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CHIEF EDITOR:
Nusrat Mirza

EXECUTIVE EDITOR:
Bismah Mirza

EDITOR:
Mirza Kashif Baig

MANAGING EDITOR:
Yusuf Rahi

PRODUCTION MANAGER
M. H. Khan

LAYOUT DESIGN:
Muhammad Zia Malik

CONTRIBUTORS:

Gen. (R) Mirza Aslam Baig
Nisar Ul Haq Usmani

BUREAU CHIEF & DIRECTOR MARKETING:

Islamabad:
Prof. Dr. M. Attaullah Khan

REPRESENTATIVES:

UK (London)

Tahir Shah

Bangladesh

Abdul Rahim Khan

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NUSRAT MIRZA

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Mailing Address:

Plot No.71/C, 1st Floor, 24th Commercial Street,
Tauheed Commercial Area, Phase-V, DHA.,
Karachi, Pakistan.

Tel : +92 21 358 619 35 -36

Email : monthlyinteractionpk@gmail.com

www.monthlyinteraction.com

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TO WHAT END.....?



The Zionist occupation of Palestine started with the support of the Western world who have championed the process of stealing land by way of genocide of the indigenous people. Since 1948, the Zionists have steadily, by use of force and violence, acquired more and more Palestinian territory, all the while subjecting the Palestinians to the worst form of oppression and the entire world has turned a blind eye to these matters. The Hamas-Israel conflict which began on October 07, 2023, seems to be deeper than the obvious dispute arising from Zionists' occupation of Palestine. According to some intellectuals, it is a false flag attack like that of 9/11 staged by America and the Zionists.

As per this theory, the war should be viewed together with the Ukraine war which is in line with the four-pronged American agenda to maintain global hegemony whereby, Britain was to exit from the European Union, there is to be a mass migration of Asians, and Africans back to their home countries, Global inflation and eventually war. Wars in this case are well thought out to have maximum benefit for America and the Zionist regime. Russia was forced into a war with Ukraine with heavy support to Ukrainians being sent by Western countries.

This has benefited the USA by keeping Russia in check, similarly, this current war between Hamas and the Zionist regime is staged to corner the Muslims of Gaza and eliminate them from the land. Also, this war may be aimed at Iran as well because it is rumored that Iran has achieved 83% uranium enrichment, and at 93% it will become a nuclear power. An attack on Iran would prevent it from becoming a nuclear power. Iran understands this threat and has therefore distanced itself from the war in Gaza and is doing its best to convince the Western world that it is not an active supporter of Hamas.

Also, this will pave the way for 1 or two more wars to cement American hegemony and to successfully conclude the greater Israel Plan. Alternately, it is also believed that this attack on the

Zionist regime was a response by other global powers to the USA and to distract the West from the Ukraine war. Even though this theory is considered, the swiftness of the response illustrates extreme readiness, and it seems to be serving American interests. Therefore, it is believed that similar to the 9/11 attack, the Americans and the Zionist regimes were aware of the plan, and they let it happen to fuel their agenda.

The American establishment understands that the biggest obstacle in the path of tyrannical designs is their own nation, which is why they conduct such false flag operations to get their people to support their actions. While this American philosophy works in the short term to justify the actions in the long run these wars and atrocities have destroyed American society. School shootings and violent crimes have increased drastically in the USA. US soldiers are increasingly suffering from severe mental illnesses, but all this is acceptable damage for the US regime. Whichever theory is considered, the global situation is grim with destruction and death in every corner.

The world needs to understand that the Gaza dispute needs to be effectively addressed with a two-state solution. There is a dire need for a permanent ceasefire, leading to a permanent settlement, and the Zionist regime needs to be forced to stop the genocide in Gaza. At this moment, the anti-Zionist sentiment has reached its peak globally due to the atrocities they are committing in Gaza. Global powers need to band together to prevent a spillover of this conflict, which would engulf the whole world as this is the final act of the USA and its Zionist partner to ensure their hegemony.

