would like to see territorial rectifications with Greece. In 2019, Turkey's interior minister Soylu commented that Northern Syria is actually part of the Turkish homeland in accordance with the 1920 National Pact, the territory claimed by the Turkish nationalist forces as they waged their war of independence a century ago.

Meanwhile, after several military interventions, Turkey, together with its proxy, the Syrian National Army, rule significant parts of northern Syria where Turkish officials oversee the running of area where, like a colony, Turkish goods, healthcare and education services are provided and even the Turkish lira is used for commercial transactions.

Similarly, Turkey exerts overwhelming influence over the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and Turkey continues to station tens of thousands of troops in Northern Cyprus

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while seeking to scupper the Republic of Cyprus efforts to extract offshore hydrocarbon. Also, in the Mediterranean, Turkey disputes Greece's Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) and earlier this month went so far as to send a naval vessel to escort seismic research vessels exploring in waters that Greece claims. Ankara signed a unilateral demarcation agreement that claims Greek EEZs with the embattled Tripoli government in Libya, which only exists thanks to Turkish military assistance and Turkish-sponsored Syrian auxiliaries, some of which are drawn from Jihadist militias.

Meanwhile, Turkey established military bases in Qatar and Somalia, and potentially one on the Sudanese island of Suakin by the Red Sea and Horn of Africa, where Ankara, together with Qatar, compete for influence against the UAE and Saudi Arabia. However, Ankara is now on the backfoot as political and economic developments have upset its plans for regional domination and states come together to ward off Turkish belligerency.

As Sudan undergoes political reform, Turkey's plans for a military base on Suakin is off the table and Khartoum may even follow the UAE's lead and normalize relations with Israel.

Turkey's drilling in the East Mediterranean earlier this month prompted France to send a naval escort in solidarity with Greece and Cyprus, and all 27 of the EU's foreign ministers expressed their full solidarity with the two EU member-states. Earlier in February, Brussels hit Turkey with sanctions and a pre-accession fund freeze worth millions of euros because of its activities off Cyprus. In January 2020, Italy, Israel, Egypt, Cyprus and Greece formed the Eastmed Gas Forum, and last month Greece and Egypt signed their own maritime agreement.

Around the same time that the Israel-UAE deal was unveiled, Greece's foreign minister meet his Israeli counterpart Gabi Ashkenazi and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Just before, Jerusalem declared its solidarity with Greece. Then the UAE announced that it had sent four F-16 fighter jets to take part in a military exercise with Greece off of Crete scheduled for 25 August.

In the East Mediterranean, an anti-Turkish alliance backed by the EU and the Gulf states is forming. Although a significant power with a strong military, Turkey has nowhere to turn for support. Ankara angered the West by seeking closer relations with Moscow, even risking U.S. sanctions to purchase Russia's S400 missile defence

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system. However, in Syria, Moscow backs Turkey's adversary, the Assad regime, and in Libya, Turkey and Russia are on opposite ends of the civil war.

What is more, in the face of continued pressure due to the COVID-19 crisis, Turkey's economy, already struggling with a plummeting lira, a balance of payments deficit, high unemployment and declining growth, is expected to be the one of the hardest hit among the G20 economic powers, limiting Turkey's economic resources for its international ambitions.

Even Turkey's much heralded Black Sea gas discoveries cannot save Turkey's woeful economic outlook, especially as it will take years and considerable investment before the gas becomes commercially viable.

Turkey's only real ally is Qatar. But even Doha stayed largely silent about developments in the Mediterranean, especially as the state-owned Qatar Petroleum is part of the consortium with ExxonMobil to survey Hydrocarbon off Cyprus and plans to invest in Egypt's gas refinery project.

But a cornered Turkey is a dangerous Turkey, and, as its 46-year occupation of Northern Cyprus shows, Ankara is willing to take significant economic hits and diplomatic losses, and even, in the words of Erdogan last month, to "sacrifice its entire being," including lives, to become a regional superpower.

**By: Dr Simon A. Waldman**

**Source: Haaretz**

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## **The RNC looked like a bad parody of 'SNL'**

At times, while watching the pandemic edition of the Republican National Convention, I had to remind myself this wasn't a "Saturday Night Live" parody of the Party of Trump. But it easily could have been.

The first night of the RNC amounted to a series of skits on the themes Trump has previewed for us repeatedly, alternating between lying about who President Donald Trump is and what he has done -- and lying about who Joe Biden is and what he would do.

It started with the convention's opening film. As images of the Statue of Liberty and Trump in action flashed across the screen, the narrator -- Jon Voight -- described Trump as "a man who works tirelessly for you," and a party that is "embracing the undeniable greatness of diversity." Cue the laugh track. If "SNL" producers had been directing, they would probably have added video of any of Trump's over 200 golf outings, and perhaps him telling non-White Democratic members of Congress to go back where they came from.

We were told that Trump has been a "decisive leader" on the pandemic, in contrast to Democrats. The evidence to the contrary is overwhelming, with plenty of material available to illustrate Trump's bungling of the federal government response. Just to highlight the point, the producers put Trump in the White House talking to "regular people," without masks, without sufficient social distancing, with Trump again mentioning "hydroxy" and giving other incorrect coronavirus information.

Convention speakers offered variations on these deceptive themes, with an occasional dog whistle along the way. The youthful conservative activist Charlie Kirk proclaimed Trump the "bodyguard of Western civilization." And the wealthy St. Louis couple that made you-can't-even-believe-this news around the world, brandishing weapons outside their mansion last June when Black Lives Matters protesters were outside, claimed that Biden and Democrats "want to abolish suburbs altogether" by bringing low-income housing to neighborhoods. They further warned about "Marxist revolutionaries" taking over Congress.

It was all really scary -- or funny -- depending on your perspective.

Biden, we heard over and over again, plans to defund and dismantle the police, something he has repeatedly denied; and that he is a radical socialist, a ludicrous claim that his decades in office prove false. A Cuban émigré noted gravely that Fidel Castro was once asked if he was a communist. Castro, too, said no. We know how that turned out. So, grain of salt on Biden's centrist claims; he may be a secret commie.

Montana businesswoman Tanya Weinreis praised Trump for saving her business and expressed deep compassion for small businesses facing "the terrifying prospect of Joe Biden."

The entire slate of speakers was determined to make Biden look chillingly frightening and Trump reassuringly competent.

Perhaps after Biden's recent performance, they've changed tack on painting him as addled -- and instead decided to cast him as a weak leader controlled by the "radical socialists," a label that came up again and again.

The charge that the Democrats are all becoming socialist clashes with the reality that primary voters chose the centrist Biden, who then picked a centrist running mate in Kamala Harris. Surely, they'll fine tune their Trojan Horse argument.

Trump's "promises made, promises kept" motto came up a few times, making me think back to his promise to abolish Obamacare and replace it with "something terrific." Waiting, still. Then there's the wall Mexico will pay for, and all the other unkept promises. But never mind any of those.

There was a lot of drama -- even tears. But nothing came close to the performance of Kimberly Guilfoyle, Donald Trump Jr.'s' girlfriend, former Fox News host and a Trump campaign fundraiser. In a very loud, melodramatic delivery that was vaguely reminiscent of the over-the-top rhetorical style of South American caudillos, Guilfoyle gave us an urgent heads up about the great perils ahead. Biden and the Democrats, she warned, "want to destroy this country ... they want to steal your liberty, your freedom. They want to control what you see and think, and believe, so they can control how you live." She beseeched us, "Don't let them kill future generations."

