

International Current Affairs

2019 Events

Why Turkey is Invading Syria: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUeXaPaKF50>

2020 Events:

United States:

Do morals matter in US Foreign Policy?

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/04/24/so-do-morals-matter-us-foreign-policy-i-asked-expert/>

- The conventional wisdom in our field is that “interests bake the cake” and then politicians sprinkle a little moral icing on it to make it look pretty. By looking in detail at the 14 presidents since 1945, I show that in a number of instances, if you hold too simply to this cynical view, you are going to get the history wrong.
- Weber was correct that political leaders must start with a politics of consequences, and the smart realists understand that.

There’s no such thing as good liberal hegemony:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/21/theres-no-such-thing-as-good-liberal-hegemony/>

- Instead of advancing, **democracy has been in retreat** around the world for more than a decade—including in the **United States itself**—and U.S.-led efforts at regime change have led not to thriving democracies but to failed states and costly occupations. Hyperglobalization under U.S. auspices produced a grave financial crisis in 2008, politically painful job displacement in a number of sectors, and helped trigger a wide-ranging populist backlash. NATO enlargement helped poison relations with Russia, and policies such as dual containment in the Persian Gulf inspired anti-U.S. terrorism, including the 9/11 attacks and all the negative consequences that flowed from that event. The end result of these developments has been a partial retreat from globalization, the emergence of would-be autocrats in Hungary, Poland, and **even in the United States**, and revitalized authoritarianism in many other places.
- To start with the most obvious point: a smarter approach to liberal hegemony would have to be a lot more patient. In the 1990s, Americans felt they had found the magic formula for success in a globalized world—what **Thomas Friedman called “DOScapital 6.0”**—and that other countries couldn’t wait to become more like the United States. The wind

was at the United States' back, history was moving its way, and giving the world a healthy shove in the right direction would just accelerate the process.

- This view was both self-congratulatory and naively optimistic, but one could still believe that "the arc of history bends toward justice" while acknowledging that bending the arc will take longer than one had previously thought. The United States should adopt a slow, steady, and decidedly nonmilitary approach to spreading liberal values, therefore, and recognize that it will take several decades (or more) to bear fruit. One might call this approach "liberal hegemony lite."

Post America World Order: <https://www.trtworld.com/article/36100>

- Global crises tend to accelerate trends, and the Covid-19 pandemic is no exception. The trends which this pathogen is jolting pertain to the **Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)**, **global governance**, **neoliberalism**, and international institutions such as the **European Union**.
- Many in the world who oppose free trade will argue that the coronavirus crisis has validated their arguments in favour of protectionism. Bigoted, xenophobic, and far-right nationalists across multiple regions will exploit this pathogen to advance agendas that target immigrants, refugees, minorities, and other marginalised groups.
- The coronavirus crisis has further highlighted inequalities created by decades of neoliberal policies that leave the weakest members of societies more vulnerable to the forces of the free market with fewer safety nets and public services available to those in most need.
- As John Feffer, the director of Foreign Policy in Focus, recently [wrote](#): "Market fundamentalists are like Christian Scientists. They refuse government intervention just as the faithful reject medical intervention. Much like God's grace, the invisible hand operates independent of human plan. Then something happens, like a pandemic, which tests this faith. States around the world are now spending trillions of dollars to intervene in the economy: to bail out banks, save businesses, help out the unemployed."
- Perhaps the former Prime Minister of Sweden best described "the first great crisis of the post-American world" when he [tweeted](#): "The UN Security Council is nowhere to be seen, G20 is in the hands of the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, and the White House has trumpeted America First and Everyone Alone for years. Only the virus is globalised."
- Without a doubt, coronavirus has forced all governments to look around the world and see how different powers are dealing with the unprecedented challenge. Long after a vaccine is developed, people of all countries will remember how the US government failed to lead amid this pandemic.

- No matter how politics in the US play out this year, the damage done to America's international reputation during the Covid-19 crisis will continue to shape perceptions of the US as a power in decline.

The US needs to reshape global supply chains: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/08/united-states-reshape-global-supply-chains-china-reglobalization/>

- Reducing vulnerability to disruption or coercion
- Reducing vulnerability to sabotage or surveillance
- Preserving/expanding domestic manufacturing capacity
- Imposing costs on China

The United states forgot its strategy for Winning Cold Wars: Offshore Balancing: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/05/offshore-balancing-cold-war-china-us-grand-strategy/>

- No direct invasion
- Find proxies to balance offshore
- India for China

Trump Has Irrevocably Changed American Relations With Europe—and Biden: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/05/06/trump-has-irrevocably-changed-american-relations-with-europe-and-biden-probably-can-t-fix-it-pub-81739>

- European diplomats privately admit transatlantic relations are at their lowest point since the end of the Cold War, including during the 2003 Iraq War.
- President Trump is the first modern US president to undermine European integration, to view the EU as a threat, and to inject conditionality into NATO.
- But Trump's style and unpopularity in Europe obscures an uncomfortable reality for Europeans that many EU-US tensions are also the product of a longer-term, more structural divergence of US and European interests than of America's 45th President.
- First, low levels of European defense spending would annoy Biden just as they have Trump, Obama and Bush.
- Second, China. While both Republican and Democratic attitudes to Beijing have hardened, many EU member states will remain reluctant to choose between their growing trade and investment equities with China and their security and values equities with the US, aggravating Washington.
- Third, US interest in Europe – the product of the dominance of the Cold War in US foreign policy – will continue to decline.
- Fourth, any president's ambition to reassert US global leadership will be impacted by political polarization and a public weary of international engagements at home, as well as the rise of competing powers overseas.
- Finally, Europeans have become accustomed to disagreeing with the US over the last three years in a way that would have been unthinkable under previous administrations.

Slavoj Zizek: In American protests, victims of Trump's policies help the criminal erase the crime:
<https://www.rt.com/op-ed/490252-minnesota-riots-money-life/>

- Returning too quickly to 'normality', as advocated by Trump and his administration, exposes many people to the deadly threat of infection – but they nonetheless demand it, thereby covering up any traces of Trump's (and the capital's) crime.
- In the early 19th century, many miners in Wales rejected helmets and other expensive protective equipment, even though this gear greatly reduced the possibility of deadly accidents which abounded in coal mines, because the costs were deducted from their salaries.
- Today we seem to regress to the same desperate calculation, which is a new inverted version of the old forced choice 'money or life' (where, of course, you choose life, even if it is life in misery). If you now choose life against money, you cannot survive, since you lose money and life, so you have to return to work to earn money to survive – but the life you get is curtailed by a threat of infection and death. Trump is not guilty of killing the workers, they made a free choice – but Trump is guilty of offering them a 'free' choice in which the only way to survive is to risk death, and he further humiliates them by putting them in a situation whereby they must demonstrate for their 'right' to die at their place of work.

All roads to a better trade deal go through WTO: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/28/trade-deal-wto-trump/>

- That means we need to look more closely at the WTO's direct and concrete achievements. For one, it greatly expanded the share of global trade that is covered by rules that govern countries' behavior. That means, for example, that U.S. companies and their workers now have a better shot at winning foreign government contracts, or at selling their IT or other services abroad. The WTO has begun tackling barriers to U.S. agricultural exports—an area of trade that had originally been dropped, at U.S. **insistence**, from the global trade system in the 1950s. And it has considerably improved worldwide protection for U.S. intellectual property, whether that applies to Hollywood films, apps and software, or life-saving medicines.
- The WTO has also significantly enhanced the United States' ability to enforce these rules. The U.S. government has brought dozens and dozens of cases before the WTO's trade adjudication bodies. And it has won the vast majority of them, thereby forcing European Union countries, Canada, and even China to adhere to the rules U.S. negotiators had championed.
- Has the WTO outlived its usefulness? After all, as one of **164** members, the United States has considerably less influence than its gigantic economy would suggest. Maybe the issues of today, such as how to deal with China's unequal and discriminatory trade practices, are better tackled directly as a bilateral issue between Washington and Beijing?
- But a multilateral approach to trade is arguably even more important today than when these institutions were first created. Tariffs were a primary concern back in the late 1940s, when countries were mainly shipping finished goods to each other. Countries

liberalized in a variety of ways—some cut tariffs bilaterally, others multilaterally, some even unilaterally.

- Today's trade barriers are much different, however, even as trade has gotten more varied and complex. Tariffs are no longer the main obstacle to international commerce. Things like subsidies, taxation, and discriminatory regulations are a bigger source of friction, but these sorts of barriers are very difficult to resolve bilaterally between countries. The reason is simple: They most often apply to all trading partners at once.
- The Trump administration has come to learn this the hard way in its failed negotiations with China. The much-touted "phase one" trade deal may be already falling apart due to China not meeting its commitments to purchase U.S. products. But more importantly, the January agreement was completely silent on some of the key issues that motivated Trump's trade war in the first place, including unfair subsidies and protections benefiting Chinese state-owned companies.
- Finally, would the United States be better off if it were to leave the WTO? The joint resolutions in Congress seem to envision U.S. withdrawal leading to other countries such as Britain and Japan following suit and joining the United States in new trade arrangements outside the WTO. The problem, of course, is that the United States can unilaterally decide to exit the WTO, but it can't force other countries to do the same. Furthermore, any new trade deals would require willing partners. This is another lesson Trump had to learn the hard way when he couldn't force other countries to follow the United States in abandoning the planned Trans-Pacific Partnership. Japan, Canada, and the nine other countries that had negotiated the pact went ahead anyway, lowering trade and investment barriers among themselves, leaving U.S. companies out in the cold.
- The main result of a unilateral departure would be a more isolated United States with less ability to pressure China and at greater risk of falling behind.

The Artemis Accords and the Next Generation of Outer Space Governance

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/artemis-accords-and-next-generation-outer-space-governance>

The bilateral agreements between NASA and other national space agencies will integrate principles found in existing space governance regimes, such as the Outer Space Treaty, that NASA believes will facilitate safe and transparent exploration, scientific research, and commercial activities in space, for the benefit of all humanity. To be specific, the Artemis Accords will:

- Ensure that missions serve *peaceful purposes*, as the Outer Space Treaty requires;
- Require *transparency* in plans and policies for space exploration;
- Strive for *interoperability* of space systems;
- Reaffirm obligations in the Rescue Convention to provide *emergency assistance* in space;
- Emphasize the need to *register space objects* and encourage partners to join the Registration Convention if they have not done so;
- Require *release of scientific data*;

- *Protect heritage* sites and artifacts on the Moon of historic significance;
- Reinforce that the Outer Space Treaty permits extraction and use of *space resources*;
- Prevent harmful interference with lunar operations by *deconflicting activities* through transparency and safety zones; and
- Commit the parties to respect UN-negotiated guidelines on *space debris mitigation*.
- The accords do not mention the Moon Agreement (1979). This treaty has been controversial because it proclaims that the Moon and its resources are the “common heritage of mankind,” a formulation that has never been popular with the United States. However, only 18 countries have ratified the agreement, and no major spacefaring country has joined it. Instead, the Artemis Accords address access to, and use of, lunar resources through the Outer Space Treaty.
- The Artemis Accords will be intergovernmental and will not apply to commercial enterprises interested in pursuing lunar activities. NASA will negotiate contracts with any space companies working through the Artemis Program, as it typically does in projects involving the private sector. For the Artemis Accords to retain legitimacy, the onus will be on NASA to have these contracts reflect, where relevant, the Artemis principles. Where U.S. private-sector activities are undertaken without NASA participation, the U.S. government will need to ensure that they too comply, as necessary and appropriate, with the principles in the accords.
- The most controversial aspect of the Artemis Accords involves the issue of space resources. The accords reinforce the long-standing U.S. position that the Outer Space Treaty permits countries to use resources, such as minerals and ice on the Moon and Mars, in space activities. In April, President Trump issued an executive order re-confirming the U.S. view that space is not a “global commons” and that U.S. policy encourages “international support for the public and private recovery and use of resources in outer space, consistent with applicable law.”

Welcome Back to Kissinger’s World: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/07/kissinger-review-gewen-realism-liberal-internationalism/>

- The world, from Washington’s perspective especially, has gotten Kissingerian again. America’s crusades are over or at best are corroded and crumbling at their derelict foundations. The Wilsonian crusaderism that transformed sensible Cold War containment into a futile and delusional battle against the myth of monolithic communism, ending horribly in Vietnam; and then reawakened in the post-Cold War era as a neo-Reaganite call to end “evil” regimes, finishing tragically in Iraq, has all but exhausted itself. No one wants anything to do with transforming the world anymore—so much so that Americans put a frank neo-isolationist, Donald Trump, in the White House so that he could shut the country off from the world.
- Over the course of the past century or so, we have witnessed the debunking of monarchy, authoritarianism, fascism, communism, and totalitarianism, each of them tried and tested to destruction. And now, to a degree, we are also experiencing the failures of democracy, which in so many places seems polarized into paralysis, as in Washington, drowning in memes of misinformation and hacked by malign external forces like Russia. We have

also seen how capitalism—though it bested Cold War communism in terms of ownership of the means of production—has proved grossly unequal to the test of producing social equity. The world's chosen system is prone to continual collapse.

- All this brings us directly back to Kissinger, the great realist Hans Morgenthau (who was his mentor), and the fierce geopolitical urgency of now. Global anarchy beckons, and proliferating great-power rivalries demand savvy, hardheaded strategic diplomacy of the kind that Morgenthau conceived in theory and Kissinger mastered in practice. This appears to be the main message of Gewen's book, which demands to be studied, especially at a moment when Sinophobia is surging and Beijing is giving back as good as it gets. For China today, Gewen writes, is "the Apatosaurus in the room."
- The answer to the future of U.S.-China relations—and the global peace and stability that largely depend on getting them right—may lie in the past, Gewen suggests. It's no small coincidence that Kissinger and his philosophy had their moment in the sun at a time of U.S. weakness, during the Vietnam War, civil unrest, Watergate, and the stagflation of the 1970s, when diplomats had to find common ground and a balance among the major powers. Because a weakened and disordered Washington may be in an analogous place today vis-à-vis China, Kissinger's favorite subject and the focus of his greatest diplomatic triumphs.
- But it is largely this chaotic 21st-century world that Morgenthau, though largely forgotten now except in academia, presciently described in the ur-text of modern realism more than 70 years ago, *Politics Among Nations*, and which Kissinger expanded on in his diplomatic career, as Gewen brilliantly documents in his book. Morgenthau anticipated the present breakdown in the belief about the progress of human society when he said that the rationalists who pined for perfection in human governance and society denied the "inevitability of tragedy," to pick up Gewen's main theme. That is what every great statesman has known—that the "choices he faced were not between good and evil ... but between bad and less bad," writes Gewen, a longtime editor at the *New York Times Book Review* (who, full disclosure, has occasionally assigned me reviews). This describes much of Kissinger's career, including the opening to China, the 1973 truce in the Middle East, even the chaotic and bloody end to the Vietnam War and the thousands of lives lost Kissinger must have on his conscience.
- But Kissinger's ideas have more resonance now because we are clearly in a place similar to the American weakness in the '70s, when foreign-policy elites weren't thinking of triumph but just survival, as they should be now, especially when America's internal problems are arguably as enervating as they were back then. Perhaps the biggest disappointment of Gewen's book is that after spending hundreds of pages delving into the biographical and historical sources of Kissinger's nuanced, Hitler-haunted realism, the author doesn't apply it much to the present—and only fleetingly to China. Because there is no greater vindication of Kissingerian realism than what has happened in China during the first decades of the 21st century. After a quarter century in which it became fashionable in Washington to think that co-opting China into the post-Cold War system of global markets and emerging democracies would gradually nudge that country toward Enlightenment norms—what Kissinger once archly called "the age-old American dream of a peace achieved by the conversion of the adversary"—such illusions have faded

away. All we have left is an emerging superpower that fits Kissinger's hardheaded view of a country he visited some 100 times, dating back to his first talks with Mao Zedong. And if Kissinger's analysis is correct—as it probably is—the United States and China can find accommodation if they work at it, with preaching kept to a minimum.

- As a result, as Kissinger once explained, “Almost every situation is a special case.” The new rise of nationalism, he wrote, might seek “national or regional identity by confronting the United States.” This is what Xi's China has done. Indeed, many of today's nationalists are responding to Washington as the Soviets once did, consolidating national control by playing up the threat from foreign enemies. And neonationalism across the globe should be dealt with in the same jujitsu manner George Kennan recommended against the Soviet Union: Reduce the perceived threat from the United States, and authoritarian systems like China's are more likely to wither on their own.
- The key is not to overreact. And the choice is stark for both countries, Gewen writes. “One way or another, either through an intellectual evolution that accepts limits and diplomatic compromise or through the wholesale shedding of blood, they will have to give up their cherished exceptionalism for a Westphalian system of international diversity and a more modest, if uncomfortable, equilibrium.”
- Kissinger anticipated much of this outcome, Gewen writes. Decades ago he foresaw that the Reagan era and the Cold War's end would not prove a new beginning for American-style liberal democratic capitalism, as the neocons believed and liberal internationalists hoped, but was more “in the nature of a brilliant sunset.” While Kissinger conceded, as always, that Wilsonian idealism would continue to define the heart of U.S. foreign policy, he wrote that even in the triumph of the Cold War—which he admits was partly won by the primacy of human rights in the debate (especially its role inside the Soviet bloc)—U.S. leaders would have to articulate a new balance of power “to preserve equilibrium in several regions of the world, and these partners can not always be chosen on the basis of moral considerations alone.”
- China too is engaged today in a self-searching debate about how far it can go in global dominance, and the country's long history of geopolitical caution (in deed if not always in word) is encouraging. Amid all this self-doubt and mutual probing of “limits”—one of Kissinger's favorite words—lies the possibility of common ground, even if the two economies decouple in terms of supply chains and financial codependence. For without smart, aggressive diplomacy to find a new balance of power, there is the possibility of a catastrophic, even world-ending misstep. In particular, Kissinger—perhaps the most profound student of the centurylong peace that began with the Congress of Vienna and ended in August 1914—worryes about the pre-World War I descent into aggression, an especially scary prospect in a nuclear age. Like many in Washington and Beijing today, Europe's leaders back then blithely thought “risk taking was an effective diplomatic tool,” Kissinger wrote.
- The way forward? Muddle through. Or, as Kissinger put it, find a “pragmatic concept of coexistence” not unlike Cold War-era detente, when a Vietnam-embogged and stagflation-encumbered America was also in no shape to conduct ideological crusades and instead got into bed with Beijing while negotiating arms restraint with Moscow.

Keep the pressure on diplomatically but fudge the fundamental issues, as smart diplomats have always done. Because the alternative—constant conflict and war in the South China Sea that could potentially go nuclear—is unthinkable. “Ambiguity,” Kissinger said, “is sometimes the lifeblood of diplomacy.”

- Another issue that both Kissinger and Morgenthau foresaw is that the more populist democracy becomes, the less able it is to conduct reliable foreign policy. Morgenthau, who later broke with Kissinger over his opposition to the Vietnam War, especially saw the effect popular democracy would have on professional diplomacy—an impact that is all too apparent in the Trump administration but also affected the ever dithering Obama and Bush administrations. Kissinger picked up this theme in his 2001 book, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?*, and in a 2018 [article](#) in the *Atlantic* that Gewen describes as his “final lesson as a self-appointed educator of the American public.” In the growth of cyberspace, Kissinger perceived a “growing anarchy, which he equated with a Hobbesian state of nature in which the prospect of world order receded ever further from view ... and in his mind the computerization of the world encouraged a kind of irresponsible thinking that was deleterious to rational judgment at best, disastrous at worst.”
- In the end, the choice in front of us is not as difficult as we may think. Kissinger lamented Wilsonianism’s excesses but conceded that it still formed the bedrock of American foreign policy. And a consensus is possible if the Wilsonians accept that American sovereignty and hard power will always be sacrosanct and the America Firsters accept that the liberal international order the United States created, flawed as it is, will remain far more a protector than an antagonist, not least because it has gained majority consensus in the world and helps take the raw edge off Washington’s still dominant military power, preventing would-be rivals like Beijing and Moscow from forming alternative power blocs. Striving openly for U.S. hegemony just won’t work, Kissinger has [written](#), because no international order can survive if it isn’t viewed as just: “The dominant trend in American foreign policy thinking must be to transform power into consensus so that the international order is based on agreement rather than reluctant acquiescence.” Ragged though its dominance is, the United States, as chief author of this international order, still has the upper hand here. Or as Kissinger [wrote](#): “Our goal should be to build a moral consensus which can make a pluralistic world creative rather than destructive.” The task is all the greater today.

Overmilitarization of US Foreign Policy: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-02/robert-gates-overmilitarization-american-foreign-policy>

- Without a return of U.S. leadership, these challenges will only grow, moving us closer to a dog-eat-dog, might-makes-right world and further from one shaped by international cooperation and the peaceful resolution of differences. But such a return would depend on first addressing the fundamental flaws in U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War. Washington has become overly dependent on military tools and has seriously neglected its nonmilitary instruments of power, which have withered and weakened as a result. And it has attempted to develop and implement policy using a national security structure and bureaucracy that was designed for the Cold War and has changed remarkably little since the 1940s. Without greater military restraint and far-reaching

institutional restructuring and reform, U.S. politicians and policymakers will have an increasingly hard time persuading Americans to support the global leadership role so essential to protecting the security and economy of the United States. And without American leadership, there will be truly dark days ahead.