Right now, emerging giants like Russia and China are competing against each other and are trying to fight back individually which is not enough. They also need to establish a decisive strategic alliance with regional powers such as Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan if they wish to emerge victorious from this scenario. This conflict must be diffused through decisive collective measures; otherwise, it could escalate and evolve into a world war.

Some writers and intellectuals assert that, regardless of how the war in Gaza concludes, Israel has already lost. Others emphasize the perceived double standards of the USA in the Gaza and Ukraine conflicts, attributing it to Western hypocrisy. The Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister is calling for reforms in the global security structure, highlighting the perception that the system is skewed in favor of the USA and serves American interests.



NEWS IN BRIEF



CHINA OFFERS VISA-FREE ENTRY FOR CITIZENS OF FRANCE, GERMANY, ITALY, THE NETHERLANDS, SPAIN AND MALAYSIA

China has announced temporary visa-free entry for citizens of France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and Malaysia from December 1 to November 30 next year. This move aims to boost post-pandemic tourism and revive the country's tourism sector, which suffered due to strict COVID-19 measures. The visa exemption applies to various purposes, including business, tourism, visiting relatives, and transiting for up to 15 days. The decision follows recent efforts by China, such as restoring international flight routes, to recover from pandemic-related restrictions.

The government also seeks to improve its global image after disagreements with Western countries on issues like COVID-19, human rights, Taiwan, and trade. The move received positive responses, with hopes for similar measures for all EU member states.

French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna praised the announcement during her visit to Beijing, emphasizing its positive impact. This follows China's previous expansions of visa-free transit policies and the elimination of COVID test requirements for inbound travelers. The European Chamber of Commerce in China views the decision as a positive step to boost business confidence and facilitate people-to-people exchanges.

Courtesy: Reuters.

U.S. THWARTED PLOT TO KILL SIKH SEPARATIST, ISSUES WARNING TO INDIA

U.S. authorities thwarted a plot to kill a Sikh separatist in the country and issued a warning to India over concerns the government in New Delhi was involved, a senior Biden administration official said. The U.S. is treating the plot with utmost seriousness and has raised the issue with the Indian government "at the senior-most levels," the White House said on Wednesday (Nov 22, 2023). The Financial Times first reported the plot. White House



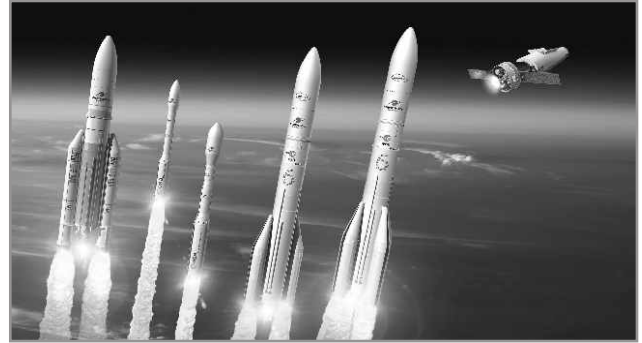
spokesperson Adrienne Watson said Indian officials expressed "surprise and concern" when they were informed about the incident. "We are treating this issue with utmost seriousness, and it has been raised by the U.S. government with the Indian government, including at the senior-most levels," Watson said.

"They stated that activity of this nature was not their policy ... We understand the Indian government is further investigating this issue and will have more to say about it in the coming days. We have conveyed our expectation that anyone deemed responsible should be held accountable," she said. Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, who says he is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada, was the target of the foiled plot, according to the senior administration official. "Just like Canadian citizen Hardeep Singh Nijjar's assassination by the Indian agents on Canadian soil was a challenge to Canada's sovereignty, the threat to (an) American citizen on American soil is a Challenge to America's sovereign (ty)," he said. News of the incident comes two months after Canada said there were "credible" allegations linking Indian agents to the June murder of a Sikh separatist leader, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, in a Vancouver suburb, something India has rejected.