When her effusive display ended, CNN's Wolf Blitzer declared coolly, "That was forceful." Jake Tapper responded, "Forceful is one word for it."

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If "SNL" were scripting the RNC, they could simply lift some of these speeches and performances verbatim. And then, to wrap it up, they could show the party officials trying to come up with a platform, explaining what they stand for, and what Republicans believe and hope to accomplish. In the comedy routine, Republican stalwarts would find that everything they thought they believed has been opposed or muddled by Trump.

So, someone would suggest that instead of bothering with a platform, they should simply issue a document stating that whatever Trump wants, that's what they believe. And if it were a television sketch, that would be hilarious. But, unfortunately, for America today, that's actually reality.

**By: Frida Ghitis**

**Source: CNN**

Mega Lecture

## **The best way to keep schools open? Stop coronavirus entering them in the first place**

The world is in the middle of a global educational emergency. One billion children are out of school because of the Covid-19 crisis; of those, roughly 400 million have lost access to free school meals. Many young people are behind on learning and have lost the structure of a routine. For those living in abusive households, school was a safe space where they could access supportive adults. As countries learn to live with the reality of coronavirus, reopening schools is one of the largest challenges they face. In the UK, the hardest part of this isn't opening schools, but ensuring they stay open in the foreseeable future. As the experiences of Israel and several states in the US have shown, if cases jump quickly and community transmission is high, it becomes difficult to keep schools open. Continual outbreaks and cases of Covid-19 within schools can also dent the confidence of parents and teachers, and spur a move towards online learning: in the US, for example, only one in seven parents says their children are returning to school full-time.

Teachers are one of the most important components in getting schools back open. Trying to guilt trip or berate them is both unhelpful and unfair. By and large, teachers go into education because they care about children and young people; just as parents do, they want their safety and wellbeing to be taken seriously. So listening to what teachers have to say is vital. In Scotland, where schools have now been open for nearly two weeks, the government offers priority, on-demand testing for teachers, nursery and other school staff who think they have been exposed to the virus, while 2-metre distancing measures are in place between teaching staff, and between teachers and students.

To prevent Covid-19 from spreading in schools, it's vital to stop the transmission of the virus in the community. In Scotland, the government is committed to a strategy of maximum suppression, and has continued to encourage people to work from home in order to keep schools open in the coming weeks. Schools are integral to local communities, so the prevalence of Covid-19 in a community will also be reflected in its schools. Indeed, a recent Public Health England report examining outbreaks of coronavirus at English schools in June found a strong correlation between the number of school outbreaks and the regional incidence of Covid-19. Breaking chains of transmission after cases emerge in schools will require a robust

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testing and tracing system that is integrated with the community. To help stem the spread of Covid-19, schools themselves can adopt mitigation measures such as frequent handwashing, outdoor learning, ventilating classrooms, staggering start and end times and avoiding the mixing of different age groups and classes. Parents should be kept largely off-site, and teachers should be cautious around one another; recent research from Public Health England suggests that two thirds of viral transmission in schools occurs between teachers, or from teachers to pupils. Although face coverings have educational costs for younger children, WHO guidance advises the use of them for those aged over 12 – so it would make sense to adopt them in secondary schools where transmission is occurring.

But some of these measures can create problems of their own. If maintaining 2-metre distancing were mandatory for all secondary school pupils, for example, those at private schools (which tend to have more space and resources) could likely return full time while state school pupils, particularly in deprived areas, would probably only get one or two days per week of in-person schooling. Blended learning that mixes in-person and online teaching could be an option where physical distancing isn't possible – but encouraging a move towards online learning will amplify educational inequalities, particularly if pupils don't all have access to laptops, iPads and internet connections.

Schools reflect how we are all tied together as communities. What one person or family does can affect a whole group of people. If children who are returning from countries where they have been exposed to the virus go straight back to school, their entire class might also be required to isolate for 14 days. This is why rapid response plans are an important part of keeping schools open; should a pupil or teacher test positive, schools should know how to act so that contacts can be quickly identified, tested and quarantined. Of all the strategies for reopening schools and keeping them open, a zero Covid approach aimed at maximum suppression of the virus is the best one. Schools operate within communities: the safest way to protect them is to make sure the virus never gets into schools in the first place

**By: Prof Devi Sridhar**

**Source: The Guardian**

*The writer is chair of global public health at the University of Edinburgh*

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## Strange economics

Economics is strange, full of odd things that are rarely challenged. It is a bit like religion that one is supposed to accept without asking any questions. When I was studying the subject in college, we were told that there were three factors of production — land, labour and capital — of which the first was fixed and the other two were mobile. In simple terms, this meant that while your piece of land stayed where it was, your body and your money were not rooted in the same way.

Out of college, one got to appreciate the difference between something being mobile and the same thing being freely so. Thus, while labour and capital are technically not fixed to one place, their movement can be restricted in any number of ways.

The movement of capital can be constrained by border controls and limits on convertibility. There was a time when many countries made it very onerous to convert local into foreign currency and to export or import money. Browsing through my late father's files, I was struck how many letters he had to write, how many forms he had to fill, and how many trips he had to make to the State Bank to get the few pounds that were needed to finance my year abroad during which I picked up all the myths about economics.

Restrictions on the movement of labour are much easier to grasp. Much as I always wanted to go to Goa to work, it was out of the question. An invitation to teach at the IIM-Calcutta withered on the vine. Even an acceptance at a conference in Manipal was nixed by the Ministry of External Affairs.

Countries exercise strict control on who they let in from other lands. Even within countries there can be restrictions on movement as there were for non-Whites in apartheid South Africa and as there still are in China with its internal passport system known as hukou. Cities are so clean in China because poor villagers are not allowed to move there at will. In Pakistan, there are many roadblocks requiring identification before one is allowed entry into the cantonment areas. I recall a time when I was denied permission to visit my ancestral home in another city because I did not have the requisite NOC to enter the locality.

Now consider what has been happening over time. While constraints on the movement of capital have been progressively relaxed, those on that of labour have been progressively tightened. There was a time when Europeans just picked up their bags and moved to Argentina or Brazil and people like James Joyce and D.H. Lawrence decided they had had enough of the parochialism of their native lands and would rather live in France or Italy or Germany.

Such free movement is no longer possible with rulers like Trump further closing their borders to most outsiders especially those from “----hole” countries and England opting for Brexit to keep out eastern Europeans. Meanwhile, capital is circulating around the world at hyper speed, flowing in and out at will. Anyone attempting to restrict unlimited transfers, like Mossadegh or Allende, is deposed by the intelligence agencies of countries displeased with such restrictions.

Here we see the politics of power and powerlessness. The small minority that owns the bulk of global capital exercises its power via the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organisation to enforce rules that ensure its capital can roam freely in the pursuit of profit.

Meanwhile, the vast majority that owns nothing but its labour is powerless to achieve the same mobility for its human capital and is kept out if it tries by policemen like Home-land Security. Thus while ‘hot’ money zips in and out across borders, ‘cold’ bodies are often found dead in refrigerated vans or in capsized ferries in freezing waters. If lucky, migrants endure long confinements in refugee camps before being sent back where they tried to escape from.