- As essential as it is to build and maintain a strong military, it's just as—or more—important to know when and how to use it. When facing a decision of whether to use the military, presidents must better define the objective. What are troops expected to do, and are the resources adequate for the mission? If the mission changes, as it did in Somalia under President Bill Clinton (from famine relief to peacemaking and improving governance) and in Iraq under President George W. Bush (from toppling Saddam Hussein to occupation, fighting an insurgency, and nation building), is there a commensurate change in the resources applied? Is there a mismatch between U.S. aspirations and U.S. capabilities, as in Afghanistan?
- Finding the right answers to these questions has proved difficult in recent decades. The objective of any military intervention must be clear, and the strategy and resources committed must be adequate to fulfill the objective. Sensitive to domestic politics, presidents sometimes are tempted to use just enough military force to avoid failure but not enough to achieve success. Such an approach is not only strategically unwise but also immoral. The lives of American men and women in uniform must not simply be thrown at a problem and squandered in halfhearted or impulsive efforts. In the use of military force, the words of Yoda from *Star Wars* apply: “Do. Or do not. There is no try.”
- The consequences of an insufficiently planned military intervention can be devastating. Take, for example, the U.S. intervention in Libya in 2011, which I opposed. Once President Barack Obama decided to go in, the administration made two strategic mistakes. The first was agreeing to expand the original NATO humanitarian mission from simply protecting the people of eastern Libya against the forces of Libyan President Muammar al-Qaddafi to toppling the regime. NATO could have drawn a proverbial line in the sand somewhere between the capital, Tripoli, and the eastern city of Benghazi; a no-fly zone and attacks on Qaddafi's ground forces could have protected the rebels in the East without destroying the government in Tripoli. Under those circumstances, perhaps some kind of political accommodation could have been worked out.
- As I said at the time, Qaddafi had given up his nuclear program and posed no threat to U.S. interests
- The second strategic mistake was the Obama administration's failure to plan in any way for an international role in reestablishing order and a working government post-Qaddafi.
- There were a number of nonmilitary ways in which the United States (and its allies) might have been able to stop the fighting and help stabilize Libya in the summer and fall of 2011. But there was no plan, no funding, and no desire. Washington's use of nonmilitary instruments of power, as so often after the Cold War, was hesitant, inadequately funded, and poorly executed. The NATO-Arab coalition bombed Libya and then just went home, leaving Libyans to fight over the ruins and thus creating another source of instability in the region and a new base for terrorists. Obama himself supplied the harshest judgment about the intervention, characterizing the failure to plan for a post-Qaddafi Libya as the worst mistake of his presidency.

- Like a strong military, diplomacy is an indispensable instrument of national power. For many years now, Congress has starved the State Department of sufficient resources (except for brief periods under the George W. Bush administration), and the White House has often sidelined the agency and failed to support its budgetary needs. The State Department's critics, including those inside the department, are right that the organization has become too bureaucratic and requires far-reaching reform. Still, any effort to strengthen the United States' nonmilitary toolkit must position a stronger State Department at its core.
- The United States' economic power offers further nonmilitary means of courting partners and pressuring rivals. After World War II, the United States presided over the creation of institutions designed to strengthen international economic coordination largely on American terms, including the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (later part of the World Bank). Throughout the Cold War, the United States was a principal advocate for free trade and a more tightly knit global trading system.
- When I retired as director of the CIA, in 1993, USAID had more than 15,000 employees, most of them career professionals, many working in developing countries in dangerous and inhospitable environments. When I returned to government as secretary of defense, in 2006, USAID had been cut to about 3,000 employees, most of whom were managing contractors.
- In shrinking USAID, the United States unilaterally gave up an important instrument of power. By contrast, China has been especially adept at using its development projects to cultivate foreign leaders and buy access and influence. Its boldest gambit on this front has been the Belt and Road Initiative, which in 2019 encompassed projects in 115 countries with an estimated cost of over \$1 trillion.
- Another casualty of the collapse of the Soviet Union was the U.S. Information Agency and the United States' overall strategic communications capabilities. During the Cold War, the USIA established a global network of libraries and outposts stocked with books and magazines about democracy, history, American culture, and a broad array of other subjects. The agency's Voice of America broadcast news and entertainment around the world, presenting an objective view of current events to millions who would otherwise have been dependent on government-controlled outlets. The USIA and its many outlets and programs reached every corner of the planet. It was a sophisticated instrument, and it worked.
- Nevertheless, the USIA was abolished in 1999, with its residual efforts folded into the State Department. That had real consequences. By 2001, U.S. public diplomacy was a pale shadow of its Cold War self. Unlike China and Russia, the United States now lacks an effective strategy for communicating its message and countering those of its competitors.
- U.S. policymakers have many nonmilitary tools at their disposal. But those tools will remain inadequate for the challenges ahead if Washington does not overhaul its outdated national security apparatus. The current structure, established by the National Security Act of 1947—which created the Department of Defense, the U.S. Air Force (as a separate

military service), the CIA, and the National Security Council (NSC)—has outlived its usefulness.

- Reviving and restructuring U.S. development assistance is all the more urgent in light of China's Belt and Road Initiative and its other efforts to bring developing countries into its orbit. The establishment, in 2019, of the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, an independent government agency that helps finance private-sector investment in development projects was a good start to expanding U.S. efforts to encourage private investment in developing countries. China may be able to loan billions of dollars to countries, but the United States has a vastly more powerful private sector that can not only invest in but also select economically viable projects that will truly serve the long-term interests of the recipient countries.
- In the United States' nonmilitary competition with China and Russia, U.S. officials also need to look at how to reform the alliances and international organizations Washington helped create to make them better serve U.S. objectives today. When it comes to NATO, for example, the United States should keep pressuring other members to spend more on defense but also help allies find ways to collaborate in modernizing their military capabilities. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank also merit a hard look.
- In addition, if the United States wants to compete effectively with authoritarian governments, it will have to overhaul its public messaging. The current effort is an embarrassment. Many entities have a hand in strategic communications, including the White House, the State Department, the Defense Department, the Treasury Department, the CIA, and the U.S. Agency for Global Media, but for the most part, each goes its own way. The result is many lost opportunities. The United States has failed to appeal to the nationalist sentiments of people in Europe and elsewhere to resist Chinese and Russian efforts to interfere in the internal affairs of their countries.
- Finally, most Americans want their country to stand for something beyond just military strength and economic success. They want it to be seen admiringly by others as the world's strongest advocate for liberty. In formulating a foreign policy that the American public will support, U.S. leaders should recognize that it is important to use every nonmilitary instrument of power possible to encourage both friends and rivals to embrace freedom and reform, because those objectives serve the U.S. national interest.

How America's Credibility Gap Affects Defense of Rights Abroad:

<https://www.cfr.org/article/how-americas-credibility-gap-hurts-defense-rights-abroad>

- What does it mean to lose credibility in the defense of fundamental rights abroad? The millions of oppressed people in foreign societies will face further hardship as authoritarian governments crack down. The sense that the United States remains committed to the rule of law is crucial for foreigners at risk, because they often need the strength of U.S. credibility and influence to protect their own rights. U.S. support

for the Helsinki process, launched in 1975, helped enormously to strengthen the rights of people in Soviet-era Eastern Europe. Sanctions under the Magnitsky Act in recent years have been potent weapons to remind foreign leaders of their responsibility for human rights violations. More recently, the United States took steps to protect the human rights of the people of Hong Kong as China tightened its grip on the city, and that has given them hope. When that influence is greatly diminished, these individuals are at severe risk of losing their fight for the protection of their fundamental human rights, for justice and the rule of law, and even for their survival.

- Sadly, the American voice abroad has become one of withdrawal from treaties and institutions and abandonment of human rights. Since early 2017, the retreat on human rights, global health, climate change, education and science, nuclear arms control, and the rule of law has been relentless. Each withdrawal undermines the United States' clout with foreign governments and within major organizations, and this weaker posture diminishes U.S. influence in the realm of human rights. Notable retreats include:
 - the decision not to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, which, at earlier U.S. insistence, promoted numerous human rights protections and acted as a counterfoil to China's anemic human rights agenda;
 - forfeiture of the U.S. seat on the UN Human Rights Council, the most important human rights forum in the world;
 - withdrawal from the UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, which supports many essential societal platforms for the advancement of human rights;
 - failure to persuade enough allies and friends to retain the United States' seat on the Human Rights Committee of the ICCPR, where critical decisions on human rights enforcement are made;
 - decision to defund the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, affecting the rights of millions;

- announcement of the intent to defund and withdraw from the World Health Organization, which promotes and defends the right to health worldwide and plays a critical role during pandemics;
- withdrawal from the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate, which is aimed at the protection of environmental and associated human rights;
- withdrawal from negotiations on the Global Compact for Migration, which protects the rights of migrants; and
- an assault on the International Criminal Court, which advances the rule of law globally by holding perpetrators of atrocities accountable in a court of law.

How can we recover our softpower? <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/501812-can-we-recover-our-soft-power>

- A country's soft power comes primarily from three sources: its culture (when it is attractive to others), its political values such as democracy and human rights (when it lives up to them), and its policies (when they are seen as legitimate because they are framed with some humility and awareness of others' interests.)
- How a government behaves at home (for example, protecting a free press and the right to protest), in international institutions (consulting others and multilateralism), and in foreign policy (promoting development and human rights) can affect others by the influence of example.
- Unlike hard-power assets (such as armed forces), many soft-power resources are separate from the government and are only partly responsive to its purposes. Hollywood movies which showcase independent women or protesting minorities can attract others. So, too, does the charitable work of U.S. foundations and the freedom of inquiry at American universities. Firms, universities, foundations, churches, and protest movements develop soft power of their own which may reinforce or be at odds with official foreign policy goals.
- These private sources of soft power are increasingly important in the age of social media. Our peaceful protests can actually generate soft power. That is why governments at all levels must make sure that their own actions and policies do not squander that soft power. Domestic or

foreign policies that appear hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to others' views — or based on a narrow conception of national interests — can undermine soft power. When President Trump says, “America First,” the question is not whether the president tries to defend the national interest: it is how he defines that interest that makes the moral difference.

End of the World and American Foreign Policy: <https://www.cfr.org/report/end-world-order-and-american-foreign-policy>

The authors argue that the United States should

- “create a persuasive model of competent U.S. governance, which will in turn reinforce America’s international leadership;”
- “revitalize North American collaboration;”
- “fundamentally reform the way the United States deals with its treaty allies and partners;”
- “increase ambitions with Europe;”
- “strengthen relations With India;”
- “invest in international institutions;”
- “condition engagement with Russia;”
- “reduce involvement in the Middle East;”
- “stop deterioration in the balance of power with China;”
- “compete with China” but “compartmentalize transnational challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and international terrorism;” and
- “work with other countries so that the rebuilding of national economies is consistent with maintaining an open and mutually beneficial global economy.”

To Save its democracy, US needs a dose of its own medicine:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/14/to-save-its-democracy-the-united-states-needs-a-dose-of-its-own-medicine/>

- Imagine the following scene: A country is burning. Minority communities and their allies are flooding major cities to protest human rights abuses and inequality. The president is a divisive demagogue who openly endorses violence against his critics in a cynical effort to bolster his waning support. The media, once a respected institution, has become

- caught in real-life crossfire, at risk of arrest and attack. And the police are no longer respected as guarantors of the rule of law but are instead seen as a threat to public safety.
- Smoke plumes are visible in the capital city; government buildings and neighborhoods are tagged with anti-establishment graffiti while police headquarters are set ablaze; storefronts are shattered; police and ambulance sirens blare while helicopters buzz overhead; and citywide curfews are imposed.
 - This is precisely the kind of country that the United States regularly invests millions of dollars in to promote democracy. But today we are not speaking of the Democratic Republic of the Congo or the Philippines or Venezuela. It is the United States itself. The irony is that the U.S. government is crying out for the kind of democracy aid program that it regularly implements “over there” in so-called developing countries.

George Floyd Protest

The Racists’ Peace: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/racists-peace-200607085302328.html>

- Peace is never peaceful in a colony. The peace of the slave master is not the peace of the enslaved. The slave master finds placid the view of the masses of enslaved people working for him under the whip of the overseer. The enslaved finds peace in a plantation on fire.
- It is not peaceful in the prisons, in the slums, under parole, under-employed, or under arrest. They have assumed their peace to be universal. They mistake the security of their families, the leisure with which they live their lives and the fire in which we live ours as good order, as peace all around. They look out at the incessant waves of our deaths as they would out a window to the beach.
- When their innocents die, they launch wars. Their protests to their innocents dying are wars on countries they say harbour terrorists and wars with countries they say look like they harbour terrorists. Their protests are with artillery, with 20-year wars, with the violent removal of regimes, the remaking of societies in their image, the Shock and Awe that is to serve as a message to the entire world that they will not be suffering this again.
- Their protest is a full course meal. When they are finished with it, they give us the "peaceful protest", the bones and gristle and entrails of their protest, thrown out like chicken feed to the slave cabins. I am not that hungry.

Beyond Exceptionalism: <https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/beyond-exceptionalism-us-political-violence-decades-in-the-making-36877>

- Violence is a strange word in the American lexicon. In a society that views itself as exceptional, the use of violence in the furtherance of *domestic* political ends is seen as both practically impossible and morally impermissible.
- The first is that the American far-right, further radicalised in the last ten years, is willing to engage in violence against people in defense of its perceived place in American society.
- The second reason is that the sustained erosion of civil society and basic overtures of democracy has created an environment where peaceful agitation is no longer able to secure an end to police murders of unarmed Black people.
- The duality of right-wing violence and the ineffectiveness of agitation that is “respectable” (i.e. does not destroy property) means that the United States is entering into a period where violence against people in furtherance of politics is normalised and ultimately acceptable.
- As protests rage on the dialectical relationship between the far-right embrace of violence and the inability of reform without property destruction means that an escalation is inevitable.
- The far-right is composed of many different groups and formations, but they generally share an affinity for reactionary White protestant identity politics and/or an outlook driven by conspiratorial propaganda.
- The far-right is also organised into many militias and paramilitary groupings that are both clandestine and simultaneously banal in [appealing](#) to the frustrations of the base of the Republican Party. This indicates a degree of political sophistication and organisation that is not present among progressives and “the Left.”
- BLM, the slogan and the movement, which effectively is a modest call for police reforms and the American promise of equality under the law for black people, became a part of the national conversation because of the property destruction that occurred during protests in places like Ferguson, Baltimore and Charlotte.
- Without a spectacle of fires and looting, there would be no national discourse on police murders of Black people and the systemic brutality that sustains such killings.
- Yet, despite years of rallies, policy proposals and reform efforts, under President Obama and President Trump, police murders of unarmed black people at the national level, and the [systems](#) that reinforce it, have continued unabated.

Towards Global Intifada: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/global-intifada-200605105438548.html>

- The single demand that captures the aspirations of Palestinians, Arabs, and African Americans is "dignity" - not wealth, not power, not revenge,

but human dignity. This is because dignity is the only antidote for people who feel they are being treated like animals and can be shot and killed at will.

- Not surprisingly, the most common spark that sets off mass protests across the world is the killing of civilians by government troops or the private militia and thugs of ruling elites.
- Over the years, I listened to government officials, police commissioners and bureaucrats make these very same statements, albeit in different languages, from the US to Iraq, Lebanon, and Israel-Palestine.
- The problem with these statements is that nobody believes them any more. Exasperated citizens see elites who make promises and offer thoughts and prayers as selfish liars and insincere brutes who will do and say anything to stay in power, especially to maintain the existing economic structures that enrich them and impoverish everyone else.
- In Israel-Palestine, other Arab nations and the US, whenever the citizenry takes to the streets en masse, the media focuses primarily on the drama of crowds of protesters confronting the police. They provide detailed reports on property vandalism or attacks against security forces, but rarely take the time to humanise the protesters by reporting empathetically and accurately on the web of inhuman and discriminatory conditions that caused them to revolt.
- The media widely fails to explore the structures of racism, colonialism, abuse of power and lack of equal rights in the US, Arab states and Israeli-occupied Palestine that trigger protests year after year, and decade after decade.
- In a globalised and deeply connected world, where mainstream media cannot continue to mask the interconnected and deep-rooted grievances of the subjugated and demeaned peoples, these citizen rebellions can soon pave the way for a "global intifada".

America's Social Contract is still based on racial hostilities:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/08/american-racism-welfare-state-george-floyd-protests/>

- Maybe Americans can finally acknowledge that the lack of empathy that allows a white police officer to kill a black man with the bored, routine

expression of a plumber fitting a pipe isn't just an incident but what defines the United States today. Americans might finally understand how racial hostility has misshaped their priorities far beyond the issue of race itself and how foundational this hostility is to the social contract as it exists today. It is racial hostility—not some special love of laissez-faire capitalism—that allows Americans to applaud the creation of unprecedented wealth next to deprivation on a scale that would be the shame of any other advanced nation.

- In an international ranking of poverty, the United States sits **rock bottom** among the industrialized countries in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), worse even than Mexico and Turkey.
- Americans like to blame these misfortunes on globalization and technological change ravaging working families. But globalization and technology struck everybody—the French and the Germans and the Canadians and the Japanese—yet American society buckled alone.
- The white America that has held political power since the birth of the nation decided that if it had to share the social safety net with people on the other side of the racial and ethnic line, it would rather do without one. The eminent sociologist William Julius Wilson put it starkly in his book *When Work Disappears*: White taxpayers oppose welfare because they see themselves forced, through taxes, to pay for stuff for black people. America's bloated prisons, idle men, single moms, and dead babies can be traced to this exceptional fact.
- The U.S. criminal justice system was targeted squarely at black people just as welfare policies had long been targeted at white people: Today, almost a million African Americans are behind bars. Though they account for some 13 percent of the population, black people make up 40 percent of the bloated count of men and women in prisons and other correctional facilities.
- The reason, of course, is that criminal justice was also a political tool: In the 1960s, Southern Democrats straining to recover the allegiance of white people lost with the passage of the Civil Rights Act took to "law and order" as a rallying cry. Republicans hoping to pry working-class white people from the Democrats' grasp did too. "Crime" became the code word for racial unease.
- "The crime debate was racialized to an important degree," Western said. "The anxieties white voters felt were not just about crime but about fundamental social changes going on in American society." Being tough on crime became the surefire tactic to woo white voters shocked by the sight of black people in public spaces that white people had long thought of as their own.

- There is something darkly ironic about America's stilted social contract: The racial hostility that corralled people of color by limiting welfare policies ended up fencing in white Americans too.
- On Roosevelt's watch, workers gained the first national minimum wage, unemployment insurance, and the right to form unions, strike, and engage in collective bargaining. Older people got Social Security pensions. But many New Deal policies were either explicitly engineered to favor white people or favored them in practice. The Federal Housing Administration, created in 1934 to insure mortgage loans for Americans of limited means, refused to back loans in predominantly black neighborhoods, or for black people period, underwriting the segregation of urban America.
- White Americans have a greater life expectancy than African Americans. But the average white American baby born in 2018 will die at least two years sooner than newborn Germans, Danes, Greeks, and Portuguese; at least three years sooner than babies in South Korea, France, and Australia; and five years sooner than newborns in Japan.

America The Unexceptional: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/10/american-exceptionalism-human-rights-democracy-unexceptional/>

- If human rights are so important that the United States makes it an official feature of its diplomacy, why have Americans not applied it to their own government?
- The answer is simple and **well documented**. Racism and white supremacy drove the American refusal to enforce human rights at home, and that legacy of hypocrisy shapes human rights policy today.
- At the outset of the modern human rights movement, segregationist Southerners and their allies fought against U.S. engagement with the U.N. human rights system. They saw human rights as a threat to segregation, to its oppressive system of official racist violence, to the inequalities of Jim Crow. They worried, rightly, that the U.N. human rights bodies would, if they had the authority, put pressure on the United States to end its systemic racism.
- As a result, when the United States ratified major human rights treaties on **civil and political rights** and **racism**, the Senate demanded that they not be applicable in U.S. courts absent further legislation, which senators knew would not be forthcoming. It's true that the United States comes under periodic evaluation at the U.N. Human Rights Council and in the few treaties it has ratified, but such reviews hardly receive attention or have much impact domestically.
- In the decades since, U.S. resistance to human rights has extended beyond its racist origins. Some argue that international human rights law has always been too ambiguous and too politicized to be implemented consistently by governments. The American right has taken to arguing that human rights treaties are an effort of global elites to undermine U.S. sovereignty. Indeed, **this was the argument** against the Convention on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities, a treaty negotiated by the administration of President George W. Bush that basically implemented U.S. law on a global scale.

- First, the United States should establish an independent and permanent Human Rights Commission that can evaluate any legislation to ensure that it meets the global standards articulated by human rights bodies for decades.
- Second, Congress should begin the process of implementing the treaties the United States has ratified as a matter of U.S. law, especially the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (It has already done so for the Convention Against Torture.)
- Third, the United States should ratify all the treaties that it has so far refused, particularly those related to discrimination against women, children's rights, migrants' rights, and the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Fourth, Americans easily speak the language of civil and political rights, but they have failed to articulate a shared vision for fundamental rights to work and living wages, health care, and education at home and abroad.
- Finally, only with a commitment to human rights at home can the United States truly be a global voice for human rights. In a fit of Trumpian immaturity, then-U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley pulled the United States out of the U.N. Human Rights Council, the central human rights body of the U.N. system.

Get used to me: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1564278/get-used-to-me>

- Wasn't it Justice Thurgood Marshall (the first Afro-American judge to be elevated to the US Supreme Court) who held that "In recognising the humanity of our fellow beings, we pay ourselves the highest tribute?"
- For centuries, the continents of both China and Africa enjoyed an insularity that remoteness assured. Over time, China expanded into one gigantic nation state while Africa has contracted into 56 smaller nations. Both endured and survived invasions; both experienced colonialism and suffered exploitation; both are now making their presence felt within the First World.
- As the champion boxer Mohammad Ali Clay said to his fellow-countrymen, before his brain was addled in prize fights, "Get used to me. Black, confident, cocky; my name, not yours; my religion, not yours; my goals, my own; get used to me."

Iran vs US:

US – Iran Fight on Strait of Hormuz: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUBg6Qp_N98

How Iran’s Suleimani became US target:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtzvIBAYP_8

Qasim Suleimani Assassinated at Baghdad Airport

<https://www.dw.com/en/qassem-soleimani-timeline-of-events-following-iranian-generals-assassination/a-51910195>

Iran suffering from Sanctions amid Corona Virus:

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-08/trump-administration-will-block-iran-s-5-billion-imf-loan-bid>

Incentives for Trump to go to war with Iran post US Oil Crash: <https://www.rt.com/op-ed/486598-trump-iran-war-oil/>

Iran launches military satellite: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-52380507>

Will Trump Return to JCPOA? <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/will-trump-return-to-jcpoa-iran-us-relation-conundrum/>

- Tehran has already notified the European Union that any move to re-impose UN sanctions through the back door will trigger a vehement reaction — including, possibly, Iran exiting the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- The bottom line is that the UN arms embargo is not really a big ticket item but the sanctions is. Even if the ban gets lifted in October, it is only for small arms, whereas transfer of advanced technology such as missiles will have to wait another 3 years. Iran is largely self-reliant in defence. And its asymmetric capability to generate deterrence against US aggression is legion.
- The Trump administration realises that its sanctions policy has failed. The murder of the charismatic Iranian general Qassem Soleimani only hardened Tehran’s resolve to press ahead with the “axis of resistance”. And the world opinion militates against continued US sanctions against Iran.