Courtesy: Nikkei Asia.

EUROPE'S SPACE PROGRAM PLAYS CATCH-UP WITH CHINA AND INDIA

Europe's intention to launch a return cargo mission to the International Space Station by 2028 puts it years behind China and India, with industry experts saying that unless there is greater political will and commitment of funds, its access to space in the future will be limited. France, Germany and Italy agreed earlier this month at the European Space Agency Space Summit in Spain to commit 340



million euros (\$363 million) per year to the Ariane 6 rocket program, a decision backed by all 22 members. But that is hardly enough to catch up with China and India, which have been reaching milestone after milestone.

Courtesy: Nikkei Asia.

PAKISTAN POINTS AFGHAN TALIBAN TO MILITANT HIDEOUTS, URGES ACTION

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry says it has handed over intelligence on Pakistani Taliban militant hideouts in Afghanistan to the Taliban government there, demanding the authorities take action against what Islamabad considers one of its biggest security threats. "We have shared the evidence with Afghan authorities of TTP hideouts inside Afghanistan," Zahra Baloch, the Pakistani ministry's spokesperson, told reporters in a weekly briefing on Thursday, referring to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. "We have urged the interim Afghan government to take concrete action against



these TTP elements, dismantle their networks, and prevent terrorist attacks from across the border into Pakistan." She added.

Courtesy: Nikkei Asia.

BRICS CONDEMNS ISRAEL WAR ON GAZA IN SIGNAL TO THE WEST

Leaders of major emerging economies called for an end to Israel's war on Gaza on Tuesday, and for a cessation of hostilities on both sides to ease the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. In a virtual summit chaired by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, the BRICS grouping denounced attacks on civilians in Palestine and Israel, with many leaders calling the forced displacement of Palestinians, within Gaza or outside the territory, "war crimes."

"We condemned any kind of individual or mass forcible transfer and deportation of Palestinians from their own land," a chair's summary read. The group, which did not issue a joint declaration, also "reiterated that the forced transfer and deportation of Palestinians, whether inside Gaza or to neighbouring countries, constitute grave breaches of the Geneva conventions and war crimes and violations under International Humanitarian Law." The BRICS is made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, all major emerging economies looking for a greater say in a global order long dominated

by the United States and its Western allies. These countries are often viewed as leaders of what is referred to in international policy speak as the "Global South". But it wasn't just these five countries that spoke on the war on Tuesday. Earlier this year, the BRICS had agreed to expand and add Egypt, Ethiopia, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iran as members from 2024. The leaders of these six countries also participated in the meeting called by South Africa. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres joined the summit too.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera.

PAKISTAN AND IMF REACH DEAL FOR RELEASING \$700M FROM \$3BN BAILOUT PACKAGE

Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have reached a preliminary deal for the release of \$700m from a \$3bn bailout package after two weeks of talks with the global lender. The IMF on Wednesday said it reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan's caretaker government on the first review of the \$3bn fund. "Upon approval [from IMF executive board], around \$700m will become available bringing total disbursements under the programme to almost \$1.9 billion," IMF's Pakistan mission chief Nathan Porter said in a statement.

Courtesy: Dawn.



THE GREATER ISRAEL PLAN AND THE US PRIMACY

IS HAMAS'S SUDDEN ATTACK ON ISRAEL ANOTHER 9/11?



NUSRAT MIRZA



The attack on the land of Israel on October 7, 2023, resulted in the tragic loss of several soldiers and the capture of more than 100 Israeli soldiers, including one general and a few commanders, which sent shockwaves across the globe. It appeared as if major intelligence agencies, including Mossad, the USA's CIA, and Britain's M1-6, had ceased to function, given the magnitude of the attack that occurred without any prior indication.