There was no mention of the concept of power in any of the college courses in economics and although it was never stated, it became clear that the system the subject extolled privileged banknotes over human lives. The system did not exist to serve human beings; human beings existed to serve the system run by capital. Meanwhile, all courses in politics lauded liberal democracy in which people were sovereign and dictated policy by virtue of the power of an equal vote.

If that is indeed the case how come a tiny minority that owns capital always gets what it wants and the vast majority with all its votes ends up empty-handed? Is it one-person-one vote or one-dollar-one vote?

I am sorry I made my father use his hard-earned money for me to learn all this rubbish.

**By: Anjum Altaf**

**Source: DAWN**

*The writer was a professor of economics at the Lahore University of Management Sciences.*

Mega Lecture

## Never say never

Within the first year of its emergence as a state Turkey had recognised Israel and established diplomatic relations with it. This was in 1949. Turkey continues to retain that relationship and immensely benefit from it. Turkey's defence industry was almost entirely triggered around initial Israeli support; Israeli tourists travel into their Mediterranean neighbour most frequently. When Recep Tayyip Erdogan warns UAE of breaking diplomatic relations with it he makes no mention of Turkey first breaking her relations with Israel. It's not doublespeak. It is pure economic sense which guides Turkey through the geopolitical maze. Erdogan's war and peace go side by side without as much as a blip in the Bosphorus.

Egypt retrieved the Sinai from Israel in 1978 in return for recognising her and established formal diplomatic relations — embassies and all. Anwar Sadaat did the honours at Camp David. Jordan followed Egypt in 1994 under the late King Hussein. Both nations, Egypt and Jordan, were thoroughly vanquished at Israeli hands in consecutive wars. Jordan lost Jerusalem to Israel in 1967 and 1973 wars and was only able to retain an access to a part. In return it had to recognise Israel. The rest of the Muslim world has generally kept away from any formal recognition even as they have interacted informally with the Jews of the world for their advances in military technology, finance, medicine, agriculture and in the academic world. A lot of this work is based in Israel.

China, our iron-brother, has had a longstanding and a fruitful relationship with Israel. A lot of the technology that finds its appearance in military hardware in China is sourced in Israel or built around reverse-engineered understanding of it. From modern fighters and avionics to modern airborne radars there is significant Israeli input in the shape of technology that Israel sold to China. It is best left there else we may begin categorising the equipment we carry as kosher or non-kosher.

Three nations have in particular benefited from their relationship with Israel: Turkey, South Africa and Singapore. Their respective defence industries were built around Israeli support and technology transfers. Number of countries, including Pakistan, have benefited from these indirect sources of technology and weapons. UAE has for a couple of decades now been working to develop into a technological hub. It seeks technology triggers which can catapult it into that direction and help diversify its economic base for continued growth. A number of Israeli specialists

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work in the UAE under different nationalities and run companies with Emirati front-men. Most of the Middle East and Asia utilises these goods and services so conveniently located. UAE has only formalised what was already existing. The world was changing even as the Muslim world held tight the facade of non-recognition.

Dominoes will fall now that a Gulf nation has formalised an existing contact because it is in the nature of dominoes. Saudi Arabia may yet not be one of them but don't count on that for too long. The new generation of Princes feels unnecessarily shackled by emotive shackles and wishes to break free to pursue independent pathways. Not immediately but there will be a progressive settlement of most of the Muslim world with Israel around mutually acceptable adjustments. The trick for each will be to work the perfect time for a transaction and win for each their Sinai. Israel, desperate for formal acceptance, will happily oblige.

The new order in international relations of essence is different from the system of alliances that came forth at the end of WWII. That too dissolved with the end of the Cold War and for some time a uni-Polar world existed. The rise of China has given fillip to an old idea. But the retraction of the United States from its global eminence — shedding the weight of singly carrying the global order at considerable financial cost — and the relatively pacific rise of China belie the possibility of the world being divided into two or more security alliances. The notion is antiquated and regressive in conception. It fails to factor-in how the world has restructured over the last three decades. It is also a convenient fall-back to the more known comfort of geopolitical division than understand the complexities in new light.

Those that still harbour war as the ultimate binary invoke the older construct without acknowledging the inherent independence in the new world. China is as much as an economic certainty as the US is a militarily one with intertwined interests and trillions of dollars worth of trade and investments. It isn't going to fly way in an imperious moment of ecstasy. Nor is Europe ready to tow a dictated line from the US to shun China even if it still relates to the US in strategic terms. Relations between nations are increasingly multi-spectral and multi-planar in construct. You could have a Ladakh going in parallel even as you trade a 100 billion dollars worth with each other. And so much more.

Pakistan is unlikely to break relations with the UAE or even cool those off in spite for latter's friendly overtures to a common Muslim bogey. Saudi Arabia will not

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break away from the GCC and its eminence because one or more members would have a formal relationship with Israel. The world will learn to coexist along various planes, competitive, cooperative and sometimes conflictive. It will need a new orientation in how the world has come to be and its new ways. Those that see alliances or blocs emerging around the 'recognition of Israel' factor are on the wrong side of history and international framework. Blocs and groups remain a self-defeating proposition. Turkey, China and Russia have a fulsome relationship with Israel; how can they take up binary positions against it? Most of the Muslim world has chosen silence or supported the UAE initiative. That should be instructive.

Pakistan's position on Israel is principled and based around larger sentiment of the Muslim world. The sentiment itself is changing. Here on it shall need a nimbleness to adjust to an evolving framework of relations between states. As more Muslim nations tow the recognition line Pakistan must continue to evaluate her position. There may not be much to lose in the short-to-medium term if we keep on the rejectionist track but there must come a time of diminishing returns. Before such a moment we may flip the odds to judge if more is to gain by keeping from being the last ones to hold aloft the banner of principles. On the contrary we may build in a major gain leveraging a vital interest if we can judge the moment perfectly. I don't know how desperate is Israel for Pakistan to accept it or how pushed is the US to make it happen for them but if indeed the moment arrives and Jared Kushner comes calling we may better have our marbles in order. Geopolitics is patently secular and adjusting to it isn't as ungodly as it is made to be.

**By: Shahzad Chaudary**

**Source: Express Tribune**

## **CPEC; a boost for economic recovery**

As the COVID-19 pandemic is gradually brought under control under the concerted efforts of Pakistan's government and people, the Punjab government has recently lifted lockdown restrictions on tourism, hospitality industry and the like. Due to the pandemic's impact, Pakistan's economy is estimated to fall into recession in the 2020 fiscal year, with a negative growth rate over 4 percent. Pakistan's government and people are looking forward to the emergence of great shoots in the economy soon after all the industries' reopening.

Since significant results of Sino-Pak joint fighting against COVID-19 have been achieved in the current stage, advancing economic resurgence will be the next focus of bilateral cooperation. Despite the negative influence by the pandemic, bilateral cooperation on CPEC has made a stride forward and the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership has been further enhanced. Over the past few months, CPEC projects have been accelerated, projects both under construction and completed are going well, with remarkable fruits. Pakistan's Railway ML-I Refurbishment and Expansion Project was approved by the Central Development Working Party (CDWP). The Karakoram Highway (KKH) Project Phase II Project was opened to traffic. Both projects have aroused attention from various circles of Pakistan's society. I have a staunch belief that successfully pushing forward the CPEC projects will be an important carrier and breakthrough of economic resurgence.