To Stop a US Iran War, Finlandize Iraq: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/11/stop-us-iran-war-neutral-territory-finlandize-iraq/>

- The best way to de-escalate tensions now is to Finlandize Iraq. Shortly after World War II began, the Soviet Union demanded that Finland cede a large amount of its territory in order to protect Leningrad. However, the Finns refused and preferred to fight rather than capitulate. The Soviets invaded Finland in what became known as the Winter War.
- The conflict lasted a little more than three months, and the Soviets incurred large numbers of casualties. They also significantly lowered their demands at the peace table in 1940. “Finlandization,” described as “active and principled neutrality,” was later

inaugurated in 1948. The Finns and the Soviets agreed that Finland would not join any alliance with a power hostile to Moscow, in exchange for the Soviets respecting Finland's autonomy and democracy. Under this arrangement, Finland avoided becoming a puppet state and the Soviets avoided having a hostile neighbor

- In other words, the United States and Iran could agree to treat Iraq as a “sphere of restraint” or neutral zone, much like the U.S. and the Soviet governments agreed to treat states such as Finland and Austria during the Cold War.
- First, it would require that Iran and the United States commit to the territorial integrity of Iraq. If both Iran and the United States refuse to recognize an independent Kurdistan and attach strict conditions to aid to Iraq and the KRG specifically, it should mollify Turkey's fears.
- Second, as was the case in the Austrian State Treaty, the U.S. and Iranian governments would agree to withdraw their forces.
- Third, the United States and Iran would only provide aid to Iraq that carried the condition that the central government in Baghdad improve its military effectiveness with respect to domestic policing and counterterrorism.

The Pandemic Means the EU must regionalize its Iran Policy:

<https://carnegieeurope.eu/2020/05/15/pandemic-means-eu-must-regionalize-its-iran-policy-pub-81823>

- The Europeans should bolster the trade of drugs, medical products, and foodstuff through their Instex barter platform. This could even be used to channel the \$5bn loan that Iran requested from the IMF to battle the pandemic.
- Strengthening humanitarian trade would not only help neighbouring countries affected by a spread of infections due to travel from Iran. It would also work towards settling the dispute over Iran's nuclear program by allowing Tehran to return to the 2015 nuclear agreement. The fact that Iran responded to the US withdrawal two years ago with a [gradual reduction of compliance with its obligations](#) has in particular Israel and Saudi Arabia worried by Iran's already growing regional clout possibly being strengthened by the bomb.
- As a way out of this conundrum, the Europeans should seek to turn the Iran-only ban into one against all non-state actors in the region. Such a list would include Iranian proxies like Hezbollah, but also Saudi-supported groups active in the various regional conflicts. This would help to de-escalate regional tensions while defusing a dangerous international standoff over the validity of the multilateral system.

China vs US

Trump's action allows China to take advantage but there's an opportunity:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/trump-china-coronavirus-election-biden-a9471106.html>

Why US will keep its authority after Corona:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/16/coronavirus-pandemic-china-united-states-power-competition/>

How Covid is testing US leadership: <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2020/04/26/how-covid-19-is-testing-american-leadership/>

- US should not show power OVER China. It should show power WITH China. Collective leadership.

Romney's reckless China rhetoric risks new Cold War:

<https://www.deseret.com/opinion/2020/5/3/21241981/utah-senator-mitt-romney-reckless-china-rhetoric-risks-new-cold-war>

- Sen. Mitt Romney jumped on this bandwagon last week by calling on America to “seize the moment” of the pandemic to wage a grand geopolitical struggle against China. His argument is based on fundamental factual distortions that betray an ignorance of China's capabilities and strategy. Romney inflates the threat posed by Beijing, feeding into a reckless new Cold War narrative. He betrays conservative principles, advocating a protectionist and over-militarized strategy that will drive up deficits and weaken our economy at a time when we are already grappling with a serious recession and skyrocketing debt.
- Romney argues that China poses a much broader geopolitical challenge on both military and economic fronts based on inaccurate assessments of Chinese strategy and power. Most egregiously, he characterizes China's grand strategy as one of “economic, military and geopolitical domination.” Although China is seeking to increase its influence commensurate to its growing economy and population size, it is not seeking a strategy of “domination,” particularly not at a global level. China's ability to project significant military power beyond its “near seas” remains limited relative to the United States'.
- A wiser and more conservative strategy would resist the temptation to exaggerate the challenge posed by China. Rather than wasting taxpayer dollars to line the pockets of defense contractors, Washington should reduce budget deficits, bolster diplomatic capabilities and invest in domestic infrastructure. This would strengthen America's global influence relative to China by making our political system more attractive and our economy more competitive. Such rebalancing toward responsible statecraft and domestic renewal is the best way for America to seize this moment.

The 5 ways US-China Competition is Hardening:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/18/united-states-competition-coronavirus-pandemic-tensions/>

- **Military Competition**
- **Economic decoupling**
- **Technology**
- **The Future of Order**
- **Information Competition**

The Great Decoupling: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/14/china-us-pandemic-economy-tensions-trump-coronavirus-covid-new-cold-war-economics-the-great-decoupling/>

- Decoupling refers to the deliberate dismantling—and eventual re-creation elsewhere—of some of the sprawling cross-border supply chains that have defined globalization and especially the U.S.-China relationship in recent decades.
- The U.S. ambassador on the spot in an Asian economic powerhouse put it bluntly in a cable to the secretary of state in Washington: Don't cut them off. Give them some "economic elbow-room," or they'll be forced to carve out an economic empire of their own by force. But Washington was in the grip of economic nationalists battling a historic economic downturn. The White House, consequently, was deaf to the Ambassador Joseph Grew's [pleas](#) from Tokyo in 1935. Within a few years, the United States ramped up economic pressure on Japan, culminating in a trade and oil embargo. Six years after Grew wrote his dispatch, the two countries were engaged in total war.
- The threat of a great decoupling is a potentially historic break, an interruption perhaps only comparable to the sudden sundering of the first huge wave of globalization in 1914, when deeply intertwined economies such as Britain and Germany, and later the United States, threw themselves into a barrage of self-destruction and economic nationalism that didn't stop for 30 years. This time, though, decoupling is driven not by war but by peacetime populist urges.
- Undoubtedly, most experts and officials agree, brewing trade tensions between Washington and Beijing—amplified by the coronavirus pandemic—will force some multinational companies to alter their business models, reorienting their supply chains closer to U.S. shores. Across the fractious political spectrum in Washington, Republicans and Democrats alike agree the United States should alter its business relationship with China to varying degrees. But if the fallout from the pandemic passes quickly, and especially if Trump and his protectionist "America first" agenda are defeated in the November election, the clamor to decouple from China could begin to ebb as politicians confront just how complex it is to untangle parts of the world's two largest economies. Not least of the problems Washington would have to confront is that China is the second-largest U.S. creditor, holding more than \$1 trillion in U.S. debt.
- Now, Trump administration officials talk of rolling out a concept called the "Economic Prosperity Network" of like-minded countries, organizations, and businesses. The aim is in part to convince U.S. firms to extricate themselves from China and instead partner with members of the so-called network to reduce U.S. economic dependence on Beijing—seen as a key national security vulnerability. If a U.S. manufacturing company can't move jobs from China back to the United States, for example, it could at least move those jobs to another more U.S.-friendly country, such as Vietnam or India.
- China, in some ways, has been pursuing its own form of decoupling for more than a decade, since it launched a campaign to develop more advanced technologies at home and rely less on U.S. and other Western suppliers, noted Ashley Feng of the Center for a New American Security.
- One reason that the pandemic is creating such an opening for a fundamental reshaping of the global economy is because most of the economy, in the United States and elsewhere,

has been shut down for the first part of the year. That creates a rare, if traumatic, opportunity to start with something like a clean slate.

- Global supply chains came about in the first place because they offered lower costs and greater efficiencies for manufacturers—to the benefit of consumers nearly everywhere, if not to certain displaced manufacturing workers. And many companies continue to invest in China not as a source of global production, but to serve one of the world's biggest consumer markets—witness Tesla's mammoth factory in Shanghai to churn out electric cars for the Chinese market.
- The first wave of decoupling will likely take place in medical supply chains, a vulnerability highlighted by difficulties getting masks, gloves, and even ventilators during the pandemic. And supply chains in many advanced technologies, from telecommunications to semiconductors, are also being reshaped for security reasons. Advocates of decoupling like Hawley hope the trend will expand to include broader swaths of manufacturing.
- The United States has already thrown out the idea of strategic engagement with China and openly treats Beijing as its major geopolitical rival. China has taken advantage of the pandemic to **ramp up** pressure on Taiwan, which it regards as a renegade territory.
- Strategic engagement, which guided successive U.S. administrations since practically the first secret Richard Nixon-era trips to China, has been **declared dead** even by former Obama administration officials. With unemployment at record levels and the economy slumping, nobody—and especially not presumptive Democratic nominee Biden—wants to go easy on China.
- In the end, U.S. efforts to roll back the one part of globalization that it can somewhat control—global supply chains and trade—will be at best a partial and imperfect solution that will only aggravate the other challenges. Choosing economic decoupling as the answer to today's problems, said Zoellick, is simply inviting future headaches.

Foreign Policy by Example: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-06-05/protests-pandemic-world-watching?utm_medium=partners&utm_source=cf&utm_campaign=haass

- Today's American travails have been widely seen and heard outside the United States. Globalization is a conveyor belt—one that in this instance carried stark images of police brutality across the globe. If one lesson of COVID-19 is that what starts in Wuhan does not stay in Wuhan, one lesson of the killing of George Floyd is that what happens in Minneapolis does not stay there. Comparisons between the current situation and the United States of 1968 are overdrawn, in no small part because what is going on now is arguably more serious, but one mantra from that time remains apt: "The Whole World is Watching."

- The United States has long retained many positive features when seen from abroad: excellent universities, innovative companies, and a tradition (currently compromised) of openness to immigration. The election of Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012 seemed to show that racism had abated to a significant degree; the gains of the civil, women's, and gay rights movements were a source of inspiration elsewhere; and even the country's multiple experiences with impeachment seemed to showcase a system in which no person was above the law. Now, however, the image of a United States consistent with former President Ronald Reagan's "shining city on a hill" grows ever more distant in the eyes of the world.

As China vs US Competition Grows, will covert regime change make a return?

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/as-us-china-competition-grows-will-covert-regime-change-make-a-return/>

- The stakes are non-trivial. If covertly toppling hostile governments is indeed an easy, cheap, and effective way of promoting friendly regimes around the globe, U.S. policymakers would be wise to adapt the Cold War playbook to the current rivalry with China. Unfortunately, the track record of covert regime change is decidedly mixed, often producing negative and unintended consequences for intervener and target alike.
- The main reason leaders find covert action attractive is that it reduces political costs. At the international level, plausible deniability can help states manage the thorny problem of escalation, even when [rivals detect](#) one another's operations.
- Understanding executive and congressional interests in the quiet option is essential for assessing the implications of a potential resurgence in covert regime change against the backdrop of U.S.-China competition. Taking stock of its track record over time is equally important. The most obvious metric on which to evaluate this issue is operational success. That is, how often did covert attempts at regime change actually accomplish their intended goal? The answer is not very often. According to [Lindsey O'Rourke](#), such operations succeeded just 39 percent of the time. O'Rourke further notes that "the covert operations that easily toppled their targets also tended to be the ones that were least needed from a geostrategic perspective in that they involved

overthrowing weak states with limited international political or economic influence.”

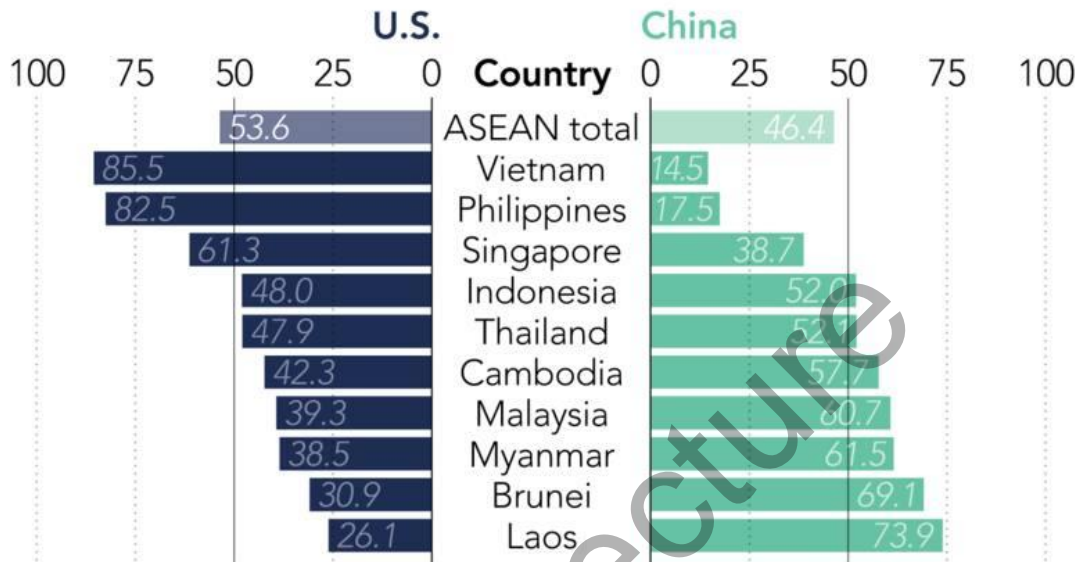
- It is also worth noting that advances in [information and communication technology](#) are making it harder than ever for states to maintain any semblance of plausible deniability. The secret raid that resulted in the death of Osama bin Laden in May of 2011 is a prime example. Although it wasn't technically a covert operation since Obama announced it to the world afterwards, the fact that the whole ordeal was [inadvertently live-tweeted](#) by a Pakistani IT consultant in the Abbottabad neighborhood highlights the challenges of secrecy in the 21st century.

China Gaining Influence Over US in South East Asia:

- The CSIS report's findings are largely in line with what the ISEAS survey found: China is gaining ground in the region and the United States is losing it. The CSIS team, as its top finding, notes that “China is seen as holding slightly more political power and influence than the United States in Southeast Asia today and considerably more power relative to the United States in 10 years.”
- Separately, in economic terms, “the region views China as much more influential than the United States today, and this gap is expected to grow in the next 10 years.” Analysts will likely spend much time debating how much of this shift was inevitable and how much of it — and to what degree — was accelerated by the policies and diplomatic style of the Trump administration.
- It's clear from the CSIS effort — and from speaking to many of these same strategic elites in the region — that the defining geopolitical question for each and every Southeast Asian capital is how competition between the United States and China may shake out. Interestingly, with the exception of elites in Vietnam and the Philippines, who cited the possibility of conflict in the South China Sea as their top concern, all others worried about the direct and indirect effects of U.S.-China strategic competition.
- 7/10 countries preferred china

Survey finds Southeast Asians split between U.S. and China

If ASEAN were forced to align itself with one of the two strategic rivals, which should it choose? (in percent)



Online survey of about 1,300 respondents in Southeast Asia conducted between Nov. 12 and Dec. 1
Source: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

The Power of Historical Memory:

- The Thucydides Trap is an intellectual trap for the unwary when uncritically applied to China. China is not a rising power; it is a returning power. The psychology is different.
- It is essential to recognise that America's 'adversary' is the People's Republic of China (PRC) led by the Communist Party of China (CCP), not 'the Chinese'. The millions of people of Chinese descent in the world are not automatically aligned with the PRC. To refer to the 'Chinese' challenge is intellectually flabby and politically indefensible.
- The psychology of a returning power is very different from that of a rising power. Imperial Germany at the beginning of the 20th century sought to elbow its way into the circle of great powers and seize its place in the sun. Ironically, German Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow, who coined the phrase, was speaking of Germany's acquisition of territory in China.
- 2019 marked the centenary of the Treaty of Versailles, as well as the May Fourth Movement. China sent over 100,000 workers to France during WWI, hoping to gain a place at the victors' table and rid itself of the unequal treaties. At Versailles, China was betrayed.
- The German concession in Shandong was handed over to the Japanese, instead of being given back to China. On May Fourth protests broke out all over China at this shabby

treatment. Deputy National Security Advisor Matt Pottinger invoked the Movement in a speech seeking to undermine the CCP.

- This is ironic, since disenchantment with the Western democracies caused China to turn to autocratic countries like the Soviet Union and even defeated Germany for models. This led ultimately to the foundation of the CCP.
- The memory of racial injustice festers. The unequal treaties resulted in Western enclaves ruled by foreigners, where Chinese were treated as inferiors in their own country. A Japanese proposal for an article on racial equality in the Treaty of Versailles was rejected, by America among others.
- **An American official said that America knows how to ‘spend an adversary into oblivion’. A story is told of Croesus, the last king of Lydia and renowned for his wealth. Croesus wanted to attack Persia. He consulted the Oracle at Delphi, which declared that ‘if Croesus goes to war with Persia, he will destroy a great empire’. Croesus confidently went to war and was soundly beaten. The great empire he destroyed was his own.**
- **Perhaps America might learn from history.**
-

US vs Russia

The New START Deal: <https://www.rt.com/op-ed/488480-china-nuclear-arsenal-disarmament/>

- Russia seems willing to renew the new START agreement, which would be simple in procedural terms. The Trump administration, though, seems determined to abandon the New Start treaty unless it can expand it to bring China on board. There is absolutely no interest in Beijing in joining the regime. And it is now far too late to draft a comprehensive new document anyway.
- In the dangerous waters of a post-New START world, perhaps the only way to navigate clear of the rocks and shoals of nuclear conflict is for China to escalate its development of a viable strategic nuclear force in order to enable the kind of meaningful trilateral strategic nuclear arms control the world needs to survive.
- The turmoil in the United States, set before the eyes of the world, raises questions about American power. To distinguish between absolute power and available power is useful here. The country’s absolute power, above all military and economic power, is still considerable. The bigger question concerns its available power. Is a country with 42 million people unemployed, a declining GDP, shuttered factories, widespread protest that at times turns violent, and deep internal divisions in a position to act internationally?
- The answer to this question is anything but clear. Available power consists not just of military and economic instruments but also the ability and the will to use them—and this measure is the one most sensitive to the condition in which the United States now finds itself. The impulse to turn inward and do less in the world was already rising after the United States overreached in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now, the country faces formidable

domestic strife, which will likely quell much of the remaining appetite to intervene abroad, however justified on occasion it might be. Some of those who bemoan American missteps over the past two decades may welcome such an inward turn. But no less dangerous than overreach is underreach—a United States that fails to act to protect its interests. Such a United States will not be able to isolate itself from a world in which viruses, greenhouse gases, terrorists, and cyberattacks cross borders at will.

- The moment is therefore dangerous. Three decades after the end of the Cold War on terms more favorable than any optimist could have hoped, the state of the world is deteriorating. A traditional security agenda has reemerged, including a revisionist Russia, a rising and more assertive China, and ever more capable hostile middle powers, such as Iran and North Korea; what is more, these concerns share the field with a new security agenda that includes terrorists with global reach, climate change, and pandemics.

Russia's Cynicism is infecting US Politics: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/04/russia-united-states-mirror-politics-putin-trump-george-floyd-protests/>

- Once, the United States **sought** to remake Russia in its own image. But with an irony worthy of Russian **literature**, it is now actually Americans who are **becoming** more like **them**. The French political theorist Alexis de Tocqueville **wrote** that the United States and Russia were the twin drivers of modernity, two nations that, as he put it, started out from different points but tended toward the same end. He may yet be proved right.
- Russia has long been what political scientists call a **low-trust society**, and the United States is swiftly becoming one. These societies are marked by the widespread lack of social confidence and reliance on familistic, tribal connections as the basis for all cooperation, which of course comes at the expense of a broader ability to trust strangers. They are also characterized by the almost **occult role of corruption** in politics, where though “individuals participate in and directly perceive modern secondary organizations ... [they] reject them as illegitimate or corrupt.”
- Both were born in revolution, always more **ideas** than countries. Russia might not think of itself as a multicultural country like the United States, but Moscow has always been an ersatz state, one that assimilated the aspects of its rivals it most feared. From **hijacking** Kyiv's history to adopting the mannerisms of French absolutism, hardly any of the things Russia is most famous for—**Orthodoxy**, **communism**, hell, even **vodka**—originated in Russia.
- In Russia, one has the “**sense of being surrounded by lies**,” a condition Americans are **coming** to appreciate—with Russian **encouragement**. Russians grew accustomed over decades of Communist rule to exhibit self-preserving **circumspection** about the concept of truth since the Soviet apparatchiks might change it on a whim. Getting caught on the wrong side of the party line was dangerous.
- This cynical mindset was fed conspiracy theories that **convinced** the Russian people that the world was against them and that change is impossible. Like the insatiable appetite for nostalgia, “[c]onspiracy theory replaces ideology with a mix of self-pity, paranoia, self-

importance, and entertainment.” In a world controlled by dark forces puppeteering every event, people seek strongmen who claim to be able to protect them.

- As Putin works to **crystalize** Russia’s **autumnal autocracy**, the United States is flirting with its own. Where once Moscow sought to emulate the West, it is now Americans who are building a **pastiche** version of Putinism, complete with rampant **cronyism** and Soviet-style “**alternative facts**.” In hindsight, it should not have come as such a surprise that Russia’s current crop of cultural appropriators turned the West’s most recently **successful** weapons—the **free market** and **advertising**—against it.

What’s Russia’s New Nuclear Deterrence Basic Principles?

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/whats-in-russias-new-nuclear-deterrence-basic-principles/>

- The Russian Federation reserves the right to use nuclear weapons in response to the use of nuclear and other types of weapons of mass destruction against it and/or its allies, as well as in the event of aggression against the Russian Federation with the use of conventional weapons when the very existence of the state is in jeopardy.