This raised suspicions that this incident might be akin to a second 9/11, fueling the

belief that the Greater Israel project was advancing through this assault, especially as Israel contemplated a significant ground attack, including the possibility of a severe strike on Gaza.

The Greater Israel Plan, also known as the Colonel Peter Rolf Plan or the Joe Biden Plan, was originally conceptualized by Israeli diplomat Yinon in 1983. This plan entails changing the borders of the entire Middle East, and the map for it was designed by Colonel Peter Ralph. The geographical scope of this plan includes Iran and Pakistan.

According to this plan, Israel is intended to be the largest country in the Middle East, and the borders of all other Middle Eastern nations would be altered, resulting in their territorial reduction. Consequently, the unrest in Iran's Sistan region has intensified, and disturbances are also escalating in Pakistan's Baluchistan. A recent incident, wherein a dozen more soldiers were martyred, serves as a manifestation of these tensions.

More importantly, Iran is reported to have enriched uranium to 83%, and at 93%, it can produce an atomic bomb. In this context, the unanimous decision of the West is that it will not allow Iran to become a nuclear-armed country. Pakistan, being a nuclear power, is perceived as a threat by Israel. Consequently, institutions in many countries, including India and Israel, are actively involved in destabilizing Pakistan.

On November 3, 2023, an incident occurred in Dera Ismail Khan, followed by an

attack on Mianwali Airbase station on November 4. Despite all nine terrorists being killed by commandos, it is noteworthy that news of this attack was circulating in India on November 3, 2023, a day before the actual incident occurred.

Why is Pakistan being destabilized? There are several reasons for this. One is to keep Pakistan occupied internally, while the other is to ensure that, in the event of American-Israeli intervention in Iran, Pakistan, being a neighboring country, is also affected. A robust Pakistani military has the potential to alter the entire strategic landscape for the USA in South Asia. Consequently, there is a concerted effort to prevent Pakistan from becoming a factor in such scenarios.

To keep Pakistan internally preoccupied, incidents of terrorism are being deliberately increased. If this tactic proves ineffective, adversaries have alternative options, such as escalating tensions on both the western and eastern borders. The eastern border can be provoked at any time, with or without justification. However, the western border issue was initiated by Pakistan, despite having valid reasons behind it. Nevertheless, this has strained the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Pakistan has signaled its preparedness by conducting missile tests, including the Ababil



and Ghori tests, as well as testing Fateh One and Fateh 2 rockets earlier. Though, limited information about these tests has extended to the people of Pakistan but these exercises have significantly enhanced Pakistan's defense capabilities. Additionally, Lt. General (R) Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, advisor to Pakistan's National Command Authority (NCA), made a clear statement during a seminar at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in Islamabad on May 24, 2023.

He asserted that Pakistan possesses full-spectrum Nuclear Deterrence capability, and all of India's nuclear assets are within the reach of Pakistani missiles. Gen. Kidwai emphasized that there is no hiding place for India's strategic weapons in the presence of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. Behind Gen. Kidwai's statement lies the revelation that Pakistan's Shaheen III ballistic missile has a range of 2750 km.

If launched from South Punjab, it could neutralize India's nuclear weapons in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. These islands, where India's nuclear assets are safeguarded, were considered out of Pakistan's reach. However, Shaheen III has surpassed this safety barrier. Further investigation, involving discussions with several nuclear scientists, uncovered that the speed of Shaheen III is 24 times faster than the speed of sound.

This makes it highly effective, potentially rendering defense systems ineffective in preventing its target destruction. Importantly, Shaheen III is capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear payloads. Another formidable missile in Pakistan's possession is the Nasr tactical missile, capable of striking targets within a range of 70 km and carrying either conventional or nuclear warheads.

As stated by Gen. Kidwai on May 24, 2023, "Pakistan possesses the full spectrum of nuclear weapons in three categories:

Strategic, operational, and tactical, with complete coverage of the vast Indian landmass and its outlying territories" This missile has effectively neutralized the Indian Cold Start doctrine. Consequently, it has been asserted that the area from 0 km to 2750 km falls within our target range.