The Punjab government has been attaching high importance to and providing strong support for the CPEC projects. On July 11, Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar paid a site visit to Lahore Orange Line Metro Train (OLMT) Project, and expressed his view that the OLMT is about to complete and is to start official operation once the pandemic situation gets better. Punjab Governor Chaudry Muhammad Sarwar spoke highly of the CPEC construction. Punjab Minister for Industries, Commerce and Investment Mian Aslam Iqbal said that Allama Iqbal Industrial City Construction will continue to be pushed forward. The concern and support shown by the Punjab government on CPEC projects enable Chinese companies with full confidence in investment and development.

Currently quite a number of early-harvest projects have been completed and put into operation, including Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant, Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park

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(Bahawalpur), Karachi to Lahore Motorway (Sukkur-Multan Section), which are conducive to Punjab as these projects will strengthen areas of weakness in infrastructure and energy sectors.

Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant was put into operation in May 2017. Ever since its operation, it has generated electricity of 26.1 billion KWh, and safety production lasts for 1,161 days, which is to meet the demand for power consumption by 20 million people in Pakistan and fill in the gap by 1/4. Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park (Bahawalpur) 300,000 kW Phase I Project has been put into operation in 2016, with accumulated power generation capacity reaching nearly 2 billion kWh so far. As the biggest infrastructure project among CPEC projects, Karachi to Lahore Motorway (Sukkur-Multan Section) was opened to traffic in October 2019, saving approximately 2-hour commuting from Lahore to Multan, creating 23,000 job opportunities for locals. Besides, more than 2,300 project managers and engineers as well as 4,500 equipment operators joined the training program.

Ongoing projects in Punjab include OLMT Project, Matiari to Lahore +660kV DC Power Transmission Project and Allama Iqbal Industrial City. According to the statistics by Punjab Public Transportation Management Authority (PTMA) OLMT Project is to be put into operation in October 2020, which is expected to create around 10,000 job opportunities for Lahore once completed, and it will cut 2.5-hour driving distance down to 45 minutes or so, subsequently ease traffic strain in Lahore and improve commuting efficiency.

Matiari to Lahore +660kV DC Power Transmission Project is the first HVDC Power Transmission Project. Up to now, converter stations at two terminals were completed, and stringing construction was completed 60 percent already, which is to wrap up by the end of October 2020 and put into production in March 2021. As the transmission line with the highest voltage, longest transmission distance and biggest transmission capacity in Pakistan, the Project will be the trunk power transmission line linking the south to the north, thus greatly ease power transmission difficulties in Punjab and Islamabad.

Allama Iqbal Industrial City started ground-breaking in January 2020, with capital investment estimated at Rs5 billion, and planned area of 3.217 acres. It is planned to attract companies from various sectors including automobiles, textiles, mechanical industry, pharmaceutical industry, food processing, chemical industry,

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construction materials and etc. for investment, which is expected to create 300,000 job opportunities in the next five years and attract foreign investment of more than Rs400 billion. Prime Minister Imran Khan stressed that the Industrial City shall provide a favourable platform for Pakistan to undertake Chinese industrial transfer and create more job opportunities for the younger generations.

CPEC cooperation has been adhering to the principle of openness and inclusiveness, which serves as a good example illustrating win-win cooperation advocated by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Under the joint efforts by China and Pakistan, difficulties caused by the pandemic during CPEC construction could be overcome, cooperation over various sectors has been moving forward against adversity, all of which contribute to Pakistan's work resumption and economic rejuvenation. The Chinese Consulate General in Lahore, along with the Punjab government and the people, will continue facilitating the projects including the Industrial City, people's livelihood and agriculture cooperation, giving all-round impetus to Punjab economic recovery and prosperity.

**By: Long Dingbin**

**Source: The Nation**

## Israel, Pakistan and the Muslim World

After Makkah and Medina, Jerusalem is the holiest place on earth for Muslims all over the world. There is no Muslim who has no respect for Masjid al-Haram in Makkah, Masjid al-Nabawi in Medina and Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem – the first Qibla for Muslims.

Jerusalem is under the direct occupation of the Jewish state of Israel since 1948. It is the duty of every Muslim to strive for its liberation as per his/her capacities and abilities. However, the Holy Quran informs us that “Allah does not charge a soul except [with that within] its capacity”. Allah and His last Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) has taught us wisdom and sagacity. Islam does not teach to close one’s eyes and hit a wall. Instead, it asks us to understand ground realities, take wise steps and move forward tactfully. So, let’s see the ground realities about Palestine, Israel and relations with the Muslim world.

Though very painful for Muslims, it is a glaring reality that 162 countries of the world, including the US, China, France, Germany and Russia, have recognized Israel and have established close diplomatic relations with her. The US – the world superpower – has become Israel’s patron-in-chief. However, Muslim countries like Pakistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Cambodia, Djibouti, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brunei, Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, Mali, Niger do not accept Israel as a legitimate state and thus do not recognize it. Three non-Muslim countries – Bhutan, Cuba and North Korea – also do not recognize Israel.

It is also a reality that Turkey was the first Muslim country that recognized Israel in 1949. Iran became the second Muslim country to establish diplomatic relations and close cooperation with Israel in 1950. However, after Imam Khomeini's revolution in 1979, the Israel-Iran friendship turned into animosity. But Turkey's diplomatic relations with Israel remained intact and friendly even after Recep Tayyip Erdogan became prime minister. In 2005, Erdogan visited Israel along with a large group of businessmen, met then Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon, laid a wreath at the Holocaust memorial and called Iran’s nuclear ambitions a threat not just to Israel but to the entire world. To reciprocate, Ariel Sharon visited Turkey in 2007 and got the honour to address the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

However, relations deteriorated between Turkey and Israel after the Gaza Flotilla raid by Israeli forces in 2010, and remained strained for few years. Diplomatic relations between the two countries normalized in 2016 as a result of secret meetings. Though Turkey threatened to end diplomatic relations with Israel when the US recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in 2017, so far Turkey's diplomatic relations with Israel are intact.

In the past, Turkey also tried to mediate between Palestine and Israel. Even meetings between the then Pakistani foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri and Israeli officials during the Musharraf era were held as per the wishes and mediation of the Turkish leadership.

Besides Turkey and Iran, Egypt, an Arab country, established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1980 after the Camp David Accords. Though Oman – a member of the Arab League – has no formal diplomatic relations with Israel, close cooperation and trade links have been established between the two. Moreover, the Central Asian Muslim states such as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan have also established friendly diplomatic relations with Israel. With the mediation of President Bill Clinton, Jordan signed an agreement with Israel in 1994, paving the way to close trade ties and opening of several crossing points at border for tourists. Syria and Lebanon are two neighboring countries with which Israel now has strained relations. But these two Muslim countries have fallen into internal chaos and civil war and are thus unable to pose any threat to Israel. However, Qatar is the only country in the Arab world that has very strained relations with Israel.

It is also a fact that, in the past, the Palestinians' struggle for independence against Israeli occupation was led by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Hamas under the patronage of Saudi Arabia. Iran – a historical foe of Saudi Arabia – was sponsoring Hezbollah and the Syrian government.