US – Afghan Peace Talks:

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/did-pakistan-win-the-afghanistan-war/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_peace_process

<https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-taliban-peace-deal-agreement-afghanistan-war>

<https://warontherocks.com/2020/04/chinas-strategic-assessment-of-afghanistan/>

Will US Taliban deal lower India’s leverage in Afghanistan:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/taliban-deal-limit-india-leverage-afghanistan-200408110120625.html>

- India cultivated a strong relation with afghan govt after 2001 with a total aid of 2 billion dollars.
- Taliban are unlikely to work with India
- India does not believe that conditions for peace talks exist
- India backs Ashraf Ghani
- India will have to do a lot of revisions if Taliban take over

Troubled Afghan Peace Process: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1554404/troubled-afghan-peace-process>

- On his part, President Ashraf Ghani insists on a reduction in violence before he frees more prisoners.
- With violence on the uptick in Afghanistan, the aim of the parleys in Rawalpindi was to seek Pakistan’s help on different aspects of the peace process including a reduction of violence in line with Pakistan’s commitment to a political solution of the Afghan conflict.

- Although the main impediment to the peace process is the impasse over the prisoner exchange, the tussle between President Ghani and Dr Abdullah Abdullah is also clouding prospects.

Corona Virus is a Ladder for Taliban: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/06/taliban-afghanistan-coronavirus-pandemic/>

- They are filling the government's gap by helping people through relief activities

The Taliban and the Al Qaeda: Enduring Partnership or Liability?

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/the-taliban-and-al-qaeda-enduring-partnership-or-liability/>

- While the agreement states that there are unspecified "enforcement mechanisms" to validate the conditions of the deal, there seem to be no visible changes in the relationship between al-Qaeda and the Taliban as of now. Al-Qaeda's relationship with the Taliban has not always been steady and while the two groups have had their differences, their relationship has remained intact for more than two decades now. Recent developments in Afghanistan have shown that the Taliban is unlikely to abandon al-Qaeda and may even permit the latter's activities as long as they benefit the Taliban operationally and are not traceable back to them.
- Al-Qaeda and the Taliban got along due to a similar understanding of a fundamentalist form of Islam known as Wahhabism that they twisted to suit their own beliefs. The Taliban mixed the pre-Islamic Pashtun tribal code, *Pashtunwali*, with Wahhabism, but lacked credible Islamic scholars who could give credibility to their ultra-strict [version](#) of Islam as most Taliban had come from the most [backward tribes](#) of eastern Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda, however, mixes Salafi and *takfiri* concepts with Wahhabism and its members usually came from educated backgrounds and provided the guidance that the Taliban required.
- Al-Qaeda leaders Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri pledged allegiance to Taliban leader Mullah Omar and accepted Omar as *Amir al-Mu'minin* (Commander of the Faithful) of all Sunni Muslims. Al-Zawahiri would later re-affirm this pledge to Omar's successors, though they were not accepted publicly. Afterwards al-Qaeda gained considerable freedom to operate

in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, and were even allowed use of national resources for their activities. In return, al-Qaeda doled out money to the Taliban.

- However, there were some tensions when al-Qaeda was becoming blatant in its attacks and statements, after which Omar shifted bin Laden to Kandahar to keep him under observation.
- In April 2020, on the seventh anniversary of Omar's death, the Taliban [praised](#) his defense of al-Qaeda and bin Laden after 9/11 in a eulogy. The Taliban had put out a similar statement in October 2019 and in July 2019 the Taliban in a video [justified](#) the 9/11 attacks. Even after the U.S.-Taliban agreement, the Taliban have not denounced al-Qaeda and rather have done the opposite.
- In the present day al-Qaeda appears to be operating clandestinely both alongside and independent of the Taliban. A United Nations [report](#) claimed that al-Qaeda and the Taliban had at least six meetings over the last one year at the top level with regard to operations, training, and sanctuary for al-Qaeda by the Taliban in the event of a U.S. withdrawal. The most interesting of these meetings occurred during spring 2019 in Helmand province, in which top veteran Taliban officials reportedly met with Hamza bin Laden (announced dead in July 2019 by the United States) to reassure him personally that there would be no change to the Taliban-al-Qaeda relationship at any cost. However, according to *TIME* Magazine, Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen categorically [denied](#) these reports.
- In May 2019, al-Zawahiri gave a [video eulogy](#) for the deceased Jalaluddin Haqqani of the Taliban's Haqqani network. Jalaluddin's son Sirajuddin became the deputy leader of the Taliban after his death. Al-Zawahiri [met with](#) Hafiz and Yahya Haqqani to discuss the Afghan peace process in February 2020.

Yahya Haqqani has been the primary Haqqani Network liaison with al-Qaeda since 2009 and the Haqqani Network has been historically close to al-Qaeda.

- In September 2019, as negotiations were ongoing between the United States and the Taliban in Qatar, a joint U.S.-Afghan raid on a suspected Taliban-al-Qaeda compound in Helmand killed the leader of al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), Asim Umar, along with multiple foreign nationals, including the group's deputy, its "courier" to al-Zawahiri, multiple foreign females, and several Taliban fighters. This is a strong indication of continued patronage of high-level al-Qaeda members by the Taliban. Prior to his death Umar had praised current Taliban Emir Haibatullah Akhundzada's leadership in an Eid al-Fitr address.
- AQIS changed the name of its Urdu language magazine *Nawa-e-Afghan Jihad* to *Nawa-e-Ghazwa-e-Hind* (NGH) in March 2020 after the U.S.-Taliban deal. This name change may have been done to give the impression that the Indian subcontinent would be the priority theater for AQIS after its apparently successful jihad against U.S. forces in Afghanistan alongside the Taliban. This could be an attempt to create artificial distance between the Taliban and al-Qaeda after the U.S.-Taliban agreement. In the April issue of NGH, AQIS for the first time mentions its role in the fight against the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) under the command of the Taliban. They helped them specifically in preparing improvised explosive devices and conducting special night-time operations to capture ISKP strongholds in Nangarhar province from August-October 2019.
- After al-Zawahiri pledged allegiance to Taliban Emir Akhundzada in 2016 the latter did not publicly acknowledge the pledge, but at the same time there is no indication that it was rejected. Al-Qaeda's regional affiliates are, in theory, loyal to the Taliban's emir by virtue of their allegiance to al-Zawahiri. Therefore, al-Qaeda's members around the globe are now, technically, bound by an oath to Akhundzada as well. Ever since the emergence of IS, al-Qaeda has sought to discredit the IS "Caliph" by promoting the Taliban's emir as the more theologically correct leader of Muslims. Akhundzada not reciprocating al-Zawahiri's pledge can be seen as an indication of the Taliban cutting ties

with al-Qaeda (as [pointed out](#) by Shaheen) but it could also be seen as the relationship becoming more clandestine. To demonstrate that the Taliban is actually breaking ties with al-Qaeda, it has to publicly reject al-Zawahiri's pledge.

US Crusade Against ICC dashes Afghan Dreams of Justice:

- That being said, the current cases presented by the Afghan government are not sufficient for the prosecutor to be [convinced](#). Out of the 151 cases, 47 of them are attributed to detention centers, 33 cases are against the Taliban, 26 cases are against the Afghan security forces, and the rest are unidentified perpetrators. Fewer than 30 cases have been taken to court, much less seen convictions. The fundamental problem is not only the narrow reach of the cases but also who exactly is being targeted.
- For instance, senior officials of the Afghan National Police in Kandahar have been [accused](#) of torture, but none of those cases was mentioned in the investigations of the Afghan government. The government's record has always been [poor on judicial independence](#), partly due to a lack of capacity but also due to a lack of political will and a desire to maintain a grip on political power. Abdul Rashid Dostum, Ghani's former vice president and a notorious military commander who for decades has been accused of torture and rape, was [promoted](#) to the marshal of the armed forces as a necessary component of the government's power-sharing deal with Abdullah Abdullah. This gives a sense of validity to the idea that a more powerful Afghan government will seek to prevent any investigations, be it internal or external, into their senior-level officials, pushing them to settle for a few high-profile cases and mainly mid-level offenders who carried out orders from their superiors.
- The impact of the United States and Afghanistan limiting the ICC's ability to investigate is gravely severe, not for the American officials or Afghan elite, but for the countless ordinary Afghans who must deal with the extraordinary consequences. Without a strong and independent body genuinely

investigating the crimes committed, Afghans may very well never receive the justice they deserve. A project conducted by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, Al Jazeera, and Bellingcat [tracked](#) just 10 joint U.S.-Afghan airstrikes on family compounds in the past two years. The samples revealed that 115 people were killed, more than 70 of them children. These are just a handful of the thousands of airstrikes launched every year in Afghanistan. The United States [carried](#) out over 7,400 airstrikes last year alone.

Palestine – Israel:

Netanyahu's Annexation plan is a threat to Israel's national security:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/23/netanyahus-annexation-plan-is-a-threat-to-israels-national-security/>

- 220 former Israeli military generals against the annexation.
- American Jewish community against it via Isreal Policy Forum
- Will cause problems with Egypt who is an intermediary between Israel and hamas and also fighting ISIS in partnership with Israel.
- Will cause problems with Jordan which is a geographical buffer with threats like Iran
- Too much risk, too little reward. Israel already has full security control over this territory
- Will trigger chain of reactions beyond control. Palestinians might rise up. Palestinian security coordination may cease. Hamas rise.
- Trump called it Deal of the Century and backs the annexation.
- Israel may risk staying a Jewish democracy

Palestine: The Third way forward: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/palestine-200518141158305.html>

- It is important to remember that contrary to newspeak there is no "Palestine problem" but rather an "Israeli colonial problem" - the region's last colonial problem - and the Palestinians may prove to be its only solution.
- Surrender is not an option. Do not even think about it. Accepting the so-called "deal of the century" put forward by US President Donald Trump and his ally Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is to surrender to Israeli hegemony. It means living in captivity in perpetuity.
- The lopsided peace process has been terribly divisive for the Palestinians. It is what asymmetrical peace processes do. Therefore, abandoning it must lead to some form of national unity.

- Comprising almost half the population between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, the Palestinians need to immunise themselves against persistent Israeli repression and marginalisation.
- As the PLO hedged its bets exclusively on the US-led peace process, it abandoned much of the international solidarity movement. Today, Palestinians need to rebuild links to European, Latin American, African and other foreign solidarity movements. These would be essential for their struggle moving forward, just as they were in ending apartheid in South Africa.
- Winning Jewish support for justice and freedom in Palestine is imperative to dispel Israeli propaganda, and indispensable to roll back Israeli hegemony
- Palestinian endgame should be justice and freedom. They are not only an attainable goal that everyone will rally behind, but also a prerequisite for peace and security in the region. They require changing Israel's calculus, not defeating it, or destroying it, as Israeli leaders whine and warn. This is how major powers gave up their colonialism and how South Africa ended its system of apartheid. They were forced to reconsider the calculus of gain and loss.

Netanyahu could be a statesman, but he prefers to be a provocateur:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/03/netanyahu-could-be-a-statesman-but-he-prefers-to-be-a-provocateur/>

- It didn't have to be this way. After all, even by the standards of mercurial politicians, Netanyahu always stood out as being remarkably Janus-faced. He has been both good and bad for Israel.
- One of his faces belongs to a strategic thinker and statesman when it comes to diplomacy and national security. It's the face of a skilled political operator at election time and a policy pragmatist when in power.
- The other face is that of a demagogue, ready to ride roughshod over institutions and to fan hatreds and resentments when the need arises. The two faces are very different, but they both reflect a deep cynicism, or at least a very Hobbesian view of the world, that Netanyahu has employed for good and for ill.
- Netanyahu's positive side is often ignored by people outside Israel, who tend to dismiss him as a warmonger, racist, enemy of democratic institutions, and oppressor of Palestinians. Even in Israel, media outlets have adopted much the same line. The prime minister's desperate campaign tactics and his attacks on the judicial system have given them plenty of fodder.
- Until the coronavirus struck, the Israeli economy had enjoyed nearly two decades of uninterrupted growth, much of it a legacy of Netanyahu's term as finance minister in the early 2000s, when he undertook sweeping structural reforms. Before the coronavirus pandemic, unemployment had reached record lows, wages were rising, and consumers were spending. Even lower-income Israelis, who are Netanyahu's most reliable supporters, had fared well.

- Not everyone will agree with Netanyahu's foreign and defense policy, but measured by the cold standards of realpolitik, it has been an undeniable success. Israel has successfully waged a cold war with Iran. Netanyahu has developed a behind-the-scenes but very real partnership with the Gulf Arab countries. Further afield, he has cultivated strong personal relationships with Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump. He has leveraged Israel's high-tech industry into closer trade and political ties with China and India.
- Annexation isn't in Israel's interest, but it is an insurance policy against threats to Netanyahu's continued rule—and that means the prime minister's worst qualities will come to the fore. Israel faces immense challenges in coping with the economic fallout of the coronavirus; it needs a statesman, not a leader whose modus operandi is divide and rule.

Stop Calling Israel a Jewish Democracy: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/08/netanyahu-annexation-palestinians-stop-calling-israel-a-jewish-democracy/>

- Long before Trump became president, many U.S. liberals and conservatives alike have taken for granted that Israel is a Jewish state whose Jewishness must be protected. For most, the definition is qualified by insisting on Israel being both Jewish and democratic—something that the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel asserts.
- This notion of a Jewish democracy has served to comfort liberal advocates of a Jewish state, who are not normally inclined to champion states defined by ethnic or religious nationalism; the word democracy makes it all seem fine.
- If being both Jewish and democratic were possible at all, Israel could presumably be defined as a national home “of **the Jewish people and of all its citizens**” equally. But the fact is there has always, since 1948, been a concession to Jewishness over democracy—by allowing Jews around the world to become Israeli citizens while denying others the same right, including Palestinians whose families left or were expelled from what is now Israel before it became an independent state. Beyond this, Israel could presumably still be blind to religion and ethnicity.
- But Israel has never been blind to the religion or ethnicity of its citizens—and since the passage of the 2018 “**nation-state**” law, it has even more boldly emphasized its Jewishness and downgraded everyone who's not Jewish. This law defines Israel as “the nation state of the Jewish People” and holds that “the exercise of the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish People”; it makes no mention of democracy or equality for others.

- A common argument employed on behalf of a two-state solution—that **Israel would otherwise lose either its Jewishness or its democracy**—emphasizes demography: If Israel annexes the West Bank, it would cease to be a Jewish-majority state, as Arabs could outnumber Jews; to preserve its Jewish character, Israel would have to be nondemocratic. Arabs are thus inadvertently posited as a demographic problem if not a potential threat. Proclaiming that Israel’s Arab citizens are the “ultimate enemy” is but an extreme conclusion of demographic emphasis.

Europeans pushing to boycott Israel over annexation should think twice:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/10/israel-annexation-boycott-europe-palestinians-netanyahu/>

- That some European governments would threaten sanctions against Israel while refusing to impose sanctions on **Iran** and **Hezbollah** is disappointing. If they’re serious, these European governments should be on notice: Their companies will pay the price.
- Three-fifths of the 50 U.S. states have already adopted laws prohibiting boycotts of Israel. Most prohibit government contracts with companies that engage in a broad range of boycott-related activities. Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, Texas, and eight other states mandate the divestment of public pension funds from such firms. New York is **considering** doing the same.
- Typically, these states publish lists of restricted companies. Illinois’s list, for example, includes companies found to **engage in** “actions that are politically motivated and are intended to penalize, inflict economic harm on, or otherwise limit commercial relations with the State of Israel or companies based in the State of Israel or in territories controlled by the State of Israel.” This definition of boycotting Israel would apply to firms that comply with such a boycott **recommended** by the United Nations Human Rights Office and by a proposed boycott law in **Ireland**.
- The potential financial impact of divestment by U.S. states on European businesses and economies is substantial.
- A review of annual financial reports of public investment funds in U.S. states with divestment laws revealed total holdings of international equities amounting to at least \$170 billion, much of it in European companies. With the proposed bill in the state of New York, this total could increase to more than \$200 billion. One Illinois pension fund alone **listed** the European multinationals Roche, Nestle, Novartis, Allianz, and Enel among its top direct holdings in international equities. Undisclosed holdings in European companies via private equity funds account for billions more.
- If a company is found to be engaged in boycotting Israel, these states’ pension systems are required to divest its shares and warn fund managers against including the company in indirect investments, including index and private equity funds.
- The laws don’t just affect companies found to be boycotting Israel directly. Any company that uses socially responsible investing criteria for its own portfolio investments or corporate pension fund is also at risk of U.S. state blacklisting if these criteria contribute to anti-Israel boycotts.
- In 2018, the company decided to boycott listings in Israeli settlements in the West Bank, but it had little choice but to reverse its decision after **Illinois**, **Texas**, and **Florida** took steps to blacklist Airbnb from

future investment. Had Airbnb remained on these blacklists, fund managers and private equity firms with state pension business would have been required to steer clear of the company's most recent funding rounds and any future initial public offering. Airbnb was also **forced to settle** multiple lawsuits filed in the United States alleging that the company was engaging in discriminatory practices, given that it did not apply its policy to all disputed territories such as Western Sahara and Northern Cyprus.

Corona Virus Overview Impacts:

<https://www.belfercenter.org/topic/3241/overview#!introduction>

Corona Virus Disease:

WHO alerted of Pneumonia cases in Wuhan -31st December 2019

7th Jan – New type of Corona Virus disease identified

12th Jan – China shares genetic sequence of CoVid 19

Corona Virus Timeline: <https://www.nytimes.com/article/coronavirus-timeline.html>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/08-04-2020-who-timeline---covid-19>

April: Human/Clinical Trials start in China, US, and some other developed countries

Critical Analysis of the magnitude of impact of social distancing in poor countries:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/10/poor-countries-social-distancing-coronavirus/>

Article for why COVID 19 is not engineered:

<https://www.technologynetworks.com/genomics/news/scientists-firmly-determine-that-sars-cov-2-was-not-engineered-332244>

Documentary for why COVID 19 is engineered:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gdd7dtDaYmM&feature=youtu.be>

Wuhan Lab blamed by US for Corona Spread: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1550025/the-wuhan-lab-at-the-core-of-a-virus-controversy>

- Earlier the US national intelligence director's office said it was still investigating how the virus began. But the office said it had determined Covid-19 "was not manmade or genetically modified".

What does the WHO do: <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-does-world-health-organization-do>

- Created in 1948 as part of the United Nations, the WHO has a broad mandate to guide and coordinate international health policy. Its primary activities include developing partnerships with other global health initiatives, conducting research, setting norms, providing technical support, and monitoring health trends around the world.
- Today, the WHO monitors and coordinates activities concerning many health-related issues, including genetically modified foods, climate change, tobacco and drug use, and road safety. The WHO is also an arbiter of norms and best practices. Since 1977, the organization has maintained a list of essential medicines it encourages hospitals to stock. The WHO has since made a similar list of diagnostic tests, and it has plans to add devices, such as X-ray and ultrasound machines.
- In its 2019 strategy, the WHO identified three priorities [PDF] for its work over the next several years:
 - providing health coverage to one billion more people;
 - protecting one billion more people from health emergencies such as epidemics; and
 - ensuring another one billion people enjoy better health and well-being, including protection from non-infectious diseases such as cancer.
- The WHO is headquartered in Geneva and has six regional and 149 country offices. It is controlled by delegates from its 194 member states, who vote on policy and elect the director-general. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, previously Ethiopia's foreign minister, was elected to a five-year term in 2017. He is the WHO's first leader from Africa, and his election was the first time all WHO countries had an equal vote.
- The most recent two-year goal was \$4.4 billion. About 20 percent of the budget comes from mandatory dues paid by members; the rest is made up of voluntary donations from governments and private partners. The top voluntary contributors include the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Unlike dues, voluntary contributions are often earmarked for specific initiatives, which can complicate the WHO's ability to set its own course.
- The WHO relies on its member states to monitor and report crises in a timely fashion. Countries have historically been hesitant to report outbreaks, often because they're fearful of economic repercussions. In 2003, for example, China denied for months that it was suffering an outbreak of the infectious disease that was eventually identified as SARS. Before the WHO declared China free of SARS in 2004, the

disease killed more than three hundred people. In Ethiopia, Tedros himself was accused of downplaying cholera outbreaks while he was the country's health minister. He has denied these claims.

- China alerted WHO officials of a growing outbreak in the city of Wuhan on December 31, 2019. The WHO declared a PHEIC one month later and drew up a strategic preparedness and response plan that initially called for \$675 million in funding from donors. However, by April 9, it had received just over half that amount. In March, after the virus had spread to more than one hundred countries, the WHO declared the outbreak a pandemic. While such a designation generally does not affect how the WHO addresses a crisis, it amplifies the call for countries to develop their own emergency response plans.
- In addition to increased scrutiny over its role in the coronavirus crisis, many critics have faulted the WHO for slow and poorly coordinated responses to previous outbreaks. That includes the 2014 Ebola outbreak, in which it waited five months before declaring a PHEIC, despite pleas from groups such as Doctors Without Borders.
- Responding to some of these criticisms, the organization instituted several reforms intended to improve its responses, including the creation of a reserve force of public health workers and a \$100 million emergency fund. The WHO also added an incident management system that allows it to place medical responders, equipment, and supplies, such as medicines, on the ground right away while it coordinates the broader response.
- Under Tedros, the WHO is attempting to tackle another of its most enduring problems: political friction between its headquarters and its six regional offices, which critics say have enjoyed too much autonomy.