Then there is Ababeel, which can launch several missiles in multiple directions. If a large number of missiles are fired in different directions, no defense system can stop them. On top of all these missiles, the Babur missile is capable of a second strike from sea, land, or air, serving as a deterrent against enemy attacks. However, if someone becomes irrational and self-deluded, engaging in reckless ventures, they risk losing their existence in the counterattack.

This signals a grave situation. November, December 2023, and the entirety of 2024 are looming as potential war-ridden periods due to scheduled elections in the USA, India, and Pakistan. The complexity intensifies as the Americans deploy two fleets, and British and French ships encircle the Middle East, evoking a disturbing and ominous atmosphere.

The gravity of the situation is further heightened by Russia's testing of a nuclear torpedo. The global landscape is stirred as the United States faces challenges to its global supremacy from Russia and China. In response, the U.S. aims to reclaim its dominance by potentially winning a world war, indifferent to the potential devastation and humanitarian toll. The United States has repeatedly expressed its commitment to restore global hegemony at any cost, a stance it continues to actively pursue.

Pakistan must thoroughly examine this situation and make decisions accordingly. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is encircling Pakistan, creating unrest in Baluchistan and Sistan, and rendering the



ports of Gwadar and Chabahar unusable. Additionally, in Afghanistan, the US has left a significant arsenal of modern weapons under a secret agreement with the Taliban, including tanks, helicopters, and warplanes. The potential targets for this armament need careful consideration.

Upon reevaluation, it becomes evident that Pakistan is grappling with an economic crisis and is subjected to a hybrid war, facing threats from both its western and eastern borders. The nation is experiencing a deliberate weakening, with efforts to undermine its authority and erode its international role. Previously, Pakistan served as a mediator between Iran and Saudi Arabia, but China has now assumed that role. While Gulf countries once readily assisted Pakistan, they now support India under the pressure of the USA. Due to American pressure or perceived weakness, several friendly nations are inclined toward India, and Pakistan's influence, as a nuclear power, has weakened. Establishing a sphere of influence should have been a priority, which unfortunately has not been achieved.

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PAKISTAN CALLS FOR GENUINE CONSIDERATION AND PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE



SYED SAMIULLAH

Pakistan occupies a strategically significant position, offering both connectivity and trade advantages while also presenting certain challenges. Throughout history, major powers have consistently sought to strengthen their ties with Pakistan to serve their diverse interests. The United States, in particular, has demonstrated a clear interest in Pakistan since its inception. Pakistan's active involvement as



the leading member of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) from 1954-55 showcased its alignment with the United States during much of the Cold War.

However, during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, the United States deviated from its pledge by refusing to provide military support to Pakistan. This decision fueled widespread anti-American sentiments in the country, leading many to question the reliability of the United States as an ally. The disillusionment peaked, impacting the trust Pakistan placed in its alliance.

The turning point came in 1971-72 when Pakistan terminated its alliance with the United States following the East-Pakistan war,

resulting in the secession of East Pakistan with India's assistance. Subsequently, Pakistan sought to improve relations with the Soviet Union, but this endeavor was short-lived.

The dynamics changed in 1979 with the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, driven by a desire for warm-water access. This event prompted the U.S. to reestablish closer ties with Pakistan, a relationship that endured until the defeat of the USSR. The post-9/11 era brought renewed vigor to the alliance, with the U.S. enlisting Pakistan as a key ally in its war on terrorism. However, this partnership experienced fluctuations until 2021 when the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan signaled the end of this strategic cooperation.

President Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger utilized Pakistan's close ties with the People's Republic of China to initiate covert communications, leading to Kissinger's secret visit to China in July 1971 following his visit to Pakistan. These interactions eventually paved the way for President Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972, marking the normalization of relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

In contrast to the U.S., China, a rising economic giant, approaches its partnership with Pakistan in a distinct manner. The China-Pakistan relationship, rooted in historical cooperation, has gained strength with the introduction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Internationally, Pakistan is acknowledged as a crucial player

in this initiative, highlighting its significance alongside China. Despite Western efforts to counter the BRI and restrain China, targeting Pakistan due to its role in the project, Pakistan resiliently reinforces its ties with China. As a consequence, Pakistan encounters opposition from the U.S. and other Western nations. The recent stringent conditions imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are viewed not as ordinary measures but as repercussions of Pakistan's alignment with China.

In the bid to counter China, both the U.S. and Europe have bolstered India's influence, contributing not only to India's economic growth but also fortifying its strategic position. Initiatives like the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) and the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) offer India new prospects while posing challenges for Pakistan due to its economic and strategic alliance with China.

The QUAD, comprising the United States, Australia, India, and Japan, initially centered on maritime cooperation but has expanded its focus to address broader issues encompassing security, economics, and health. Alongside, the PGII, a G-7 project valued at 36 billion USD, was initiated to rival China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

In this context, Pakistan not only finds itself marginalized but also targeted by these groups solely due to its friendship with China. Beyond challenges from the U.S. and India, Pakistan faces baseless accusations from other states. Despite understanding Pakistan's economic challenges, false narratives, such as claims of selling weaponry to Ukraine against Russia, persist.

Even if hypothetically true, given Pakistan's struggle for survival and the absence of robust support from China and Russia, such actions could be justified. The prevailing circumstances necessitate a nuanced

understanding of Pakistan's intricate geopolitical challenges.

Examining the alliance between Pakistan and China reveals a profound connection, although there's a perception that China hasn't provided the substantial support Pakistan merits. The disturbance and imbalance in Pakistan's geo-economic position indirectly affect China. To rectify this, Pakistan requires support from China to enhance its global export capacity.

Currently, a notable disparity is evident when comparing the trade volumes between Pakistan and China. Pakistan's exports amount to no more than 1 billion USD, significantly lower than China's exports exceeding 15 billion dollars. This imbalance stems from Pakistan's limited industrial base, causing the gradual contraction of its small industry and resulting in various economic challenges.

China can play a pivotal role in helping Pakistan overcome these challenges by implementing strategic measures. These may include eliminating duties on Pakistani imports, providing special trade incentives comparable to the European GST Plus or American Increase Market Plus, importing small weaponry from Pakistan, and expediting the development of Economic Zones under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).



Pakistan is in dire need of an immediate and substantial financial assistance package, a financial commitment well within China's capabilities. The rising inflation rate not only exacerbates the difficulties faced by the average Pakistani but also hampers overall production, business operations, and trade, consequently resulting in increased unemployment and heightened instability.

A financial intervention from China would alleviate the multifaceted economic pressure on Pakistan, fortifying the nation and providing various benefits to China. This support would secure China's significant projects, enhancing the trust and reliance of other nations on China and its initiatives. Neglecting to address these economic

challenges may transform the infrastructure developed during the initial phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into a burden for both countries.

Fundamentally, it is vital for regional powers, specifically China and Russia, to acknowledge that mitigating regional instability aligns with their best interests instead of disregarding it. This becomes especially crucial when the destabilization is initiated by adversaries or competing powers like the US, India, or other Western nations, as it can lead to direct or indirect consequences affecting these countries.

The author is a Research Officer at Rabita Forum International (RFI) and associate Editor of the Monthly Interaction.

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THE GREATER ISRAEL PLAN AND THE US PRIMACY

However, there is still potential for positive action to navigate through these challenging times and regain influence. It is crucial to develop and implement strategies to overcome the current difficulties and restore Pakistan's standing on the international stage.