There was a time when Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as well as Iran considered Israel their enemy number one. But unfortunately, instead of struggling against the common enemy for the peaceful resolution of the Palestine issue, Iran and Saudi Arabia started a race for regional superiority and hegemony through proxies. Now Saudi Arabia sees Iran as a greater threat to its regional hegemony and interests than Israel.

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On the other hand, after 9/11, the situation in the Arab world, like the rest of the world, changed radically. Extremist organizations like Al-Qaeda and ISIS have become a threat to Arab governments. Moreover, the Arab Spring shook Arab rulers and caused a great sense of insecurity among them. So, Saudi Arabia and its close allies gave up Hamas' patronage and left it alone. The void was soon filled by Iran and Qatar.

Moreover, Turkey under the leadership of Tayyip Erdogan has come in direct competition with Saudi Arabia and the UAE with a strong historic desire of leading the Muslim world once again.

In this context, the US has also put pressure on Arab countries in the Middle East to improve relations with Israel. Thus, due to pressure by the US and animosity with Iran and Turkey, Saudi Arabia and UAE etc have decided to reduce their hostility with Israel. The UAE starting diplomatic relations with Israel via mediation by the US seems the first step of the strategic policy shift in the Arab world.

It is also a reality that national interests are the guiding force of every state's foreign policy, relations and engagement. So one could question why some, especially some religious parties, in Pakistan are putting the country in an unenviable position of being seen as hostile by the UAE, by blasting the latter country's decision to establish diplomatic relations with Israel?

Pakistan itself is facing daunting challenges. India has annexed Occupied Kashmir and the world does not listen to Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan is facing one of the worst economic crises in its history. Islamabad needs friends not foe in this critical time.

Pakistan itself should never give up its principal stance on Palestine and should never recognize Israel as per the wishes of most Pakistanis. That is our sovereign decision and right. But what is the justification of our anger at the independent decision of other sovereign states? Will we also protest against Turkey and China tomorrow because these two countries also have diplomatic relations with Israel? Will we now also protest against Iran for its close relations with India?

At this critical stage, we should be concerned about our country own challenges. It is not a wise approach by our religious parties to be angry at the UAE for its independent decision at this critical juncture when Saudi Arabia has already been offended by the government.

**By: Saleem Safi**

**Source: The News**

*The writer works for Geo TV.*

Mega Lecture

## From 'Five Eyes' to six — a good idea, but not the best

Listen carefully, and you can hear a slow crescendo among security specialists calling for Japan's inclusion in the "Five Eyes" intelligence alliance. Membership makes some sense given this country's needs and what it can contribute. Two obstacles loom large, however, and while not insuperable, they are formidable.

Membership would be a coup for Tokyo, a declaration of confidence in Japan's ability to protect information, but joining the exclusive group is no panacea. It will not solve the most important security challenges the country faces.

The Five Eyes emerged from informal intelligence-sharing arrangements between the United States and the United Kingdom that were established during World War II. The brewing confrontation between the West and the Soviet Union prompted those governments to formalize an agreement a year after that war ended that continued the exchange, with Australia, Canada and New Zealand identified as priority partners over other third parties. In 1955, their special status was codified in an updated agreement and those three countries were explicitly distinguished from other members of the Commonwealth.

More than 70 years after its formation, much about Five Eyes remains shrouded in secrecy, although former U.S. defense contractor Edward Snowden raised its global visibility when he leaked thousands of pages of information about U.S. surveillance programs when he fled to Russia in 2013. Documents that have been officially released reveal that the Five Eyes (the name is a shorthand version of the header "AUS/CAN/NZ/UK/US EYES ONLY," which identifies whom the intelligence can be released to) was originally intended to share all SIGINT (signals intelligence) that they gathered, as well as methods and techniques relating to those operations. The governments are to share "continuously, currently and without request" both "raw" (unanalyzed) intelligence in addition to "end product" (intelligence that has been subjected to analysis or interpretation).

While emphasis remains on intelligence product, Five Eyes cooperation has evolved and expanded in recent years, and now there are meetings that address broad policy concerns. There are discussions among Five Eyes defense ministers, attorneys general and secretaries of homeland security or the interior.

Representatives regularly meet all over the world to address specific topics as developments demand.

Increasingly too, nonmembers are being brought into the conversations, depending on the subject. In 2018, Reuters reported that Five Eyes had been sharing with Japan, France and Germany information about China's cyber activities. Last year, Kyodo News reported the members had joined with Japan, South Korea and France to discuss ways to counter North Korean provocations and smuggling, as well as China's growing military capability.

In 2018, Japanese participants from the foreign and defense ministries, the Cabinet Satellite Intelligence Center and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency joined the U.S. Air Force Space Command's Schriever Wargame for the first time. The exercises, which tested multinational cooperation in the event of an attack on U.S. space communications, are an example of the opportunities open to Five Eyes members — but proof too that a country doesn't have to be a member to enjoy the benefits of the group's work.

It is important to distinguish ad hoc consultations and the periodic sharing of information with joining the group. Meetings of the like-minded are to be expected; membership is a completely different level of engagement, however.

Japan is well aware of the difference and even though its representatives are often invited to the table, some in Japan are dissatisfied with the arrangement. Being part of the club has its own merits. The public record suggests that Defense Minister Taro Kono has been the most vocal proponent of Japanese membership. In an interview with the Nikkei newspaper earlier this month, he highlighted the values that Japan shares with the other five countries, and the need for close coordination on security, diplomatic and economic issues. Japan would like to be more deeply involved with the group, "even to the extent of it being called 'the Six Eyes.'" Tokyo has a good case to make. Japanese intelligence has made a difference: Japanese intercepts of communications between Soviet ground controllers and fighter pilots helped establish that those aircraft shot down Korean Air Lines Flight 007 in 1983. The U.S. has intelligence collection facilities in Japan that monitor signals traffic throughout the region. And there is interest in intelligence that Japan has collected in its coastal waters.

Tokyo has its advocates. During a visit to London last month, Kono proposed that Japan join the group, a suggestion that was warmly received by Tom Tugendhat, Conservative chair of the U.K. Parliament's foreign affairs select committee. "We should look at partners we can trust to deepen our alliances," Tugendhat enthused. "Japan is an important strategic partner for many reasons and we should be looking at every opportunity to cooperate more closely."

It won't be easy. **First, Japan will have to better protect intelligence.** Partners have long recognized the value of this country's intel, but they have concerns about the security of the information Tokyo receives. For years, every set of recommendations by U.S experts and officials to improve the Japan-U.S. alliance included calls for the criminalization of leaks of national security information. In 2013, the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe enacted a law that did that — to great applause from alliance advocates — but there is more work to be done.

The law was controversial among the Japanese public, a sign that additional improvements will not be easy and hints at the cultural obstacles to the protections that the Five Eyes seek. That resistance assumes additional significance given the nature of the competition with China: It is increasingly nonmilitary and concerns high-technology sectors, which means that vital intelligence is now deeply entwined with private sector activity — companies, universities and other research institutions — and Japan doesn't have a security clearance system that gives civilians access to such information. There appears to be some progress on this front, but thus far it is only tentative.

The restructuring of the National Security Council and National Security Secretariat to include a new economic emphasis also reflects this outlook, but there are questions about Japan's ability to collect intelligence in this area, given resource restraints.