Corona Virus Political Impact:

Rise of Authoritarianism during Corona Virus:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1548793/permanent-plague>

China taking advantage of Corona Crisis:

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/04/09/amid-coronavirus-pandemic-china-seeks-larger-role-on-world-stage-pub-81515>

Why Europe won't turn pro China? <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/04/15/no-covid-19-isn-t-turning-europe-pro-china-yet-pub-81571>

Politics in Afghanistan Amid Corona: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1550446/afghan-politics-vs-infection>

Globalization after Corona: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/17/globalization-trade-war-after-coronavirus-pandemic/>

China's Wooing of Europe: <https://www.economist.com/china/2020/04/16/chinas-post-covid-propaganda-push>

Why Muslims don't believe in idea of liberal world order:
<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/do-muslims-believe-in-mantras-of-liberal-world-order-why-not/>

Geopolitical schadenfreude US IRAN CHINA Corona:
<https://www.trtworld.com/article/34853>

Rise of Authoritarianism and Regionalism post corona:
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1550700/post-crisis-global-realities>

Netanyahu and Gantz sign power sharing deal: <https://p.dw.com/p/3bBgh>

Do Authoritarian Countries handle pandemic better?
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/03/31/do-authoritarian-or-democratic-countries-handle-pandemics-better-pub-81404>

- Response is influenced by: Lessons from SARS epidemic, Legitimate Political Systems (influencing degree of compliance, China most trusted by citizens), State Capabilities, Dependency on Science than Ideology

How will global system be shifted after Covid pandemic:
<https://www.trtworld.com/article/35614>

- The future of the EU will be up for debate, more than it already is today. Some EU members have been left to fight against this pandemic on their own
- China's position as a center of trade attraction will be open to debate
- There will be large-scale changes economically and, as a result, an economic crisis will affect the whole world
- There will be fundamental changes in the fields of education and healthcare
- There will be an even further increase in the impact of the digital environment
- There will be a new culture of a more inward-looking social life and social distancing

- A situation where the policies of President Trump and his discourses on nationalism in the US will intensify and more pressure will be put on international organisations by the US

Despotism and Democracy in the Age of the Virus:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/24/opinion/coronavirus-democracy-europe.html>

- The world's American reference point has vanished.
- No amount of flag-waving Chinese officials disembarking from planes onto European soil with offers of masks and ventilators can obscure the fact that all this began with a biological Chernobyl in Wuhan, covered up for weeks as a result of the terror that is the currency of dictatorships.
- The Great Depression that began in 1929 produced two distinct results on either side of the Atlantic. In the United States, it led, beginning in 1933, to Roosevelt's New Deal. In Europe, it led to Hitler's rise to power in the same year, the spread of fascism, and eventually devastation on an unimaginable scale.
- This time, as the coronavirus stops production and leaves more than 26 million Americans newly unemployed while in Europe it causes salaries to be "nationalized," in the words of Emmanuel Macron, the French president, the effects of an economic collapse not seen in almost a century may be flipped.
- But in Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, Europe has again discovered a leader inspiring in her candor and sanity and steadiness.
- If Trump wins, assuming the election is held, and Pangloss continues his assault on truth, the Merkel-Macron democratic camp will struggle. If Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee, wins, the United States will not recover an American-led world, because that world is gone forever, but the return of American decency and principle will make an enormous difference. To begin with, autocrats will no longer have an American carte blanche.

Populists are tired of US being in charge: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/25/populists-multipolar-world-russia-china/>

- A multipolar world allows populists to play poles against each other for their own benefits
- Right wing Populists back a nationalist agenda which does not coincide with the liberal world order.
- To implement policies, populists need to shield themselves from external pressure in terms of human rights etc. Multipolarity provides that.
- To populists unlike West, China isn't very intrusive in terms of policy implementation
- But deals with China are opaque and based on requirement of future support
- A critical part of the domestic politics of goods substitution is that populists claim that their pragmatic courting of illiberal or authoritarian states affords them a wider range of partnerships and international networks.

- Invoking multipolarity also makes it easier for populists to reject external, mostly Western, criticism of their domestic governance practices.
- In the end, for smaller states, multipolar populism may prove self-defeating. It's one thing to use exit options to reduce external liberalizing pressure, but it's another when new patrons start calling in favors. Despite Beijing's defense of sovereignty as an international principle, its practices toward clients suggest that, eventually, it will use its leverage in ways no less coercive than other great powers.

The Pandemic could tighten China's grip of Eurasia (China – Russia relations):

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/23/coronavirus-pandemic-china-eurasia-russia-influence/>

- Beijing's inroads in Russia and across the vast landmass of post-Soviet Eurasia could have global ramifications as the global competition between the United States and China accelerates.
- Since 2014, Moscow and Beijing have regularly touted their **joint military exercises**, high-profile energy exploration and **pipeline deals**, and a good cop-bad cop routine to constrain U.S. power on issues like the Syrian civil war, **the North Korea nuclear crisis**, and the future of internet governance.
- The Kremlin and Russian elites pin their hopes on the proposition that China will roll out massive measures to support its tumbling economy and prevent growing unemployment from causing social unrest and will continue government-driven spending on construction and infrastructure, including **accelerating** rollout of 5G networks, giant data centers, and more. Following cuts envisaged by the OPEC deal, Russia will have to decrease shipments of oil to Europe while **continuing to supply oil to China** in order to meet the obligations of Rosneft, the largest state-owned oil company in the country, under its multiple long-term contracts with Chinese energy companies.
- There is huge appetite among insecure leaders across Eurasia to emulate China's model of societal control and surveillance. Chinese companies including Hikvision and Huawei have been aggressively pushing their products to authoritarian leaders in the region long before the pandemic.

COVID19 knocks on American Hegemony: <https://www.nbr.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/publications/new-normal-tellis-050420.pdf>

- Battering the US Economy
- Discrediting US State Competency
- Corroding the US led International Order

COVID-19: Blessing in Disguise for BRI: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/will-covid-19-be-a-blessing-in-disguise-for-the-belt-and-road/>

- The first step is to focus on the nonphysical aspects of the BRI such as the Health Silk Road (HSR) and the Digital Silk Road (DSR). Despite a late start in 2016, the HSR is gaining currency with the outbreak of COVID-19, which lays bare the urgency and public-good nature of cross-border health cooperation.

- On the other hand, COVID-19 is transforming the nature of economy, shifting the balance between electronic and retail commerce in the former's favor. With the COVID-19 outbreak and social distancing measures continually pushing economic activities and consumption patterns online, China's DSR will rise in prominence.

The pandemic is a wake up call for the neoliberal order:

<https://www.trtworld.com/article/36033>

- It became clear that increasing marketisation does not always translate into a better life for society at large. The overwhelming majority of Americans and to a lesser extent in other developed economies, are left exposed to the sudden fluctuations in the market and feel financially insecure.
- The US's decentralised and mostly privatised healthcare system is proof that the increased role of the private sector does not always bring better results. Long after the virus started to spread among Americans, hospitals were still charging people for Covid-19 tests. People are still being billed for treatment unless they have insurance, which many Americans lack. The virus is universal, but the US healthcare system is not.

Corona Virus Economic Crisis

Summary: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronavirus_recession

How Economy Will look after Pandemic: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/15/how-the-economy-will-look-after-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

US Oil Crash: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52350082>

Oil Crash Explained:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJkKby9S9kM&feature=youtu.be>

Economic China: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b07eafPe7pY>

End of Capitalism? <https://www.dawn.com/news/1554658/end-of-capitalism>

- COVID-19 has brought mighty capitalism to its knees in a David and Goliath way that its Stalinist and Islamist foes never even dreamt about. But worry not, the beast is still sturdy and will be back bellowing on its feet soon. Yet multiple threats have hit it hard since the 1990s after it proudly felled communism. Each has stemmed from its many serious flaws and hurt its long-term prospects.
- But markets will dominate society until greed dominates other motivations in humans. The base of any ideology is its values from which emerge specific institutions and policies. The core value for both communism and capitalism is materialism. Upon it, communism built the institutional edifice of state monopoly and capitalism that of market near-monopoly. Once materialism is nixed as the main aim, a democratic society built on a mix of equal market, state, non-profit, employee-owned and community institutions can

emerge. Ideas which even progressives like Sanders still avoid, eg, steady-state economics and this writer's wisdom economy, may be debated.

Saudi Arabia's MBS struggles as geopolitics gets out of hand:

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/post-oil-price-war-saudi-arabia-struggles-as-geopolitics-gets-out-of-hand/>

- Trump weights ban on import of Saudi Oil
- Saudis end "flogging" to silence western critics
- Putin MBS shouting Match on Oil Prices
- China prefers Iran over Saudi Arabia
- MBS struggles to keep all doors open

The 2020 Oil crash unlike winner: Saudi Arabia: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/05/2020-oil-crash-winner-saudi-arabia/>

- Strong reserves of over \$300 billion to back on.
- Will capture more market share once this is over

Climate Change and Australian Fires

<https://www.createdigital.org.au/australian-bushfires-a-timeline-of-whats-happened-so-far/>

<https://disasterphilanthropy.org/disaster/2019-australian-wildfires/>

South Asia:

India's embrace of "Economic Nationalism" is directed against China

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/indias-embrace-of-economic-nationalism-is-directed-against-china/>
<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/indias-embrace-of-economic-nationalism-is-directed-against-china/>

- India's Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) took a page from Trump's playbook by selectively embracing economic nationalism after it revised its foreign investment policy to mandate that companies from neighboring states receive government approval prior to investing within the country.
- Targeted to curb Chinese investment within India as China provides backing to many multi billion valued startups of India
- US to replace China as an investor

India cracks down on Chinese investment: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/28/india-china-fdi-restrictions-coronavirus/>

- Countries worried about rise of China and want to cease dependency on it in terms of production.
- On April 17, the government **tightened its policy** on foreign direct investment (FDI) to require investment from any country that shares a land border with India to go through a government approval process. Since the only neighbor with significant trade flows is China (neighboring Pakistan and Bangladesh already faced restrictions), the target of the new rule was abundantly clear.
- China's increasing stakes in Indian start-ups and other technology companies also raise major concerns over the protection of intellectual property rights, data privacy, and national security. Alibaba, for example, is the **single largest shareholder** in Paytm, which handles the daily financial transactions of millions of Indians. Although this is ostensibly a private investment, India isn't the only country concerned about the Chinese government's influence over private technology companies' foreign activities, whether this concerns technology transfer, access to sensitive data, or the implementation of Chinese censorship policies. The recent increase of Chinese investment in India may also represent a shift away from investment in the United States, where Chinese FDI faces growing suspicions and scrutiny.
- Lack of domestic venture capital and other investment financing is one of the reasons why India originally opened itself up to Chinese investment, and restricting foreign investment remains a double-edged sword in any country, but especially a developing one. As part of its policy to deregulate and modernize its economy, India remains open to FDI from many other countries, such as the United States, Japan, and the members of the European Union. But toward China, New Delhi has had a change of heart, with a growing consensus that greater reliance on China is not in India's long-run economic interest. This is especially true because China has been unresponsive to requests to address the huge trade deficit India has with China.

Chinese coercion in South China Sea: <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/chinese-coercion-south-china-sea-resolve-and-costs-0>

- A reputation for resolve: China uses coercion in the South China Sea primarily to establish a reputation for resolve for defending its sovereignty.
- Economic costs of coercion: China coerces only countries whose markets or resources it does not need.
- Sensitivity to geopolitical cost: When deciding whether to use military coercion, China considers the likely geopolitical backlash from the United States or its allies.

India's relations strained with Muslim countries:

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/04/22/muslim-countries-with-which-india-had-increasingly-good-relations-have-become-less-friendly-pub-81630>

- Organisation of the Islamic Conference condemned in a tweet on April 19, “the unrelenting vicious #Islamophobic campaign in #India maligning Muslims for spread of #COVID-19 as well as their negative profiling in media subjecting them to discrimination & violence with impunity”.
- At the same time Princess Hend Al Qassimi, a member of the royal family of United Arab Emirates, citing tweets by Hindus living in the UAE, denounced those who were arraigning Muslims in her country.
- Turkey held an international conference on Kashmir on November 21, 2019 — in which Pakistan Senator Sherry Rehman also participated.
- India, just before Erdogan visit, had received the Cyprus President, engaged in a dispute with Ankara, in order to circumvent Erdogan in hardball diplomacy.
- Malaysia – another country with which Pakistan has been increasingly friendly – has also criticised India.
- Even Iran, an old friend of New Delhi, has not lagged behind. Tehran is very resentful of the way India, bowing to Trump’s America, has stopped importing its oil and is losing interest in Chabahar, and is also focusing now on Kashmir and the CAA — as well as the Delhi riots.
- In December last year, Bangladeshi foreign minister and home minister cancelled their visits to India over the situation arising out of the passage of the CAA in Parliament, as Bangladeshis felt targeted by this law – a law that Sheikh Hasina described as “unnecessary” in January.
- In Afghanistan – another important country whose ruling elites were close to India – demonstrators have protested against the CAA and the Delhi riots in March.
- In contrast, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have emphasised that these matters pertain to India’s domestic politics. Since 2015, and Pakistan’s refusal to help Riyadh in its fight against Iran’s proxies in Yemen, Saudis and Emiratis have distanced themselves from Islamabad and become closer to New Delhi. This shift has something to do with economic considerations, as evident from the huge investments that MBS has announced during his 2019 Indian visit
- The new contrast between the support Pakistan has received from Turkey, Malaysia and even Iran on Kashmir and the very cautious attitude of Saudi Arabia and the UAE may bring Pakistan back to the 1960s when Islamabad was close to non-Arab Muslim countries, including Turkey and Iran with which the country finally formed the Economic Cooperation Organisation.

India Russia Defense Ties: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/india-russia-defense-ties-amid-covid-19/>

- India more and more US centric
- India opted out of the Su57 development project
- India buying Russian tanks
- Russia offered India submarines

8 Chinese Arguments Against Western Hubris and Why they will Fail:

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/chinas-8-arguments-against-western-hubris-and-why-they-fail/>

- 1. The West is “falling apart” and in a “nadir of its self-confidence,” based on the observation that Europe does not have a coordinated response to the pandemic. – Counter:** Europe is a collection of sovereign governments with very limited merged sovereignty. Each still has its own policies in most areas, including pandemic response.
- 2. China successfully implemented emergency counter-measures now “being emulated around the world.” – Counter:** The Chinese government did relatively quickly take the drastic measures that are relatively easy for an authoritarian state with untrammelled police powers. But the West will not seek to “emulate” other aspects of China’s performance like hoarding supplies, info ban, scapegoating etc.
- 3. The pandemic suggests the United States will lose its declared strategic competition with China and Russia because the United States needs medical equipment from China and, aside from the pandemic, relies on China for drugs. - Counter:** The U.S. need for imported medical equipment is temporary and rectifiable; it will not limit U.S. ability to strategically compete with China.
- 4. “China and Europe will inevitably get closer” because “a divided Europe will naturally look east” and because Europe, like China, wants “multilateralism” in “global trade,” climate change, and “the role of international institutions” while the United States is opposed. Counter:** First, it does not logically follow that less commitment to European integration among individual western European countries causes them to “naturally” move to China.
- 5. Americans want the EU to view China as an enemy, but will fail because “the creation of the EU is meant, in part, to avoid great power competition.” Counter:** The EU was founded on what began as western Europe’s common interest not in “avoiding great power competition,” but rather in protecting themselves by banding together against a threatening great power.
- 6. As the United States economically decouples from China, Europe will gain “a greater flow of goods, capital, personnel and technology from China.” Counter:** The U.S. interest in decoupling is driven by American concerns about economic dependence on China. Western Europeans [share those concerns](#), which means they may not want everything China offers.
- 7. The pandemic “can become a turning point for the country to provide more public goods to the world,” as shown by China providing medical supplies to many virus-hit countries. Counter:** Selling previously hoarded medical supplies is not providing public goods. Zhou is correct that China has the capacity to be a global “Good Samaritan” by quickly producing a large amount of certain items for which there might be a desperate foreign demand during a humanitarian crisis.
- 8. What matters is not whether states are democratic or authoritarian, but the government’s performance. China, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore proved during the pandemic that a “strong and decisive” state is necessary and that the Western model of limited government cannot cope with crises.**

Counter: By admitting that multiparty democracies like Japan and South Korea handled the pandemic well, Zhou fatally undercuts his implied argument that the lack of civil and political liberties in China is justified by superior government performance.

Gawadar Port can change the destiny of Afghanistan:

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/cpec-gawadar-port-can-change-the-destiny-of-afghanistan/>

- As a landlocked country, Afghanistan remained detached to the world. Thanks to Pakistan that has opened trade route for Afganistan despite Coronavirus threat. Afghanistan's access to the Gawadar Port provides multiple opportunities to boost the trade.

Populist Rapport through Leader and a Fictional Representative of the people – Modi

vocab case study: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/04/29/current-crisis-consolidates-populist-rapport-between-leader-and-fictional-representation-of-people-pub-81705>

- First, all major decisions related to the crisis are announced by Modi himself using direct visual mediums.
- Second, Modi continues to tap into popular emotions, in contrast, once more, to [Manmohan Singh](#) who was a policy-oriented technocrat.
- Third, Modi's language is comparatively more accessible and culturally evocative than that of his predecessors.
- Another feature of Modi speeches is consolidated: The multiplicity of readings it offers. Approached literally, Modi's discourses are about constructive and optimistic values, but when associated with the content of his governance, they consistently prompt communal interpretations.

Actual defence budget of 'deceptive' India:

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/actual-defence-budget-of-deceptive-india/>

- But the real expenditure in past years has been much greater than that exhibited on websites. In the past, India unnoticeably increased its military outlays in revised and then actual estimates. Thus the actual military expenditure is much higher than the initial estimates, quoted in international media under a hypnotic spell.
- It does so to 'lower' its military budget as a proportion of Gross National Product. Through such ploys, India, as compared with its neighbours, gets a favourable image in The Military Balance, Jane's Defense, and other international magazines.
- Simultaneously, China is modernising and upgrading its naval fleet on a massive scale. Besides, China is technologically augmenting its indigenous manufacturing capability by empowering its two largest state-owned shipbuilders, China State Shipbuilding Corporation and Shipbuilding Industry Corporation. Conspicuously, India is set for big

purchases in the new budget to master the skies and the Indian Ocean. It reflects her desire to establish her hegemony in the region.

- India thinks Pakistan has to choose between Scylla and Charybdis, that is economic collapse or military preparation. India's perceptions historically have proved to be wrong. Pakistan neutralised the impact of this differential economic performance by, going nuclear, and developing tactical nuclear weapons like Nasr short-range missile.
- India is emerging as the US proxy against rising China, which is determined to surpass the USA in GDP by 2027. India is opposed to China's Belt and Road Initiative. Besides, it uses its aid, trade and border contiguity to obstruct Chinese influence in Bhutan, Nepal, and Bangladesh. At India's bidding, those countries follow the Indian line in SAARC and other international forums like G-20.
- Former Indian foreign secretary, Shyam Saran in his book *How India Sees the World* says, 'Kautliyan [Chanakyan] template would say the options for India are sandhi, conciliation; asana, neutrality; and *yana*, victory through war. One could add *dana*, buying allegiance through gifts; and *bheda*, sowing discord. The option of *yana*, of course, would be the last in today's world' (p. 64, *ibid.*). It appears that Kautliya's and Saran's last-advised option is India's first option, concerning China and Pakistan, nowadays.
- Henry Kissinger views Indian ambitions in the following words: 'Just as the early American leaders developed in the Monroe Doctrine concept for America's special role in the Western Hemisphere, so India has established in practice a special positioning the Indian Ocean region between East Indies and the horn of Africa.'

US religious freedom report; future of Muslims in India:

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/us-religious-freedom-report-future-of-muslims-in-india/>

- This is the first time since the aftermath of Gujrat riots that USCIRF has recommended India as a "Country of Particular Concern". That means the government of India was engaged in and tolerated systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom.
- First, India is taking strides towards the path of authoritarian tendencies as evident from the government's high-handed repressive approach to combat the dissent.
- Second, the Indian Muslims would continue to be the victims of harsh and violent attacks, as India has strengthened its crackdown on the Muslims making "Corona Jihad" as a pretext for it.
- Third, the report's comments on India, has led to the 'internationalisation' of the Indian brutalities, atrocities and exposed the facade of the so-called secularism and democracy.
- For Pakistan, the importance of this dimension is two-fold: first, the report provides ample evidence for backing and strengthening Pakistan's case of Kashmir, it has publicly exposed India's belligerent, harsh, discriminatory rhetoric towards minorities, particularly Muslims. Second, Pakistan's effective diplomatic efforts, voicing concerns over India's discriminatory attacks on Muslims, exposing its fake allegations – has surely brought some success. It surely is a success of the effective diplomacy on behalf of Pakistan.

- While the report calls for the imposition of sanctions, freezing of assets – yet these recommendations aren't binding. India lies at the centre of America's Indo Pacific strategy, as a major ally with converging interests for containment of China

Riots in India: History, causes & trends: <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/riots-in-india-history-causes-trends/>

- Cow slaughter (actually, if not politicized, it is a non-issue). Yet, several Muslims including Tabriz Ansari were either lynched alive or set ablaze on this non-issue. It is eerie that India's Dura Corporation is itself the biggest exporter of beef, sometimes surpassed by Brazil.
- Hindu extremists desire to enforce a uniform civil code ostensible under Articles 44 and 48 of the Indian Constitution, but actually in violation of Articles 14 (no religious discrimination), 16 (equal opportunities for minorities), 26 to 28 (minorities freedom to manage their religious affairs), 30 (maintaining minorities educational institutions), 345, 347, 350, 350-A (rights of linguistic minorities). Loud music and Bhajan singing before mosques. Non-traditional routes of processions. Reservation of jobs, and seats in educational institutions. Elopement of Hindu girls with Muslim boys. Characterisation of one by the other community as Malichh and Kafir. Routes of Religious processions. Conversions from one religion to another. Singing or playing Vande Matram aloud before mosques. The *de facto* status of Urdu especially in Uttar Pradesh. Muslim Personal Law and Uniform Civil Code. Suspicions about Muslims loyalty to India.

Countering Islamophobia by studying literature:

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/countering-islamophobia-by-studying-literature/>

- A lack of political will, comprehensive and research-based response to counter such narratives academically is lacking in the Muslim world. Therefore, Muslim societies in general, and governments in particular, remain passively tolerant of such arguments and acts of violence.
- Islamophobia has increased in intensity due to a spiralling number of Muslim citizens and asylum seekers in the west perceived as responsible for the economic fears and identity crisis. It helped to model the conceptual framework of the West manifested in its policy framing. To understand the current wave of Islamophobia, one must go through the related literature published in the early 90s — the time when it was created.
- English classical and neoclassical literature is rife with historical allusions of crusades that keeps the bitter memory of enmity afresh throughout the generations. It was only in the twentieth century when the West had become more powerful and threatening for the Muslims after WW1 with a neo-crusade of Western Imperialism. Islamophobia then implied in Rudyard Kipling's "White Man's Burden" was meant to civilize the rest of the world. Orientalists came forward as an auxiliary of the imperialist powers to disfigure the image of Islam and Muslims, which until now, remained unceasing.