**The second obstacle to Japan's membership is also cultural — but this one exists among the Five Eyes members. The group shares deep historical and cultural ties that stem from a common Anglo-Saxon heritage; they're all native English speaking too.** Seventy years of cooperation has given them a fluency, comfort and confidence that compounds their sense of identity and separation from nonmembers. All this is subtle and immeasurable, but it is palpable and it matters.



Creating “Six Eyes” would be a real accomplishment for Japan, but the vital question is whether it is the most effective response to the burgeoning competition with revisionist governments, of which China is just one. This requires a broad coalition of the like-minded, one that addresses a much wider set of issues than intelligence needs and offerings. It must establish goals and objectives, include rule- and standard-setting, and engage across a spectrum of activities, only a small subset of which concern intelligence gathering.

Once that coalition has been forged, then its members can turn to cooperation with revisionist governments. The Five Eyes must be part of that effort, but the group must be much bigger and reflect a broader consensus than that reached by five nations as similar as the Five Eyes. That is where Japanese energies belong.

**By: Brad Glosserman**

**Source: The Japan Times**

*The writer is deputy director of and visiting professor at the Center for Rule Making Strategies at Tama University as well as senior adviser (nonresident) at Pacific Forum. He is the author of “Peak Japan: The End of Great Ambitions.”*

## **Prosperity and poverty Understanding theory of development**

The Prime Minister's television interview to discuss two years at the helm of government provided a good view into the mindset of the current government, and was helpful in understanding its priorities and goals moving forward. But one facet of the conversation that stood out was PM Imran Khan's unequivocal statement regarding Israel there is no question of recognition unless Palestine is given freedom, on the surface, this is essentially a reiteration of a stance that Pakistan has held since our independence. However, given the changing scenario in global politics, it was important for the government to clarify our position as well. Arab nations that had backchannel ties with the apartheid state have now initiated more formal discussions, leading to open speculation about who else might follow. More countries in the Middle-East are open to speaking with Israel than even five years ago. At a time like this, it was crucial for Pakistan to reiterate that it stands firmly behind the cause of Palestinians.

Pakistan's principle stance to stand against state-sponsored terrorism is also one that is consistent. Palestinians have been murdered and abused in the thousands by the Israeli state, which makes it no different than India and its actions in Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir (110K). The Modi government is now taking pages straight out of the Israeli playbook, on how to subjugate and disenfranchise an entire people. With domicile certificates being issued in the thousands ever since registration was opened for non-Kashmiri citizens, the Indian state has basically started on long-term ambitions to change the demography of the region. It is clear then, not much is different in 110K, compared to Palestine. It is important that we continue to voice support for both. For us to abandon one would mean forsaking the other, and this will never be accepted by the people or state of Pakistan.

The first month of the Islamic calendar Muharram-ul-Haram is just around the corner. The authorities, say that they have devised a fool-proof strategy-and security plan for the peaceful observance of the Muharram-ul-Haram gatherings and processions. However, the district administrations and law enforcement agencies (LEAS) across the country will have to do an additional duty this year, i.e., to ensure that the attendees also follow the safety protocols. The first ten days of this month in particular, like all other significant days that bring people in close proximity to one another will be a considerable challenge for the authorities. Over

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the last few years, the authorities have greatly enhanced security measures; the LEAS remain on their toes to maintain law and order and avoid any unfortunate event.

Pakistan, China to safeguard common interests. The two countries have agreed to collectively take measures to safeguard their common interests and promote peace, prosperity, and development in the region

Terrorism is always a 'risk, but is no longer a constant threat hanging above our heads. Expectations are high that this time too; the government will take all the steps needed to ensure that the gatherings and processions are carried out safely. However, this time the concept of safety and security cannot be looked at purely from the lens of terrorism. The idea of safety has evolved as the COVID-19 has hit the world. Now social gatherings, to which people go with no intention of harming others, have become a significant challenge to public health. Therefore, people need to rethink the definition of safety and security. Our efforts to stem the tide of infections have worked well, but it is important to stay vigilant. If people show laxity in observing the guidelines regarding COVID-19, the situation in the country can get out of hand really quickly: While the hope is that the government's security plan will deter any instances of violence or disturbance, the real and main challenge will be implementing safety measures. This time, a lot will depend on the cooperation of the people. The state can keep things normal if the masses cooperate with the government. Otherwise, a surge in COVID-19 cases could take the country back to yet another lockdown.

CPEC is of great significance to china-Pakistan partnership, Xi tells Alvi Chinese president says Beijing, Islamabad to maintain momentum of peace in the region. China and Pakistan are good brothers, partners and have a special friendship. President Xi said since the outbreak of coronavirus, the global fight against COVID-19 has proved that mutual support solidarity and cooperation were the only way to defeat the pandemic. The Chinese president responded to a special letter of congratulations written by president Dr. Arif Alvi on the second conference of the CPEC political parties joint consultation Mechanism underway in Beijing.

Pakistan, China to safeguard common interests. The two countries have agreed to collectively take measures to safeguard their common interests and promote peace, prosperity, and development in the region. The consensus to this effect was

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reached during the second round of china-Pakistan foreign ministers strategic dialogue in Hainan, china. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi represented Pakistan while the Chinese side was represented by the state councilor and foreign minister Wang Yi. The two sides exchanged views on COVID-19, bilateral relations and international/ regional issues of mutual interests. Two sides resolved to strengthen all round cooperation, maintaining momentum of high- level exchanges and a greater focus on advancing construction of belt and road initiatives.

The predictive Power of a theory where both small differences and contingency play key roles will be limited. Few would have predicted in the fifteenth or even the sixteenth centuries, let alone in the many centuries following the fall of the Roman Empire, that the major breakthrough toward inclusive institutions would happen in Britain. It was only the specific process of institutional drift and the nature of the critical juncture created by the opening of Atlantic trade that made this possible. Neither would many have believed in the midst of the Cultural Revolution during the 1970s that China would soon be on a path toward radical changes in its economic institutions and subsequently on a breakneck growth trajectory. It is similarly impossible to predict with any certainty what the lay of the land will be in five hundred years. Yet these are not shortcomings of our theory. The historical account we have presented so far indicates that any approach based on historical determinism based on geography, culture, or even other historical factors is inadequate. Small differences and contingency are not just part of our theory; they are part of the shape of history.

Even greater caution is necessary in drawing policy recommendations from this broad account of the origins of prosperity and poverty. In the same way that the impact of critical junctures depends on existing institutions, how a society will respond to the same policy intervention depends on the institutions that are in place. Of course, our theory is all about how nations can take steps toward prosperity by transforming their institutions from extractive to inclusive. But it also makes it very clear from the outset that there are no easy recipes for achieving such a transition. First, the vicious circle implies that changing institutions is much harder than it first appears.

In particular, extractive institutions can re-create themselves under different guises. Thus the fact that the extractive regime of President Mubarak was overturned by popular protest in February 2011 does not guarantee that Egypt will move onto a path to more inclusive institutions. Instead extractive institutions may re-create themselves despite the vibrant and hopeful prodemocracy movement. Second, because the contingent path of history implies that it is difficult to know whether a particular interplay of critical junctures and existing institutional differences will lead toward more inclusive or extractive institutions, it would be heroic to formulate general policy recommendations to encourage change toward inclusive institutions. Nevertheless, our theory is still useful for policy analysis, as it enables us to recognize bad policy advice, based on either incorrect hypotheses or inadequate understanding of how institutions can change. In this, as in most things, avoiding the worst mistakes is as important as and more realistic than attempting to develop simple solutions.

**By: Iftikhar Ahmad**

**Source: Daily Times**

*The writer is former Director National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA) Government of Pakistan, a political analyst, a public policy expert, and a published author. His book post 9/11 Pakistan was published in the United States. His book Existential Question for Pakistan was recently launched.*

## **Evolving politics?**

Identity has defined Pakistani politics for long. Even the drive for it was based on identity politics. But after 1947, ethnicity replaced faith, as many ethnic groups found their interests being ignored, as with Muslims earlier.

Conservatives abhor identity politics and expect all to assimilate into the dominant identity. Even some liberals see it as dividing class-based solidarity, undoing ideological politics, and emerging from elite intrigue. This ideal view came from the West where ideological politics dominates for contextual reasons. It arose there with increased urbanisation as whole families shifted to cities and bread earners worked in industry.

Also, most Western states were then highly homogenous. So labour class-based politics emerged naturally. But despite higher mobility, education and incomes, identity politics has a key role in many Western countries like the US, as immigration and political sway of weak identity groups has increased. Biden's choice of Kamala Harris reflects this trend.

Could a mass party unite people across ethnicities?

Developing countries are highly diverse and rural. Even migrant labour usually leaves family back in villages, which are deep reservoirs of ethnic content. Regular visits back to villages keep ethnic identities strong among migrants. But some think we are moving towards post-ethnic politics. Can this be true for us when it is not for the rest of South Asia or the West? Ethnic politics holds firm in diverse SAARC countries like India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Afghanistan, the first two being politically the most developed. But in both, a perverse majoritarian identity politics now prevails, which instead of assimilating minorities, segregates and marginalises them.

Given that our ethnic identities are still strong, and will remain so, ethnic politics could only abate if the state dealt with all fairly and devolved power. The 18th Amendment did this only partially inter-provincially, while ignoring intra-provincial ethnic gripes. Its fruits have been undone partly by the great undoing of democracy since 2018 via controversial polls, crackdown on the media and opposition, establishment sway and informal recentralisation, all of which may fan ethnic woes again even provincially.

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Our three main parties — the PML-N, PPP and PTI — are on the surface non-ethnic and national. But the top three or four leaders of each belong mainly to one ethnicity, a trend increasing over time. Dynastic hold dictates this in the PPP and PML-N. But oddly, even the PTI lacks a truly national top leadership. Each practises ethnic politics often, though the PTI less so.

A look at each province reflects the extent of ethnic politics. Punjab is the hegemon others resent. Much earlier, it voted in the 'outsider' PPP regularly. But 'insider' PML-N and PTI are now firm pets. Aggrieved ethnic minorities exist in each province. But only in Punjab is the minority (Seraiki) seen as politically and economically inferior to the majority. Yet oddly, sub-provincial ethnic politics is the weakest in Punjab as a popular Seraiki party has never won big in South Punjab.

Sindh has always voted for the PPP in fair polls and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. Regional ethnic tensions are the greatest in Sindh. Mohajirs dumped their long-term local favourite MQM in 2018. Yet this is not a sign that the Mohajir community's complaints and identity politics have ended. It is only a reflection of the MQM's implosion, establishment ploys, and the community's calculus, right or wrong, that their woes may be better addressed by voting for the PTI. Even in Karachi, a city-wide political identity hasn't emerged.

KP has been the most open to voting for 'outsider' parties. Yet rumblings of Pakhtun nationalism can be heard, though mainly in ex-Fata via the PTM. Then there is the Hazara belt which rarely votes in synch with the Pakhtun belt. In Balochistan, local parties usually hold sway in fair polls. A civil war driven by ethnic woes rages on. Ethnic politics is alive nationally and a post-ethnic identity hardly seen. This is an added reason for devolution besides its administrative logic true globally.

Our polls have never been won via issues-based politics but by patronage and cult politics. Even the 1970 polls were won more by cultist politics around Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's slogans and charisma. Could a mass party unite people across ethnicities via class-based solidarity? It is easier to mobilise through the crude pull of cult, patronage, ethnic or right-wing bigoted politics than liberal intellectual politics. Aspiring groups will first have to come up with workable solutions and communicate them widely in their lingo. Neither seems likely soon. Until mass

politics emerges, ethnic politics is a useful second-best option for addressing at least some societal inequities.

**By: Dr. Niaz Murtaza**

**Source: DAWN**

*The writer is a political economist and heads INSPIRING Pakistan, a progressive policy unit.*

Mega Lecture



## **Mahan, Corbett, and China's Maritime Grand Strategy**

China's naval establishment has long been enamored of the writings of the U.S. naval officer and historian Alfred Thayer Mahan. Indeed, it is not overstating the case to argue that since post-revolutionary China first turned its attention seaward in later decades of the 20th century no single thinker has exercised greater influence of Chinese maritime strategy. But that is now changing. Increasingly, Chinese navalists are paying attention to the writings of British naval theorist Sir Julian Corbett. This shift is both reflective of and conducive to a major shift in Chinese grand strategy – one that has implications both for the United States and the countries of the Indo-Pacific region more broadly.

Mahan's main arguments, though revolutionary at the time he first made them in the 19th century, are relatively straightforward. Great powers, he argued, even instinctively insular ones like the United States, have crucially important maritime interests, ranging from defense of their coastlines to protection of their vital trade routes. Accordingly, every truly great power must take steps to secure these interests against the potential predations of its rivals and adversaries. For Mahan, this implied that a truly great power had to dominate the world's oceans. And, he concluded, such domination could only be achieved by sweeping the enemy's main fleet from the seas in a decisive battle. A corollary of this was that mere commerce raiding and other piecemeal naval operations were distractions that could never prove strategically decisive. Concentration of forces, and what Mahan called "offensive defense," were the keys to "command of the seas," which in turn was the only proper object of great power naval strategy.

The reasons for Mahan's attractiveness to both American and Chinese navalists are perhaps obvious. Mahan was writing for and about a rising power, the United States, which was becoming aware that it had vital maritime interests that had to be secured if it was to prosper and realize its destiny as a great power. Initially, he thought that these interests were largely limited to the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, and the sea lanes that would come into being once the Panama Canal opened. Later, as his thinking matured and as U.S. interests became less focused on the countries near seas, Mahan turned his attention to the far seas that he came to view as crucial to U.S. security and prosperity. All of this appealed to American leaders like President Theodore Roosevelt who dreamt of an America that was a

truly global great power. It also naturally appealed to subsequent generations of American naval and political leaders who realized that, once the United States had become a global power, it needed a navy fit for purpose.

The appeal to contemporary Chinese naval and political leaders is rooted in a similar logic. As market reforms began to generate economic growth in the 1980s and 1990s, and as China became increasingly dependent on seaborne trade, Chinese leaders began to recognize that they had vital maritime interests that needed to be secured. Initially, these interests were framed in terms of China's near seas: dominating the waters of the East and South China Seas following a rough curve from Japan in the north, past Taiwan and the Philippines down to Singapore and Malaysia, and preventing China from being hemmed in by this "First Island Chain." Later, as China's maritime trade routes became globalized, Chinese navalists began to turn their attention to the far seas that were increasingly seen as crucial to Chinese security and prosperity.