- Zia Uddin Sardar, in his essay, “The Development and Locations of Eurocentrism” observed that ‘the real power of the West is not located in its economic muscle and technological might. Rather, it resides its power to define. The West defines for example what freedom is, progress etc. The non-Western civilizations have simply to accept these definitions or simply be defined out of existence.’ Therefore, the West is the dominant outlook of the planet.
- Muslims should adopt inclusive strategies by employing education and building institutions of research on the counter, alternative and assertive narrative. They should play an active role in political life wherever they live to influence Islamophobic policies. Muslim states must revisit the concept of Ummah that can lead to a unified approach to counter Islamophobia. The west has a unified outlook for Muslims, irrespective of their cultural and religious fault lines as the **narrative** suggests. Therefore, a unified approach is a compulsion of the time.
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How Different Is the “New Normal” from the Old Normal in South Asian Crises?:

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/05/08/how-different-is-new-normal-from-old-normal-in-south-asian-crises-pub-81746>

- On February 14, 2019, after a suicide bomber – an Indian Kashmiri who reportedly had joined the banned, Pakistan-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammad – attacked an Indian police convoy near Pulwama, in the Kashmir region of India, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi threatened “a fitting response” against Pakistan. “This is an India of new convention and policy,” he declared.
- While Indian officials never defined the “new normal” policy, they allowed the impression that India would not be deterred by Pakistan’s nuclear weapons from responding with increasingly punitive military force to future terrorist attacks by Pakistan-based groups.
- Pakistan’s “new normal” is actually “quid pro quo plus.” As with India, Pakistani officials have left ambiguity around the meaning of “plus,” but it seems intended to project a willingness to climb the escalation ladder as a means of restoring deterrence.
- On the strength of these polemics, it is tempting to predict that a next crisis could escalate in new and more dangerous ways – that the “new normal” will be more violent and persistently nearer the nuclear precipice than the old normal.
- Beneath the rhetorical heat, however, political and economic imperatives, and the ever-present threat of mutual nuclear destruction, keep a lid on escalation.
- The real fear in Pakistan is that Modi’s rhetoric and domestic policies during and after his May 2019 re-election indicate a level of zealotry and irrationality that might lead to deterrence failure.
- The question is whether Modi’s nuclear threats, coupled with perceived successes in implementing anti-Muslim policies in India, are likely to embolden more aggressive action against Pakistan, with attendant crisis-escalation risks.
- It remains the case that a major war favours neither the domestic politics nor international aspirations of either India or Pakistan. In this respect, though perhaps more worrying and occasionally violent, the “new normal” may not be so different from the old.

The 3 Most Polarizing Words in India: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/02/13/jai-shri-ram-india-hindi/>

- **“Jai Shri Ram” was meant to be a celebration of a Hindu deity. But the phrase is turning into hate speech—and a dog whistle for attacks on Muslims.**
- Jai Shri Ram is today increasingly deployed as a threat to anyone who dares to challenge Hindu supremacy.
- Ram’s imprint has spread in the years since the BJP chose him as the mascot for its project to build and cultivate a Hindu base of voters.

China’s Strategic Assessment of India: <https://warontherocks.com/2020/03/chinas-strategic-assessment-of-india/>

- China’s policy toward India in the past two to three years has shifted. It now actively promotes closer ties. The reason for this move was the drastic rupture from the **Doklam standoff** between China and India in 2017, in which Chinese and Indian troops faced off along part of their disputed border. In addition, Beijing fears an emerging India-U.S. alliance as part of Washington’s **Indo-Pacific Strategy**.
- Despite **high-profile visits** by senior leaders, China remains profoundly suspicious of India’s strategic ambition and intentions.
- China believes in power politics and its own natural superiority. Beijing’s vision for Asia is strictly hierarchical — with China at the top — and does not consider India an equal. Recognizing India’s historical influence in South Asia, its capability as a regional power, and its global potential, China’s policy toward India has largely followed a pattern of balancing India in South Asia by propping up Pakistan and developing ties with small countries in the region.
- India sees China as its primary threat while China sees India as a secondary challenge. Beijing’s national security priorities unequivocally lie in the western Pacific. Such asymmetry of security priorities means that India may not yet rival China in national power or in a conventional or nuclear arms race, but its resolve and focus on China are significantly stronger than those of China.
- China’s distrust of New Delhi is greater as the result of burgeoning India-U.S. ties. Washington’s **Indo-Pacific Strategy**, released three months after the Doklam standoff, seeks to anchor India in its larger Asia posture. The role, assistance, alignment, and power status the United States have offered India contributed to China’s speedy rapprochement with India and its deepening suspicion of India at the same time.
- China’s elevation of relations with India reveals an inconvenient truth: exogenous factors primarily drive China’s rapprochement with India. Had Washington not adopted the Indo-Pacific Strategy and pursued alignment with India, the trajectory of China’s policy toward India would have looked very different.
- For hardliners in Beijing, the benefits that the United States has offered in material and diplomatic terms have already emboldened New Delhi to pursue risky policies vis-à-vis Pakistan in addition to a more assertive negotiating posture towards China. Within the region, China has grown increasingly wary of the destabilizing effect of Modi’s foreign policy.

- China could be more helpful under one scenario: when Washington treats crisis management in South Asia as its overwhelming priority and China's cooperation as an indispensable component.
- Despite China's public embrace of India and the official elevation of Sino-Indian relations to an unprecedented level, Beijing's distrust and hostility toward India run deep, and vice versa. While the two countries have incompatible interests on a range of key issues, there's little chance of reconciling those differences any time soon. In the meantime, China is trying to both stabilize ties with India and prepare for future disruptions.
- China and India are both powers with regional hegemonic ambition and potential. Their structural conflict is irreconcilable until the two countries find a mutually agreeable compromise in their regional arrangements. Efforts to address the endogenous frictions — such as the border dispute and trade imbalance — could foreseeably help to facilitate that compromise. However, in the era of great-power rivalry and domestic populism, such efforts would be exceedingly difficult.

Fistfighting in the Himalayas: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/fistfighting-in-the-himalayas-india-and-china-go-another-round/>

- Just as the U.S. looks to India to play a more active role in balancing China's growing power and influence — including taking more forward-leaning positions on issues like the South China Sea and Taiwan, the Quad, and the Indo-Pacific — India is looking to the U.S. to help shore up its own vulnerabilities vis-à-vis China, not least at the disputed border. The United States has already helped the Indian military make considerable strides with the acquisition of world-class U.S. attack helicopters, surveillance and heavy lift transport aircraft, and artillery. Should there be another prolonged Doklam-like incident at the border or inadvertent escalation, India will likely again be looking to the U.S. for diplomatic and intelligence support, and calibrating its Indo-Pacific strategy accordingly.

Interpreting China's Wolf Warrior Diplomacy:

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/interpreting-chinas-wolf-warrior-diplomacy/>

- *Wolf Warrior* and *Wolf Warrior II* are Chinese action blockbusters that highlight agents of Chinese special operation forces. They have boosted national pride and patriotism among Chinese viewers.
- “Wolf-warrior diplomacy,” named after these movies, describes offensives by Chinese diplomat to defend China's national interests, often in confrontational ways.

- This change did not occur suddenly. Since 2010, when China's GDP overtook Japan's as the world's second largest, the Chinese have become more confident and China's foreign policy has become more assertive
- As China becomes more powerful, some other countries increasingly view its development as a threat to their national interests. These countries are generally unprepared or unwilling to accept China's rise. Many Chinese believe the Western media portrayal of China is highly biased, often with ideological and racist tinges. Wolf-warrior diplomacy is part of the Chinese government's endeavor to "tell the China story."
- Just as Chinese society has become more diverse, Chinese diplomats are not monolithic. There is no consensus within the Chinese foreign policy establishment on whether confrontational diplomacy is desirable, and not all Chinese diplomats are wolf-warriors.

Under Cover of Pandemic, China steps up brinkmanship in South China:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/14/south-china-sea-dispute-accelerated-by-coronavirus/>

- China's gambit is an existential test of the United States' position and credibility in Asia. Equally, China is challenging the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which brings together countries opposed to Chinese expansion but with little record of standing up to Beijing with anything other than rhetoric and diplomacy. The United States has no territorial claims but an enduring vital interest in freedom of navigation. To date, the U.S. response to China's bellicosity has been mainly diplomatic condemnation and a ramping up of so-called freedom of navigation operations by the U.S. Navy in international waters claimed by China. These operations are necessary but not sufficient, as they have had no visible impact on Chinese behavior so far. Similarly, while ASEAN wags its finger at Beijing, the organization has spent nearly 20 fruitless years trying to negotiate a code of conduct for the South China Sea with Beijing.
- Preventing the Western Pacific from turning into a China-owned lake requires working together to defend partners and international law. Maritime states like the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei should enhance cooperation by coordinating their coast guard operations, increasing their sharing of intelligence, and reaching an accord on how their overlapping South China Sea maritime boundaries should be demarcated.
- Meanwhile, the United States should act as a catalyst for the region's defense by funding the bipartisan congressional [Indo-Pacific Deterrence Initiative](#), which would provide military funding and build on earlier efforts. If Beijing's South China Sea gambit succeeds, it would be a ruinous blow to U.S. credibility, rippling across U.S. alliances

and partnerships in the region. China understands the stakes and so must ASEAN and the United States.

China doesn't want a new world order, it wants this one:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/04/opinion/china-america-united-nations.html>

- Contrary to speculation, China has always said it is not seeking to overthrow the global order. We should listen. Why would China go to the trouble of capsizing the global order when it can simply take it over, whole and intact?
- After all, China is the biggest beneficiary of globalization. It has systematically used Western-led multilateral institutions, such as the World Trade Organization, to advance its interests and influence. Though still fighting for greater control of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, it has determinedly captured the leadership of four key United Nations agencies that set international rules and standards. (It almost claimed a fifth, the World Intellectual Property Organization, this year.)

Why china may call the bluff on HongKong:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/03/business/china-hong-kong-damage.html>

- Other countries are threatening to retaliate in ways that could leave Hong Kong a shadow of its former self. The United States has vowed to end the special economic treatment it has long granted the territory. Britain has said it could open its doors to three million Hong Kongers, laying the groundwork for a severe brain drain.
- Unquestionably, Hong Kong has declined in importance to China as the mainland economy has surged. In 1997, Hong Kong's economic output was nearly one-fifth the mainland's, making it a necessary growth engine for Beijing. Deng Xiaoping, then China's top leader, had agreed to allow Hong Kong to keep its business and personal freedoms for decades to come, saying years earlier that "there was no other possible solution."
- Today, Hong Kong's output is less than 3 percent of the mainland's. While investors still prize Hong Kong's rule of law, low taxes and transparent business environment, they have grown more accustomed to doing business in mainland cities like Shanghai, where the stock market is bigger than Hong Kong's by value.
- If the United States wants to raise the stakes sharply, it could harness one of its major strengths: its vital role over the global financial system.
- China relies heavily on Hong Kong's unlimited access to U.S. dollars, the world's de facto currency. China tightly limits the amount of its currency that flows past its borders, making the Chinese renminbi less useful in making global payments and loans, striking deals or participating in international finance. About three-quarters of all renminbi payments flow through Hong Kong, according to data from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication, a network that facilitates global financial transactions.
- More broadly, China sees the risk as limited.
- In the face of Mr. Trump's threat, for example, China is calculating that he is bluffing. American business interests in Hong Kong are extensive. If the White House takes the more drastic route of limiting Hong Kong's access to U.S. dollars, Chinese banks have

other ways to maintain access to the global financial system, said Victor Shih, an expert on the Chinese financial system at the University of California, San Diego.

- China also holds more than \$1 trillion in U.S. Treasury bills, which accounts for more than 4 percent of America's total debt. While China cannot quickly sell that debt without making major problems for itself, such a move could cause disruptions globally.

In Hong Kong, Xi is playing a dangerous game of Chicken:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/27/in-hong-kong-xi-plays-a-dangerous-game-of-chicken/>

- But Hong Kong's economic success remains critical for Beijing. A new report from Hong Kong Watch notes that the territory "still plays a key role both for the mainland and the world as the Asia Pacific region's pre-eminent financial and professional services centre." Companies that relocated would not likely move to the mainland. The capital loss also would be significant. The territory accounts for nearly three-quarters of initial public offerings of Chinese firms, according to Hong Kong Watch, and is "increasingly the preferred route for Western investors seeking to access the Mainland Chinese market." The potential loss of these benefits might cause China to hit the pause button.
- To have the greatest impact, then, the Trump administration should suspend its certification decision (pending China's final action), drop its bluster, and bring together European and Asian allies to discuss taking a common position on Hong Kong. They should collectively set a legislative red line and make a quiet demarche to Beijing: Continue down this path and the world's most important economic powers together will revoke the territory's special economic status. The resulting exodus of Chinese-oriented business and capital would be accentuated by rising hostility toward Beijing across much of the world. This threat might cause China to reconsider, maintaining face by formally approving the law while draining it of its most threatening provisions and failing to enforce whatever survives in a threatening manner. If Beijing subsequently oversteps the coalition red line, the countries should follow through on their threat.

Why China has not bought central and eastern Europe:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/27/china-has-not-bought-central-eastern-europe/>

- For years now, the vast majority of Chinese investment into Europe has gone to Western, Northern, and Southern Europe, according to the [Mercator Institute for China Studies](#), a German think tank. In 2017, 71 percent of Chinese investment in Europe went to the United Kingdom, France, and Germany alone, although that number dropped to 34 percent in 2019. But that year, only 3 percent of Chinese investment in Europe went to Eastern Europe, the think tank found, despite the region accounting for about a tenth of the EU's GDP.
- Meanwhile, products and services from Germany, the U.K., France, Italy, and the Netherlands made up 78 percent of the EU exports to China in 2018, [according](#) to the Central European Institute of Asian Studies, an independent think tank. Germany alone accounted for 45 percent of all EU exports to China in 2018 and it is, by far, the EU country most reliant on exports to China, comprising 7.07 percent of Germany's overall export figures.

- More crucially, those friendly gestures have at times resembled overt signs of fealty. In 2017, both [Hungary](#) and [Greece](#) blocked separate efforts by the EU to condemn China for human rights violations. Both countries were among the few within the EU that opposed a strong position after the 2016 South China Sea arbitration.
- But even here, these actions—held up as proof of Central and Eastern Europe’s suzerainty—fail to tell the full story. First, only a minority of states from Central and Eastern Europe ever indulged in such gestures. Second, these are highly symbolic public statements that are meant to attract attention—such as when receiving well-needed surgical masks during the coronavirus crisis. Furthermore, praise is often lavished on Beijing to signal dissatisfaction with Brussels. This is especially true for populist Euroskeptics in Central and Eastern Europe. When Serbia’s Vucic praised China in March, he also highlighted the lack of EU response.
- Meanwhile, politicians from Western European states have also been acquiescent toward Chinese leaders. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has made 12 visits to Beijing since 2005, far more than almost any other European leader. Earlier this year, the new British government under Prime Minister Boris Johnson just managed to [avert](#) a full-blown diplomatic spat with the United States after reaffirming London’s commitment to allowing controversial Chinese tech giant Huawei to build parts of the U.K.’s 5G network

China is Weaponizing Globalization: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/05/china-globalization-weaponizing-trade-communist-party/>

. The report finds that the party’s interference in democratic countries is characterized by five mutually reinforcing factors:

- weaponization of China’s economy,
- attempts to dominate the global conversation about China,
- a reliance on elite intermediaries,
- targeting the Chinese diaspora, and
- a tendency to embed authoritarian norms

Indian Police Brutality & George Floyd: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/05/india-police-brutality-george-floyd-protests-united-states/>

- Many of the problems with policing in India go back to the colonial era. The British Raj deployed the police largely to discipline the local population. When India became independent in 1947, its new government retained much of the old British playbook for policing, such as a tiered system for recruitment. The upper tier is reserved for those who pass highly competitive examinations, requiring years of focused study. Candidates who pass those tests are recruited into the Indian Police Service (IPS), where they are fast-tracked to high-level planning and strategy roles, creating a sort of upper class within the national police corps. Only those who can afford to spend several years studying after graduating college can hope to hold these positions. In India, many aspirants from the so-called lower castes are the first in their families to be literate, and so they start with an immense—and often insurmountable—disadvantage when applying to join the police force.

India's Foreign Policy in Modi 2.0 first year: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/indias-foreign-policy-in-modi-2-0s-first-year/>

- One of the notable successes of this government [has been in its outreach to India's neighborhood, which began with Modi's visit to the Maldives and Sri Lanka soon after taking office for his second term.](#)
- Another of the highlights of the first year of Modi's second term is in India's ties with the United States, with Modi concluding a highly successful visit there [in September last year.](#) This was followed by the visit of U.S. President Donald Trump to India in February this year.
- Another notable success has been in the government's engagement of the Indian diaspora in different parts of the world.
- The biggest challenge for the Indian government no doubt has been the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. In the light of the pandemic, the Indian government has launched the Vande Bharat Mission, to evacuate Indians stranded in different parts of the world.
- India's abrogation of Article 370 of its constitution and the removal of the special status of the disputed border state of Jammu and Kashmir also brought a big challenge, as the foreign policy establishment had a lot of explaining to do to the international community as a whole.
- The government also had a lot of explaining to do on the [Citizenship Amendment Bill \(CAB\)](#) — especially to countries like Bangladesh.
- Relations with China also remain a major challenge as seen in the recent incursions from the Chinese side in the Ladakh and Sikkim sectors along the border between the two countries. In addition, India suffers from a huge deficit in its trade with China and it will have to take urgent steps to address this trade balance. [Last year, the Indian trade deficit stood at \\$56.77 billion.](#)
- The Pakistan conundrum continues for New Delhi. There has been no let-up in the incidents of terror emanating from Pakistan.
- The neighborhood seems likely to be the biggest challenge for New Delhi in the times ahead if it is to achieve its goal of being a great power.
- It also seems that New Delhi will get a lot closer to the United States than in the earlier times, since the threat from China shows few signs of diminishing.

Hustling in Himalayas: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/06/04/hustling-in-himalayas-sino-indian-border-confrontation-pub-81979>

- The current Chinese efforts to suddenly seek physical control over new locations in the Himalayas have been widely attributed to the general increase in Beijing's friskiness in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic. According to this reading, signs of new Chinese aggressiveness along the Sino-Indian border is all of a piece with the new security law Beijing has enacted to control Hong Kong, the enunciation of new administrative structures in the South China Sea, and the new language on Taiwanese

reunification used during the May 2020 National People's Congress plenary session in Beijing.

- India is now desperately trying to catch up on both counts, and its efforts to upgrade its own road and air networks along the Himalayan borders have caught China's attention. Beijing seeks to thwart these efforts in order to freeze its current advantages indefinitely. By occupying new segments of Indian territory, it thus aims to change the facts on the ground either to enhance its bargaining leverage in future negotiations, to simply annex spaces it covets for political or military reasons, or to compel India to abort the ongoing infrastructure modernization that could benefit it in any future conflict.
- The unfortunate truth is that China, having exploited the initiative to seize pieces of India's claimed territory, can now hold on to its new acquisitions forever unless India chooses to eject Chinese troops by force or decides to impose tit-for-tat costs on China by symmetrically occupying other pockets in disputed territory where it possesses a tactical advantage. This rejoinder admittedly carries risks because China could parry such Indian actions using its significant reserves already deployed at key locations along the front, in which case the stage would be set for perhaps a wider confrontation.

The China India Standoff and Myth of a New Cold War:

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/the-china-india-standoff-and-the-myth-of-a-new-cold-war/>

- Some experts [opine](#) that India's newfound assertiveness along the LAC in terms constructing feeder roads and supportive infrastructure may perhaps be seen as the trigger for the current standoff. The Chinese transgression may therefore be a bid to stop India from building permanent infrastructure, which could potentially give India a strategic advantage. This argument has baffled some security analysts in India as the troop build-up by China along the LAC started when the most of the Indian roads and feeder roads construction near those points was said to have reached [near completion](#). The chances of China having missed this construction and being caught unaware are slim as China boasts fairly [robust reconnaissance](#) (both ground and space-based) capabilities. Moreover, the road and infrastructure development by both sides along the LAC to shore up their respective strategic positions has continued for many years; these have led to minor skirmishes but rarely triggered a major border transgression, that too at multiple points. As M. Taylor Fravel [wrote](#), the scope, scale, and position of China's build-up appears unprecedented. Indian Defense

Minister Rajnath Singh acknowledged that a [large number of Chinese troops](#) have been stationed on the other side of Galwan Nala, and that Chinese fighters were making sorties within 30 km of their side of the LAC.

- Another proffered explanation is that China is trying to signal its strength in a bid to restore its credibility and rebuild its image, both of which have taken a severe beating in the continuing fallout from the global pandemic. Many scholars and China watchers claim that the economic setbacks suffered by China due to COVID-19, along with its already shaky economy, may have prompted Beijing to resort to the latest transgression, with the twin goals of diverting the focus from domestic issues to an external enemy, and at the same time exhibiting China's strength to the world audience. Some South Asian experts also allude to a conspiracy theory that sees the current standoff as a possible preemptive move by China to forestall India's supposed [intentions for a military adventure](#) in the northern areas of Pakistan (Gilgit and Baltistan), through which the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes.
- Both these arguments, however, fall more in the realm of speculation and hypotheticals with no evidence of such moves on the ground. Such views also do not seem to reflect the narrative prevalent in the Chinese domestic space. China has avoided escalating the current border issue by toning down the nationalistic rhetoric and also by not taking a firm stand on the issue. This could be a useful strategy to avoid any audience costs in case of having to back down to the pre-crisis position. Even an authoritarian regime like China has been seen to be sensitive to [domestic audience costs](#). During the Doklam crisis, many Chinese felt that that China had lost the [war of perceptions](#) as it was domestically seen as having backed down from its stated position to end the crisis. Additionally, Chinese leadership does not believe that the pandemic has dented its international position. In fact, many within the CCP see the current global crisis, particularly the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the U.S.

economy, as an opportunity to stake claim to its great power status, ushering in an end to U.S. primacy and a transition toward a bipolar world.