During both periods, Mahan's writings provided a conceptual framework for thinking about the kind of naval strategy best suited to a rising China. And if the Chinese naval establishment largely ignored Mahan's writings on decisive battles and sweeping the enemy (read: U.S.) fleet from the seas, they fully embraced those dealing with the need for a global great power to have a navy fit for purpose. Specifically, Chinese naval strategists adopted (and adapted) Mahan's view that a great power had to have a navy capable of wresting control of strategic waterways and choke points from powerful rivals, thereby ensuring the security of the global commerce upon which its prosperity depended. They also internalized his belief that a truly great power had to have a truly great navy – one capable not only of securing its maritime interests, but of showing the flag as well.

Over the past decade or so, however, Chinese navalists have been increasingly drawn to the work of a different sea power theorist, the British naval historian Sir Julian Corbett. Although he agreed with Mahan on a number of points, especially on the need to control vital sea lanes for both military and commercial purposes, Corbett disagreed with Mahan on a number of important issues. Most fundamentally, he disagreed with him regarding the latter's near-exclusive focus on achieving total command of the seas by shattering the enemy's naval power in one or two decisive battles.

Mahan's basic view of what he called "naval strategy" was that total command of the seas was always the best means to a great power's grand strategic ends, and that this could only be achieved by sweeping the enemy fleet from the seas. Corbett argued instead that great powers could each have their own distinctive grand strategies and that each grand strategy demanded its own distinctive "maritime strategy." Such a strategy might involve bringing the enemy's main fleet to battle and destroying it in a decisive engagement, as Mahan advocated.

But it might also involve mere temporary and local "control of the sea," blockade, commerce raiding and defense, or homeland defense. It all depended on the grand strategy being pursued. For Corbett, as for Clausewitz, the most fundamental principle was the primacy of politics in war. Maritime strategy, he believed, should always be derived from the nation's specific political goals, purposes, and constraints.

There are a number of reasons for Chinese navalists' increased interest in Corbett's work. Perhaps the most decisive factor, however, has been a profound shift in China's grand strategy over the past decade or so. During most of the post-revolutionary era that strategy had been one of geopolitical restraint, even isolationism. China's military and other strategic focus was on defense of the Chinese mainland, the reintegration of territories lost either before or after the revolution, and pressing a limited number of claims to disputed territories. Over the past decade or so, however, China has effectively adopted a new grand strategy, one that is perhaps best characterized as "offshore balancing."

This strategy has three defining elements. First, it entails a commitment to securing China's land and littoral frontiers, as Beijing defines them. This includes asserting claims to sovereignty over the waters within the so-called nine-dash line in the South China Sea, the disputed territories along its border with India, the islands it claims in the East China Sea, and of course Taiwan (collectively, China's "near seas"). It also includes denying the United States the ability to threaten the Chinese mainland or to intervene in any of the territorial disputes to which China is party.

Second, it commits China to dominating its immediate neighborhood. This includes both those territories with which it is territorially contiguous (Nepal, Bhutan, and

Vietnam, for example) and nearly so (Thailand), as well as the maritime region between its home waters and the so-called Second Island Chain.

Finally, China's offshore balancing strategy entails maintaining a favorable balance of power as far afield as the "Third Island Chain" (encompassing Alaska, Hawaii, and New Zealand), the "Fourth Island Chain" (linking Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and the U.S./U.K. military facility at Diego Garcia in the midst of the Indian Ocean), and the "Fifth Chain" extending from Djibouti on the Horn of Africa, past Madagascar to South Africa, and encompassing the Persian Gulf region. In the Chinese context, a favorable balance of power is one that is dominated by no one state, but that tilts in favor of China. Among other things, this means a balance that is not favorable to the United States.

From a Corbettian perspective, such a grand strategy requires an appropriate maritime strategy, one that can link the application of naval power to the political purpose of preventing an unfavorable balance of power from developing in any region the balancer deems crucially important. In China's case, such a strategy would necessarily entail a capacity to achieve the following goals:

Deter, delay, and, if necessary, degrade potential U.S. military intervention in maritime sovereignty disputes or clashes with Taiwan. This is as much about defending China's coastline and ports as it is about asserting and defending sovereignty claims.

Deny the United States command of the seas or control of commercially and geopolitically vital waterways and chokepoints. This is not simply a matter of deploying ships. It also requires the capability to sustain a maritime presence in strategic locations, in hostile conditions, and for extended periods.

Deny India, the other emerging great power with a growing naval presence in the Indian Ocean and adjacent seas, the ability to control or interdict vital sea lanes and choke points out to the Fifth Island Chain.

Deter, delay, and, if necessary, degrade potential U.S. military intervention within China's far seas orbit.

And this is precisely the maritime strategy China has been pursuing. In its near seas backyard, China has for over a decade now been busy developing and deploying air, naval, and missile forces to create an anti-access/area-denial bubble

encompassing the East China Sea, Taiwan, and the South China sea – basically, China’s entire coastline plus the disputed islands and seas that it claims as its own. For this mission, China deploys submarines, surface combatants, aircraft, anti-aircraft systems, anti-ship cruise missiles. These forces are supported by major naval bases at Qingdao, Ningbo, Zhanjiang, Hainan Island, as well as facilities in the Paracel and Spratly Island groups.

Beyond this near seas defensive zone, China has developed and deployed naval forces to dominate the seas out to the Second Island Chain. In addition to the A2/AD capabilities just mentioned, these forces include advanced land-attack ballistic and cruise missiles to threaten U.S. military facilities on the islands of Okinawa and Guam. Also employed are anti-ship ballistic missiles, which, using advanced re-entry vehicle technology, have the capability to strike with precision and defeat most sea-based missile defense systems. The purpose of these systems is to deter, delay, and, if necessary, degrade potential U.S. military operations in ways that deny the United States control over the seas within the Second Island Chain.

Perhaps most ominously, China is well on its way to being able to challenge U.S. and allied naval predominance out to the Fifth Island Chain. It now regularly deploys eight ships, including nuclear-powered submarines, in the Indian Ocean and adjacent waters. It has acquired a naval base in Djibouti, and has built and controls port facilities at Hambantota in Sri Lanka and Gwadar in Pakistan. China has also reportedly established a military surveillance facility on Myanmar’s Coco Islands in the Bay of Bengal, helping to facilitate the entry of Chinese naval ships into the Indian Ocean region.

And, most recently, China and Iran have entered into a strategic partnership that commits both parties to joint training and exercises, joint research and weapons development, and intelligence sharing. It also proposes Chinese investment in two more port facilities in Iran, which would add to China’s ever-expanding “string of pearls.” Nor is China finished building its offshore balancing infrastructure. When it is, it may become commonplace to see Chinese carrier strike groups regularly patrolling the Indian Ocean.

Given all this, there can be little doubt that China has begun implementing a maritime strategy that would have met with Julian Corbett’s approval. For India,

the United States, and other Indo-Pacific powers in the region, however, the question remains: What then is to be done?

**By: Andrew Latham**

**Source: The Diplomat**

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Mega Lecture