Why are India and China Fighting? <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/16/why-are-india-china-fighting-ladakh-skirmish/>

- Despite their **early friendship** in the 1950s, relations between India and China rapidly degenerated over the unresolved state of their Himalayan border. The border lines, largely set by British surveyors, are unclear and heavily disputed—as was the status of Himalayan kingdoms such as Tibet, **Sikkim**, Bhutan, and Nepal. That led to a short war in 1962, won by China. China also backs Pakistan in its own disputes with India, and China's Belt and Road Initiative has stirred Indian fears, especially the so-called **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor**, a collection of large infrastructure projects.
- The current border is formally accepted by neither side but simply **referred** to as the Line of Actual Control. In 2017, an attempt by Chinese engineers to build a new road through disputed territory on the Bhutan-India-China border led to a **73-day standoff** on the Doklam Plateau, including fistfights between Chinese and Indian soldiers. Following Doklam, both countries built new military infrastructure along the border. India, for example, **constructed** roads and bridges to improve its connectivity to the Line of Actual Control, dramatically improving its ability to bring in emergency reinforcements in the event of a skirmish. In early May this year, a **huge fistfight** along the border led to both sides boosting local units, and there have been numerous light skirmishes—with no deaths—since then. Both sides have accused the other of deliberately crossing the border on numerous occasions. Until Monday's battle, however, diplomacy seemed to be slowly deescalating the crisis: The two sides had opened high-level diplomatic communications and appeared ready to find convenient off-ramps for each side to maintain face. And both countries' foreign ministers were scheduled for a virtual meeting next week.

India on its edge as it grapples twin dispute on its border:

<https://www.trtworld.com/opinion/india-on-edge-as-it-grapples-with-a-twin-dispute-on-its-borders-37358>

- The border dispute between has been a constant since India's independence and the coming to power of the Communist party in China in the late 1940s. The legacy of the dispute goes further back to 1914 when British-Indian rulers attempted to draw a boundary (the McMahon line) with China.

- They almost succeeded in persuading China to sign a border treaty at the 1914 conference in the northern Indian town of Shimla, but the Chinese delegates walked out leaving the agreement in limbo.
- Since then, the 3500 km long border along the Himalayan ranges between the two countries has been fermenting with its lowest point in 1962, when the dispute degenerated into a full-fledged war.
- Since then, however, both countries created mechanisms to prevent a repeat of the conflict. It has largely worked except for occasional minor flare ups. The latest one too was a flare up that happened even while talks to defuse the situation were taking place between senior government officials on both sides.
- The British attempt to draw a boundary failed, as China questioned the locus standi of the “outsider” to do so. The next best chance after 1914 was in the period between 1950 and 1962 when China offered territory to the north-east of India (to the north of Arunachal state) in exchange for areas to the northwest of India (to the north of Ladakh). But, this did not work. The war followed, and chances of resolving it peacefully receded.
- The current flare-up, for instance, is happening at a time when India is firmly moving towards the West in an alliance that is inherently adversarial to China. New Delhi has also veered towards the United States’ view that China is responsible for the emergence of the Covid-19 disease.
- The US administration’s move to back Taiwan’s attempts to join the WHO as observer received India’s support, much to Beijing’s chagrin. An impending decision was put off to a later date, but China resented India’s pro-Taiwan stance.
- India’s Mutual Logistics Support Agreement with Australia that opens up its naval bases for war ships from down under and for Indian ships to berth in Australian ports too does not seem to have gone down well with Beijing.
- India’s accord with Australia is part of a broader tie-up of New Delhi with the US, France, Singapore and Japan that is expected to undercut Chinese naval activities in the Pacific.

- Despite the flare-ups on the border and the flexing of military muscle on both sides, there is little threat of large scale conflict as both countries are deeply tied to each other in trade, worth around \$90 billion annually.
- China is, in fact, India's largest trading partner and the chances of minor border clashes turning to a conflagration is remote.
- But there is no doubt it is a war of nerves and the situation has turned complex for India from an unexpected quarter, Nepal.
- Arguably India's closest neighbour in terms of cultural affiliation and a historical connect right from the time of the British, the government in Kathmandu has raked up a dormant unresolved border dispute with India.
- Nepal, which is wedged between China to the north and India to its south, is raising an issue that most people were not even aware of. This concerns a 372 sq km area to the west of Nepal in the Limpiyadhura-Kalapani-Lipulekh triangle that is of strategic importance to India. Lipulekh is the trading corridor between India and China that New Delhi considers part of its territory.
- The dispute can be traced to the 1816 Sigauli treaty between British India and Nepal according to which a river Kuti was demarcated as the border. To the west of the river was India and to the east Nepal.
- However, in 1860, the British reworked the map with the result that the area came to be part of India. But this modification was not codified into an amended treaty, with the result that from then until the 1990s, it was assumed that the region was India's.
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Domestic Current Affairs

Kashmir

Proposed moves for Pakistan: <https://warontherocks.com/2020/01/anticipating-pakistans-next-move-in-kashmir/>

Kashmir Issue possible solutions: <https://theauthenticpost.com/kashmir-issue-its-background-and-prospects-of-possible-solutions/>

- Change of BJP led govt: Article 370, CAA
- Change in mindset of Indian people towards Kashmir: Fascist govt, hindu nationalism
- Rise in freedom struggle of Kashmiri people
- China replaces US as superpower and takes on arbitration

Journalists in Kashmir booked for Orwellian Crimes:

<https://www.trtworld.com/article/35683>

- But is India's censorship on the media in Kashmir surprising? **No**. Every colonial regime keeps a reign on a free press because journalism means disseminating facts and facts incriminate regimes.
- Facts jeopardise the writ of the state, its propaganda and distortion of reality. Facts damage India's carefully contrived image of being a secular-democratic state. Facts are "anti-national". Facts cannot be jailed. But people who bring [facts forward](#) can be.
- The paucity of a robust private sector has meant that newspapers in Kashmir mostly rely on revenue from government advertisements. For decades, ad revenue has been used to control media in Kashmir. Consequently, media outlets that parrot the statist narrative are given an abundance of advertisements while the remaining are divested of them.

India's irredentism on Kashmir: <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/indias-irredentism-on-kashmir/>

- Three important events occurred *before* the so-called instrument of accession signed by Hari Singh on Oct 26, 1947: (a) the Jammu massacre, (b) the Poonch uprising and, (c) the liberation of large areas from the Dogra rule and the formation of the AJK government. As Christopher Snedden notes, "The people of Jammu and Kashmir therefore began the Kashmir dispute and not outsiders, as India claims, a claim in which Pakistan has surprisingly acquiesced."
- The trouble in Poonch began as early as February 1947 when Muslims in Poonch *jagir* staged a 'no tax' campaign. The Dogra ruler sought to quell it, as usual repressively. Those actions fanned the flames and the campaign developed, Snedden notes, into a fully-fledged anti-Maharaja uprising. Snedden estimates that about 50,000 Muslim Poonchi men were trained soldiers who had returned after having fought World War II as part of British Indian Army. As the uprising evolved, Poonchis were joined by Mirpuris and other pro-Pakistan Muslims in what is today's AJK. By the time the tribal *lashkars* got into play in October, the current area comprising AJK had already been liberated. The AJK government was formed on October 24, 1947, two days *before* the fraudulent accession of Kashmir by Hari Singh to India.
- In September-October 1947, communal riots broke out in Jammu, especially in the Hindu-majority area. The Dogra army, RSS cadres and Sikh *jathas*, especially from Patiala, participated in killing Muslims.
- According to Snedden, these three developments were (and remain) highly significant because they clearly indicated that Hari Singh had lost effective control of areas of his

state and did not have the authority to make any decision about the future of the state and the peoples living in it.

- Interestingly, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru knew these facts but emphasised the tribal *lashkars* story to present the loss of control by Hari Singh as a situation caused by outsiders rather than acknowledging either the uprising by Poonchi Muslims or the anti-Muslim lynch crowds in eastern Jammu.
- Similarly, in Gilgit-Baltistan, the Gilgit Scouts mutinied on 31 October 1947, removed Brigadier Ghansara Singh, and hoisted the Pakistan flag.

Kashmir's Covid warriors are under siege: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/kashmirs-covid-warriors-are-under-siege/>

- Muzaffer Ahmad, an epidemiologist in Indian-administered Kashmir's Budgam district, has been at the forefront of efforts to identify, detect, and trace people who have been infected with COVID-19 or may have come in contact with the infected. He positioned himself on the frontline against the global pandemic ever since Kashmiris started to return from countries like Saudi Arabia, China, and Iran as the coronavirus claimed thousands of lives around the world.
- On the morning of June 3, Ahmad left from his home in a Budgam village and hitchhiked to a nearby town, Chadoora, where he hoped to get a lift to the hospital where he works. Since a lockdown was in place, he had to get out of the car he had hitchhiked in and walk past a barricade the Jammu and Kashmir Police had erected in Chadoora. A few hundred meters ahead, there was another barricade set up by Indian Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), a paramilitary force.
- Ahmad was stopped and asked to prove his identity – a practice almost every Kashmiri is familiar with when it comes to such barricades and checkpoints. Ahmad showed his identity card and told the forces that he was a doctor and needed to reach the hospital in Budgam, the district headquarters. “Instead, they asked me to go straight and did not let me go towards the way I was headed to,” Ahmad says. When he insisted, one of the CRPF personnel, who Ahmad says was fuming, asked him to walk straight. Ahmed, who has been leaving home

- every day since the pandemic began to ravage the world to locate and detect potential COVID-19 positive cases, insisted on going on his way to hospital.
- “Give him an injection,” one of the CRPF personnel told another in a sly, camouflaged command to thrash Ahmad. He was continuously beaten with sticks on his legs until he was unable to stand and defend himself. It was only after a colleague of Ahmad happened to pass by and came to his rescue that the beating stopped.
 - A week later, Ahmad, who had been relentlessly going out to fight the virus, sometimes indifferent to his own safety, was still unable to walk properly.
 - Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his televised address to the country in late March, when he announced a lockdown to “break the chain” of transmission of the coronavirus, was very particular about respecting health workers. He asked India’s 1.3 billion people to clang utensils and clap to offer gratitude to these frontline workers. In his next TV address, Modi asked his countrymen to light candles or lamps and switch off the electricity for 9 minutes.
 - On June 1, two days before Ahmad’s vicious beating, Modi said the doctors were invincible and like soldiers without uniforms fighting an invisible enemy.
 - But the picture has been entirely different in Kashmir.
 - The assault on Ahmad was not a one-off case. In a place that is heavily militarized, attacks on civilians are not usual, but such attacks on health workers during a pandemic are particularly appalling. Doctors have spoken out about the “harassment” and “abuse of power.”

India has handed China a way to interfere in Kashmir:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/16/china-kashmir-himalayas-pakistan-conflict/>

- It was no surprise that Pakistan solidified relationships with China in 1963. India fought an ill-fated war with China the previous year that permanently damaged the idea of Sino-Indian brotherhood, and Pakistan saw an opportunity to make common cause with an Asian ally. Turning a bilateral dispute into a trilateral one, with two of the sides strongly allied, was an obvious move.

- That decision has borne fruit, not least because of India's own actions. Ending Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, on the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir, has been a longtime goal for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in India, and the party won two successive landslide victories in 2014 and 2019 partially based on its stance on this issue. In August 2019, the Indian parliament voted to [abrogate Article 370](#). That autonomy had always been somewhat illusory, but it was powerfully regarded within Kashmir—and India accompanied the change with a mass crackdown in the region, including [cutting off the internet](#) and [arresting local politicians](#). The bill didn't stop there. It also [bifurcated the territory](#) into two states—Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh—further cementing India's control.
-
- That gave China a strong interest in the issue, too. China agreed with its ally both for diplomatic reasons and for domestic ones. Part of the new territory of Ladakh contains land that Pakistan gave to China in the agreement in 1963. China sees both the abrogation of the article and the formation of the new state as a kind of aggressiveness, which is one reason for its own assertive moves on the Chinese-Indian border in the last few weeks.
- In recent days, China has demanded in foreign-policy talks with India [the revocation of the new legislation](#) creating Ladakh. This is a different way of objecting to the revocation of Article 370 as a whole, and the move benefits China on multiple fronts. It allows it to strengthen its alliance with Pakistan at very little personal cost. But, perhaps more importantly, it allows Beijing to seek a protective cover of sorts for its actions in Xinjiang.
- China has faced criticism from around the world over its [treatment of Uighur minorities](#) in the Muslim-majority region of Xinjiang, and several countries, including the United States, have passed legislation addressing this critical issue. Xinjiang threatens to become a permanent stain on China's image in the Muslim world. Adopting Pakistan's stance on Kashmir and Article 370 is a cynical way to address these anti-Muslim claims, allowing China to, to an extent, deflect from its domestic misdeeds. By pointing to issues within India and New Delhi's mistreatment of Muslims, China is able to divert scrutiny from its own [crackdown on religion](#), [separation of children](#) from their parents, [forced labor](#), and [mass internment](#) of minorities. Its foothold in Kashmir issues has served as a useful distraction.
-

End

Suleimani's Death Impact on Pakistan

<https://rusi.org/commentary/death-gassem-soleimani-what-expect-afghanistan-and-pakistan>

Turkey Pakistan Relationship:

<https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2020/04/dmap-turkey-and-pakistan-a-special-relationship>

Killing PTM Leader Further Antagonizes Pakistan Pashtun Rights Defenders:

<https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/killing-of-ptm-leader-further-antagonizes-pakistan-pashtun-rights-defenders/>

- Since its emergence in January 2018 as a nonviolent group campaigning for civil rights, PTM has openly criticized Pakistan military and its intelligence agencies, accusing them of human rights violations in the tribal region. The Pakistani authorities, on the other hand, accuse the PTM leadership of getting funds from Indian and Afghan intelligence agencies.
- For more than a decade, the rest of Pakistan and the world was led to believe that it is the tribal people who support the Taliban and their Sharia system, supposedly because this is in accordance with tribal customs and traditions. However, the PTM leadership, the majority of whom are young men who grew up under the shadow of Taliban guns, dispelled that widely-spread perception by demanding peace and an end to all kinds of armed groups – whether “good” or “bad” Taliban – on their land.
- This will further alienate the youth and the people of Waziristan, who strongly believe that they are being oppressed both by militant groups and the state security agencies. This perception is rooted in years of frustration with successive governments that failed to bring a positive change in terms of infrastructure development, education, civic facilities, and legal and constitutional status. For decades, the tribal people used to be considered as second-class Pakistanis mainly because their areas were regulated under the colonial-era Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR).

Corona Virus:

Suggestions for leadership in Corona Crisis: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1548796/leading-in-a-pandemic-crisis>

Suggestion to use field experts to handle virus situation:
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1548795/where-are-the-experts>

Critical Analysis on Dual Sovereignty and its impact:
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1549636/a-season-of-regrets>

Impact of expats coming back home during Corona:
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1549634/the-time-bomb>

Article supporting and backing Corona Debt Relief idea with historical reference:
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1549633/pandemic-economics>

PPP-PTI PR War Amid Covid 19: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1549911/partial-column>

How Pakistan can tackle Corona Crisis: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1550701/tackling-the-crisis>

Corona is the best chance for PTI to prove itself:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1550987/lost-opportunity>

Analysis on Lockdown-Economy Tradeoff: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1550989/world-is-full-of-trade-offs>

Optimistic Article for Pakistan to take advantage of its Corona situation:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1551498/spring-is-in-the-air>

Lockdown and Religious Clerics choice to open mosques:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1551499/suicidal-choices>

Tackling Myths on the Lockdown question:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1551502/lockdowns-unravelling>

Why mosques are open amid corona: <https://www.trtworld.com/article/34913>

Solutions to Economic problem of Pakistan:

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1551778/evaluating-the-response>

Corona Virus – Thoughts: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1552297/coronavirus-random-thoughts>

- There are undeniable benefits of globalisation. But thoughtless competition has social and moral costs. Globalisation has promoted wasteful development on a vast scale and spawned hyperactivity that has resulted in both fragility and an unhealthy anxiety in human behaviour. The world appears to be too fast for its own good.
- Right-wing politicians the world over have displayed a boorish disdain for these otherwise existential concerns. In their view, nothing in nature is sacrosanct and everything can be sacrificed at the altar of profit.
- Healthcare, education, and food security must improve
- The world is employing production and manufacturing capacities far in excess of human requirements. Even the service sector is geared to accelerate productive capacity. There is a need to channel human energies into areas that provide useful employment and, without adding to the stress on the planet's resources, to work for enhancing quality of life in rhythm with nature

Politics of Polarization: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1552552/politics-of-polarisation>

- History of Political polarization of public: No middle ground between Govt and Opposition in the 90s but things changed after 2008
- With talk shows, polarization increased because of harsh debates
- PTI brought in social media and that too created poles

- PTI govt not working with opposition because of such polarization. Cooperation required in time of COVID crisis.

Pakistan's government is caught between a mosque and a hard place:

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/04/24/pakistan-ramadan-coronavirus-pandemic-mosques/>

- The central place that Islam has grown to occupy in Pakistani society and politics keeps Islamabad from closing the mosques and religious leaders from voluntarily shuttering them.
- Zia's Islamisation expanded the political space for religious political parties and also led to the politicisation of the Islamic ulema who became increasingly involved in matters of the state.
- They enjoy street power (they can quickly mobilize large numbers of people), impunity (the use of violence and hate speech by their hard-line factions often goes unpunished), political influence (they get what they want from the government— from the **reversals of changes** to parliamentary oaths they deem offensive to the **removal of people** they don't like from government advisory councils), and strategic appeal for the state (Islamist militants are used as armed assets to pursue foreign-policy objectives).
- The government also fears the consequences if the kid gloves that it treats them with were to come off. If it were to order all mosques closed, protests would probably ensue. At best, this would undermine the very social distancing that mosque closures would be meant to enforce. At worst, there could be violence—and threats to the state—at a moment when the government is consumed with curbing the pandemic.
- The clerics are aware of their clout and of their status as Frankenstein's monster—a past creation of the state that the state can no longer control.
- Islamabad doesn't have any good options. It can call for a renegotiation of the agreement, which the clerics are likely to reject. It can unilaterally call for mosques to be shut, which may trigger unrest. Or it can just sit back, hold its nose, and hope against all odds that stepped-up testing and contact tracing will keep the pandemic at bay

COVID-19: Using Cash Payments to protect the poor in Pakistan:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/using-cash-payments-protect-poor-pakistan/>

- 12 Million Families to be catered.
- Could use facial recognition in place of biometric one because of physical contact avoidance.
- Cash payment programmes have been put in use during humanitarian emergencies in the past by organizations **such as UNICEF**. Unconditional cash transfers have been found to be **effective and efficient** ways to provide humanitarian assistance. They have a lower cost per beneficiary than vouchers which, in turn, have a lower cost per beneficiary than in-kind food distribution. They can also benefit the local economy. Voucher programmes generated up to \$1.50 of indirect market benefits for each \$1 equivalent provided to beneficiaries; and unconditional cash transfer programmes generated more than \$2 of indirect market benefits for each \$1 provided to beneficiaries.

Is Covid-19 Pakistan's Black Swan Event for Digital Payment:

<https://www.cgdev.org/blog/covid-19-pakistans-black-swan-event-digital-payments>

- What is the solution? Digital payments through mobile money? Naysayers would point out that not everybody in Pakistan has a mobile phone and mobile wallet. This is sadly true for most of the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable. While there are 160 million mobile subscribers, only 10 million people, mostly poor, have mobile wallets. But what prevents offering mobile money payments to those who do have a mobile wallet as one option, diminishing the crowd coming to get cash? This would further increase access to points of service and reduce crowding. And this approach wouldn't introduce additional eligibility concerns: The government can link the beneficiary account with the mobile number against which the SIM card has already been issued after biometric verification. Proof of payment can be verified by rolling out a USSD-based system where the response from a user can be verified by the beneficiary entering his/her national ID number through the linked mobile.

Covid 19 fans religious discrimination in Pakistan: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/covid-19-fans-religious-discrimination-in-pakistan/>

- Minorities Denied Aid based on Religion
- Zakat does not apply on non Muslims
- The Case of Saylani Welfare Trust
- Embrace Islam to Receive Aid case in Karachi
- Discrimination with the Hazaras

Vaccine for success: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1557470/vaccine-for-success>

- What was common between the countries that have won Round One? One, their leaders were swift in recognising the threat. Two, they understood very quickly that the only way to slow the spread of the virus was to lock down without delay and start aggressive testing. Three, they understood lockdown would not make the virus go away but would allow them time to beef up their medical defences and provide space for other measures. Four, they figured out that lockdown could not be sustained for long so they had to achieve the most out of the limited time for lockdowns they had.
- What was common between countries that have lost Round One? One, they underplayed the threat from Covid-19 and took it casually. Two, they dithered. And wavered. And waffled. Once done with these, they flip-flopped, then hemmed and hawed. Three, they wasted precious time at the start, time that should have been utilised in taking swift, bold steps. Four, they created false binaries and confused their citizens, thereby diluting the impact of the lockdown and other measures (some later relented). Five, their countries paid a terrible price for their faulty decision-making.

Message that matters: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1561639/message-that-matters>

- 1) Be clear on what the message is. More than three months into the crisis, the message is: 'lockdown is bad'. This is a bad message to have for two reasons, (a) it is negative,

solution-abhorrent and relays the passive approach of what the government cannot do instead of the active what it can do; (b) it is almost irrelevant because the solutions needed at this time have moved on to advanced variables.

- 2) Be disciplined on the message. The combination of an unclear message and undisciplined messengers is deadly
- 3) Educate the citizens on Covid-19. Every government official is talking about SOPs and yet complaining people are not following them.
- 4) Be solution-oriented. Ever since March, the government has been unrolling a policy of 'net-negatives' that are weaved into a narrative of inability and incapacity.
- 5) Elaborate on solutions that make sense. What are the solutions now? Break it down into two categories; (a) what the government must do, (b) what the citizens must do. Start with explaining the solutions and explain the mechanics.
- 6) Stop losing the battle of optics: Weeks of persuasion by the government to make people wear masks may have been undone by one photograph: Prime Minister Imran Khan arriving at the ISI headquarters and not wearing a mask
- 7) The prime minister should play the captain's inning. If the prime minister is indeed the communicator-in-chief, he should consider two things; (a) speak frugally and stay on the positive message. He should delete the word 'lockdown' from his vocabulary and move on to a messaging that inspires hope, confidence and resolve; (b) carry this message of hope and resolve to the people — visit hospitals and quarantine centres in all provincial capitals and be seen as the captain who is leading from the front.
- 8) Get some people off-air. There is a time and place for everything — and everyone. Now is neither the time, nor the place and definitely not the issue for people like Governor Sindh Imran Ismail, MPA Khurram Sher Zaman and a few others to be on the media. One says lockdown is a 'fashion' while the other breaks down the infection into categories as yet unknown to mankind.
- 9) Find nuance. It's a friend.
- 10) Remember at all times: The PTI will be judged on Covid-19. Forever.

Front line anxiety: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1561897/front-line-anxiety>

- Health workers are humans too, and they need to take care of themselves so that they can continue to provide vital services during this protracted public health crisis. They routinely face conflicts over their safety being compromised as they fulfil their professional obligations. Many feel helpless dealing with an illness that has as yet no treatment. Nearly all will, at some point in this pandemic, grieve over the succumbing of their patients or colleagues to the virus. A review of six studies examining mental health issues faced by healthcare workers due to Covid-19 confirmed significant levels of distress and moderate to high levels of clinical conditions among respondents.
- The government of Pakistan has also launched a national campaign, 'We Care', which "aims at providing adequate PPE and creating an overall psychosocial environment of care and support". This campaign has been verbally endorsed by provincial health ministers too.

- But it is important to translate this commitment into action. A report in JAMA identified top sources of anxiety for healthcare professionals working as frontline responders and summarised their need as: Hear me (impartial mechanism to connect with health workers while maintaining confidentiality; collect data and assess their needs); Protect me (ensure personal protection, implement workplace policies to prevent burnout like adequate rest and rotation, supervise for difficult clinical decisions); Support me (workplace counselling, services for stress management, support groups, back-up support for taking time off work); Prepare me (self-help training to deal with stress, offer training to deal with psychological challenges); Care for me (identify and treat those suffering from high levels of stress and with pre-existing mental health conditions).

Parliament should set up: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1563195/parliament-should-step-up>

- **1)** Speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaisar should call a meeting of the already constituted special joint committee of the National Assembly and Senate with the aim of formulating a set of policy recommendations on Covid-19. The committee, headed by the speaker himself, was constituted on March 26 and comprises 12 MNAs and 13 senators. The committee was constituted by the speaker in consultation with Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani in line with the request from Prime Minister Imran Khan. The committee was mandated to monitor, review and oversee issues related to Covid-19. It held a meeting in which the prime minister also participated. However, the meeting fell victim to acute polarisation when the prime minister left after delivering his introductory remarks and without hearing the speeches of other party leaders.
- **2)** Planning Minister Asad Umar is not among the members but he needs to be included in the committee. Since the formation of the committee, Asad Umar has played a leading role in the fight against Covid-19 as head of the National Command and Operations Centre.
- **3)** Since parliament is already in session, we are ideally placed to get this committee working on a deadline.
- **4)** The committee should then invite key specialists from all relevant fields to give briefings and present policy options.
- **5)** Based on these detailed hearings, the committee should be able to draft specific policy options aimed at combating Covid-19 effectively based on practical, doable and finance-able best practices.
- **6)** All committee proceedings/hearings should be shown live on the PTV Parliament channel. At a critical moment in our history, let the nation see how its political leadership is rising to the occasion and

forging a policy that can strengthen the national effort against the pandemic.

- 7) These policy recommendations, representing the collective will of parliament, should then be sent to the National Coordination Committee which is chaired by the prime minister.

Covid-19 and the pursuit of financial inclusion in Pakistan:

<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/covid-19-pursuit-financial-inclusion-pakistan/>

- Pakistan's government has launched an emergency cash programme for 12 million households.
- It has been built with longer-term goals to increase financial inclusion.
- The programme will help drive a shift in the payment ecosystem, from cash-based to digital.
- Beneficiaries will be encouraged to promote the benefits of such products in their own communities.

End

Sugar Issue:

Sugar Crisis Report: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE8D9Reav1g>

Sugar Commission Report: What to do? <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2232577/2-sugar-commission-report/>

- Even commodity exchanges are susceptible to abuse and anti-competitive conduct but due to strict monitoring and rules, its scope and possibilities are severely controlled.
- Exports may not be made free but imports can be made free under the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP). In fact, in order to ensure that competition takes place and prices are held at reasonable levels, there has to be excess supply in the market.

- The reason prices go up whenever exports are allowed is that the excess goes away. There is no way of accurately assessing demand and inventory levels. Imports would allow the government to intervene in the market whenever there are shortages and prices go up.
- Also, there is a peculiarity of sugar. It is produced in only three months and is sold in nine months out of inventories. This costs money in terms of financial and storage management costs.
- The issue of doing away with support price for sugarcane is a difficult one. It is said the support price system has been responsible for a rather undesirable expansion of sugarcane production capacity.
- Pakistan is a water-stressed country and with the passage of time, it is said, water stress would increase with the increase in population. It may be desirable to depend on a degree of imports in case of water-consuming crops such as sugarcane, and may be rice.

Political Economy of Sugar: <https://www.thefridaytimes.com/political-economy-of-sugar/>

- In this model, the government sets the cane price for the farmer, then allows the sugar mills to set the sugar price calculated by the cartel on the basis of jacked-up production costs and politically manipulated export subsidies for the federal and/or provincial government. The model is so rigged that, on average, the total tax paid by the industry (on the basis of fudged accounts and out of book cash transactions) is often only a fraction of the subsidy received from the government. Indeed, this industry is probably the single largest source of money laundering in the country while the sugar barons openly pull political strings and operate ATMs at the behest of their subsidizing political masters.
- The truth also is that this is one industry that Pakistan does not need at all. The sugarcane crop guzzles scarce water resources that could be more profitably exploited by cotton and wheat for genuine export forex purposes. The international price of sugar is invariably lower than the Pakistan price too, which means the public and national exchequer is being ripped off on both counts.

Power Corridor's prolonged association with sugar mills:

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/power-corridors-prolonged-association-with-sugar-mills/>

- Food production and procurement is a national security issue and needs to be controlled by the state through de-politicized institutions and bureaucracy. But how will it be possible when some of the biggest politicians in Pakistan are the primary sugar suppliers?

End

18th Amendment Issue:

No More Rollbacks: 18th Amendment

- Mercifully, this contentious phase seems to be abating, probably dictated by the law of diminishing returns. Now it is time for the executive and legislative branches to reclaim the ground lost to the establishment in the course of their internecine confrontation. Instead of rocking the constitutional boat, they should build on it a real 'legal state', or Rechtsstaat, and then let the people — the political sovereigns — be the real beneficiaries of the resulting boons: rule of law, good governance, social justice, economic equilibrium and environmental protection. Our constitutional journey must never be halted or rolled back; it must only move forward.

Playing with fire: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1555183/playing-with-fire>

- The best course for Pakistan is to defer the debate on the 18th Amendment till times are conducive to extending the federal basis of the state. However, given the establishment's extraordinary means to bring a weak and disparate opposition in line with its wishes it is not impossible that it may succeed in taking the country away from the federal principle. The result will be replacement of a supposedly voluntary union of federating units with a forced arrangement, like a marriage at gunpoint, with all the attendant hazards to state integrity.

Risks Pursuing Unilateral Agenda: <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2214881/6-risks-pursuing-unilateral-agend/>

- It is time our leaders and intellectuals reassess some basic assumptions about how the country should be governed. The government must seriously focus on improving its relations with the opposition parties. The present hostility between them is seriously undermining democracy and good governance. Moreover, the cabinet must be reduced to a manageable size. With a large number of advisers and experts, it gives an

impression of a presidential system of governance. Perhaps it is this type of governance that is giving rise to the demand for revisiting the 18th Amendment.

- The government should maintain stability in bureaucratic appointments. Frequent change of IGs and chief secretaries of provinces betrays a sense of unease and incoherence. The present practice of ignoring parliament and using the media as a primary tool of governance has serious drawbacks. We have to broaden the scope while dealing with our neighbours and the world at large — building partnerships and relations on the basis of mutual respect and understanding.

18th Amendment Much Ado Nothing:

- The 18th Amendment not only operationalised fiscal federalism but also reestablished the writ of democracy in the country. It amended Articles 6 and 270 of the Constitution to block the way to military adventurism to topple an elected government or abrogate, suspend or subvert the Constitution. Similarly, the judicial validation of unconstitutional military interventions was also prohibited. Moreover, the abolition of the concurrent list of legislative subjects is another fundamental change. With the striking out of the list, provinces now have the exclusive domain to legislate on important matters such as criminal law, contracts, transfer of property, labour welfare, marriage and divorce. Further striking features include the repealing of Article 58(2)(B) by curtailing the executive powers of the president, forming the CCI into a more substantive body, rationalising the size of the cabinet, re-naming NWFP as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P), increasing the representation of provinces on the NEC, and empowering the provinces to raise domestic or foreign loans with the consent of the federal government.

NFC Controversy: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1562342/nfc-controversy>

- Firstly, at the very onset, there is ambiguity as to whether the president had acted on his own or on the advice of the prime minister.
- Secondly, there are a total of 11 persons notified to be a part of commission proceedings, with the first five members being the respective finance ministers for the provinces and the federation. The remaining six are non-statutory members who could only have been notified by the president upon consultation with the governors of the provinces, who in turn, could only have acted upon the advice of the cabinet or chief minister of the respective province.
- Thirdly, the president has attempted to bring within the scope of the NFC matters which are clearly beyond its jurisdiction.
- Furthermore, and amongst other things, the president has also sought that the commission recommend an allocation of resources/ budget for Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-

Baltistan, whereas in terms of the Constitution, the assessment and allocation of resources for the same is exclusively within the domain of the federation and parliament.

- Finally, delegating pivotal positions within the commission to non-elected members appears to be in violation of the letter and spirit of Article 160 as well.

Provinces vs Centre: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1562775/provinces-vs-centre>

- Pakistan's greatest tragedy is that forces favouring a highly centralised state structure prevented it from becoming a proper federation. Nobody can deny the fact that Pakistan is a multinational and multicultural state and that the provinces are not mere administrative divisions; they are homelands of communities with their distinct histories, cultures and languages. That such a state had to be a federation was realised by the authors of the Lahore Resolution of 1940 who promised autonomous and sovereign status to the constituent units. It is possible that without this pledge the resolution could not have been adopted. Further, the Quaid-i-Azam rejected the federal part of the Act of 1935 because it envisaged an all-powerful centre.
- That the provinces are not subordinate to the federation can be proved by theory and contemporary practice both. More than 100 years ago, A.V. Dicey, the famous British jurist and constitutional theorist, defined the federating units as coordinates of the federation. Even if modern rulers are allergic to the old theory, they can see its part in the uninterrupted functioning of such leading federations as Switzerland, the US, Germany and Australia. They have progressed by not treating federating units as subordinates.
- In Pakistan's case, the provinces' right not to be treated as subordinate to the federation lies in the fact that the provincial assemblies created Pakistan; they are not the creatures of the federation. After giving the units their due, the federation will become a smart polity, its non-productive expenditure will come down, the feeling of alienation among communities and nationalities constituting the federal units could die out and Pakistan could become stronger and be at peace with itself.

End

Others:

Suggestions for Pakistan to improve its water situation: <https://therush.pk/the-fight-on-water/>

Ertugrul's Pakistan reception: A manifestation in Hypocrisy?

<https://www.globalvillagespace.com/ertugruls-pakistan-reception-a-manifestation-of-hypocrisy/>

- The parochial view about Ertugrul triggering an 'identity crisis' in Pakistanis is the classical example of such irritation which is generating waves of discomfort this within the circles of pseudo-liberals, commonly known as *Desi* liberals. You will not expect such a partisan view of these supposed liberals about "Game of Thrones" or "Money Heist". They won't say they cause identity crisis or exalts Western values and European culture. But when the Turkish blockbuster "Resurrection: Ertugrul" makes a smashing entry in Pakistan by elevating Islamic culture and glorious conquests of Ottomans — the self-crafted crisis of identity — at once — holds forth in this creed.
- When a hardline religious cleric speaks it is characterized as hate speech and an anti-state jargon of "a state within a state". On the flip side, if PTM leadership says anything anti-state it is considered an integral part of freedom of speech. This portrays only one thing: duplicity.
- Another dirty trick of pseudo-liberals is to employ propaganda as an effort to spread disinformation "deliberately".
- Three domains namely Islam, Ideology of Pakistan and Objective Resolution are deemed to be incessant itching points of pseudo-liberals since Pakistan's inception. To continuously vilify these three domains is the favourite hobby of pseudo-liberals. They keep engaging themselves in venomous propaganda against ideological foundations of the country.
- For years, Indian content was ubiquitous on private media enterprises without triggering any identity crisis. For years, copy-cat third-rate culture of Bollywood had been hollowing the country's ideological roots but no one ever bothered about identity. But as the Islamic history-based Ertugrul binged upon Pakistan Television and touched new popularity heights, the pseudo-liberal had to resist.

Dam Deal: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1557234/dam-deal>

- THE government has finally closed the deal for the construction of the Diamer-Bhasha dam.
- The Rs442bn contract has been awarded to a joint venture comprising China Power and the Frontier Works Organisation.
- The world's tallest roller compact concrete dam is but a part of a multipurpose Rs1.4tr hydropower enterprise that will be funded through public-sector development and commercial loans.
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Navigating an unsettled world: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1560480/navigating-an-unsettled-world>

- Four key policy areas pose immediate challenges and have to be simultaneously addressed: 1) Navigating the US-China confrontation 2) Dealing with occupied Kashmir and managing relations with an implacably hostile India 3) Helping Afghanistan win the peace but also preparing for less hopeful scenarios 4) Balancing relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

The Cyber Threat Facing Pakistan: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/06/the-cyber-threat-facing-pakistan/>

- In 2019, the mobile phones of some [senior Pakistani officials were hacked](#) for covert surveillance. The hacking was done via WhatsApp using a special type of malware called “Pegasus,” allegedly developed by Israeli spyware company the NSO Group. The malware could infiltrate a phone by making a missed call on the targeted WhatsApp number and turn on the phone’s camera and microphone as well as gain access to messages, emails, contacts, and passwords. The malware also has the capability of determining GPS location.
- Indian intelligence agencies were using the same Israeli spyware to carry out surveillance of Indian lawyers
- The threat of Indian cyberattacks against Pakistan becomes more serious given India’s growing cybersecurity cooperation with Israel. The latter is a center of cybersecurity research and development. In June 2019, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, while [speaking at the 9th Annual International Cybersecurity Conference](#), said, “I set the goal for Israel of becoming one of the top five cybersecurity powers in the world... It’s a goal we have met.”
- In March 2013, former CIA contractor Edward Snowden revealed that Pakistan was among the countries most targeted for surveillance by the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA).
- The government needs to invest in modernizing its agencies to enable them to deal with cyber threats. Currently there is no agency or organization fully committed to the country’s cybersecurity. Pakistan needs a full-fledged agency for protecting the country from cyberattacks. For example, the United States has the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and Israel has Unit 8200 or the National Cyber Security Authority (NCSA). In Pakistan, the National Response Center for Cyber Crime (NR3C), a unit of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), deals with cybercrimes; however, it lacks the capacity to shield the country’s critical national infrastructure and is deficient in resources, manpower and facilities.
- Pakistan also lacks sufficient legislation for countering cyber threats. In 2016, Pakistan passed a cybercrime law called the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016; however, the act does not cover many crucial aspects of cybersecurity.

- Pakistan needs to realize the dire threat to its critical infrastructure and the government should make all out-efforts to ensure the security of interconnected infrastructures of the country.

Pakistan's Role in Russia's Greater Eurasian Partnership:

<https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/pakistan-s-role-in-russia-s-greater-eurasian-partnership/>

- **The Russian Foreign Policy Concept of 2016**
- The first part of the document is about the General Provisions, which concentrate on the need “to create a favorable external environment that would allow Russia’s economy to grow steadily and become more competitive” in parallel with “[consolidating] the Russian Federation’s position as a center of influence in today’s world”. When combined, it can be understood that one of the most important objectives of Russia’s foreign policy is to expand the state’s international influence in order to improve its economic growth. Of topical interest, the expansion of Russian influence in South Asia could lead to Moscow reaping some of the economic benefits of CPEC.
- **Eurasian Economic Union:** The GEP has no practical standing without the EAEU as its core, so Russia must first concentrate on succeeding with its regional integration plans through this comparatively smaller structure and then transition to trans-regional integration afterwards. Unlike what some critics have claimed, the EAEU isn’t being created to advance national prestige or out of nostalgia for the Soviet-era past. Instead, the main purpose is to enable Russia to better compete with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, as well as to cooperate with them on a more equal footing.
- Pakistan and India were invited to join it in 2015, and the organization has since begun to take on more of an economic role atop its original security-related one. Still, the EAEU is much more of an economic actor than the SCO is by its very nature, but the two bodies have a lot in common, not only in membership, but also in overall outlook.
- Although Pakistan can be described by some as falling within the Chinese order, its massive market size and geostrategic location could change the strategic calculus by making it more of an independent player in the event that Russia is successful with fostering improved economic-connectivity relations with it, which would also benefit all of the EAEU’s member states. Pakistan, and by extrapolation the SAARC bloc of which it’s a part, is but one example of a so-called third order that could revolutionize the strategic balance and thus give Russia more flexibility for interacting with all other poles of economic significance.
- On an institutional level, improved Russian-Pakistani connectivity with CPEC as its centerpiece could also bring the EAEU closer to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Even though this group has been more or less moribund for the past few years owing to disagreements between Pakistan and India, it might be revived if Russia more directly began economically cooperating with Pakistan, which could in turn attract India’s attention and possibly encourage it to reach a pragmatic compromise with its neighbor for rejuvenating this regional integration bloc. On a grander scale, Pakistan could be the trans-regional gateway state for the EAEU’s further bloc-to-bloc integration with not only SAARC, but also the SCO and even the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) considering that

the Gulf countries are investing in CPEC too and could take advantage of its terminal port of Gwadar for conducting trade back and forth with Central Asia. This is a key point that is sorely lacking in the academic literature on this topic, which is due either to of a lack of knowledge about the trans-regional integration opportunities afforded by CPEC and/or a hyper-sensitivity to India's concerns about its partners participating in that project. Nevertheless, further research should be conducted on this topic.

Digital Pakistan: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1562772/digital-future>

- Across Asia, the digital economy has been a crucial factor in transforming economies and communities, and spurring economic growth. Indonesia has ridden on the back of a vibrant start-up community to create five unicorns in the e-commerce, digital payments, and travel sectors. These companies are each valued at \$1 billion or more. Malaysia has secured global investment enabling domestic and international companies to move into hi-tech manufacturing. Singapore's digital prowess has enhanced its trade relations with global markets. A focus on digital economy development means these countries have been able to leverage opportunities from digital transformation.
- As Pakistan embarks on its own transformation agenda — the 'Digital Pakistan Vision' — lessons from across Asia can be useful. Pakistan is a market of scale blessed with a youthful population. The IT export sector is vibrant, start-ups like Airlift, Zameen and Patari are being funded and noticed, and the ease of doing business is improving.
- However, a significant digital divide exists with only 35 per cent of the population having internet access. Covid-19 has shown that without comprehensive strategies to provide internet access, communities suffer and young people are disadvantaged.
- Digital economies require the free flow of data across borders to function, and regulations that support cross-border data flows are a key element. A McKinsey study shows that over a decade, data flows collectively have raised world GDP by approximately 10pc and contribute \$2.8 trillion to annual trade. That contribution equates to a larger share of the increase in global GDP compared to the worldwide trade of physical goods.
- Integration and interoperability with global standards will support an agile, innovative and resilient digital economy, one that enables Pakistan to bridge the digital divide and achieve inclusive social and economic growth.

More Connectivity: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1564060/more-connectivity>

- The Karakoram Highway, completed in 1974, was a major milestone in Pakistan's quest to improve regional connectivity. More recent efforts include the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project. Both have potential to be the bedrock for future regional development, open new trade routes giving access to landlocked Asian countries and create new livelihood opportunities for the local population. Additionally, these interventions, if implemented appropriately, will have a direct impact on the achievement of the SDGs, including decent

work and economic growth (SDG 8), affordable and clean energy for all (SDG 7), sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), no poverty (SDG 1), zero hunger (SDG 2), and industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), to name a few.

- The benefits of digital connectivity can be reaped tremendously. For example, increase in digital regional connectivity will enable SMEs and firms from developing countries to increase their share in global trade; due to their competitive edge of pre-existing lower production costs and prices. According to WTO predictions, this reduction can especially benefit SMEs and firms from developing countries, increasing their share in global trade from 46 per cent to 57pc.

Budgeting on Hope: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1564279/budgeting-on-hope>

- This year there is literally no revenue plan. No explanation on how the trillion rupees of additional revenue will be collected. First consider that the net federal revenues, meaning the amount left with the federal government after transfers to the provinces have been made as per the National Finance Commission award, is Rs3.7tr and expenditures on debt servicing and defence (the two largest expenditure heads) is Rs4.235tr. Meaning the states run out of money before it is even done paying its creditors and the armed forces, so never mind development, salaries and pensions, subsidies or anything else.
- The second problem in discussing this year's budget, and it pains me to say this, is that economic discourse in this country (which was never all that high to start off with) has been degraded down to rank silliness under this government. This sounds harsh, but let me explain.
- One of the silliest things one can do when discussing economic matters is throw indicators at each other to score points. 'Growth rates in our time were higher than they are in your time', for example. Or, 'we brought in more foreign exchange than you'. Or 'debt went up under your tenure'. And so on.
- This is silly because in economic matters the effects of decisions made today can take a while to materialise. For example, the NFC award that devolved large parts of federal revenues only began to bite at the centre a few years later, as the size of the provincial shares increased every year rather than in one go. It took many years before the vilification of the NFC award and the 18th Amendment began as a campaign, something Imran Khan has jumped on to now as well after having sung the praises of the 18th Amendment in the past.

- It takes a fair amount of rhetorical kung fu for them to explain how their policies are any different, and why deteriorating indicators in their two years are in fact good news. ‘Things will get worse before they get better’ they argue. Where have we heard that line before? Meanwhile debt servicing as a proportion of revenue was 40 per cent in 2015, and came down to 37pc by 2018. It is 62pc today, and we’re making up the revenue plan as we go along. All that we can do now is to hope for the best.

The END

VERY VERY IMPORTANT: How the US should deal with China in Pakistan

<https://carnegiesinghua.org/2020/04/08/how-united-states-should-deal-with-china-in-pakistan-pub-81456>

- CPEC not the Flagship BRI project but Pilot
- Phases of CPEC
- US should Match Chinese development efforts
- JUST READ THE DAMN ARTICLE