The world is currently in turmoil, witnessing shifts in alliances and emerging geopolitical dynamics. Unsettled regions are actively working to reinforce weakened alliances. Initially leaning towards neutrality in potential conflicts involving the US, Russia, or China, Europe now finds itself involved in the Ukraine war due to US influence.

This pattern is reminiscent of the post-9/11 era when Europe was drawn into the battlefield in Afghanistan. During that time, the US aimed to contain China, monitor China's expansion, Russia's growing regional connections, and other rivals like Iran. Additionally, there were plans to establish

Pakistan as a permanent ally to fulfill these objectives and promote US hegemony.

The escalation of tensions between Israel and Hamas has led to rallies against Israel in both Europe and the USA. Divergent opinions within Europe and the USA regarding the Israel-Hamas conflict are evident. While protests against Israel are prevalent, the United States appears inclined to take action against Muslims.

There are indications that the US might consider a mass migration program to repatriate Muslims to their home countries. This stance suggests collaborative efforts between the USA and Israel to achieve their goals, which include removing Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and addressing challenges to their global hegemony.

The author is Chief Editor of the Monthly Interaction.

POWER SECTOR REFORMS



**MUHAMMAD
SHEROZE
KHAN LODHI**



Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has had a profound effect on global energy markets. Price volatility, supply shortages, security issues, and economic uncertainty have contributed to what the International Energy Agency (IEA) is calling "the first truly global energy crisis, with impacts that will be felt for years to come".

As ever, poorer countries many still recovering from the effects of the global pandemic will bear the brunt of the negative consequences of the energy crisis. The myriad consequences of a global energy reboot mean that there may be some positive developments, too. However, with so much in a state of flux, it is difficult to predict with much certainty.

As the IEA notes, "Many of the contours of this new world are not yet fully defined, but there is no going back to the way things were". Now even households in Pakistan are feeling the heat of energy poverty as power costs here have almost doubled since the war.

With inflation in double digits, there is a cry for massive electricity subsidies, which

unfortunately the government can't afford due to a poor revenue structure and massive circular debt. Naturally, the question of what went wrong to put us in this horrible situation and how to improve the power industry then comes up.

Here are some points that explain the power crisis and how we can manage the power debt problem in the future: In the past, reforms, or whatever we did in the name of reforms, did not produce the desired results.

For instance, the disintegration of the power wing of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and its division into several independent power distribution companies (DISCOs) did not result in better performance.

In fact, the performance has only deteriorated over the years, with higher levels of corruption, inefficiency, mismanagement, bad governance, and incompetence adding to the menace of circular debt and bad recoveries.

Politicians have frequently exploited legislators' plans to provide electricity to their various areas for political points during the post-Zia era. Because of the extreme line losses and low number of commercial or corporate users, an extension of the grid for rural electric supply typically doesn't have a viable business case.

Even though grid extensions have been the most popular method for electrifying rural areas, off-grid systems are desperately

needed because our transmission and distribution networks need to be completely redesigned. Nearly half of our generation must be taken off the grid since the Transmission & Distribution (T&D) system is stopped at 22,000MW while having a generation potential of over 40,000MW.

What the government can do is start offloading some power plants to provinces for local power generation and distribution, bypassing the grid completely. Sri Lanka, Nepal, and hilly areas in India have extensively used mini/micro hydropower systems to create mini-grids to extend electrification off-grid, where financing matters are often looked at by indigenous village energy committees (VECs) or rural electric cooperatives (RECs).

This off-grid model, whether funded by the local government or communities, implies that the business model shall be deregulated to a large extent, and most of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) and Central Power Purchasing Agency-Guaranteed (CPPA-G) tariffs may not be applicable. In provinces like Baluchistan with a sparse but distributed population, this decentralized distributed generation model is the way to go.

Similarly, the independent power producers (IPPs) introduced in the 1990s, on the advice of international lending agencies, have played havoc, contributing adversely to the financial health of the power sector and leading to ever-increasing power tariffs.

Not only is the common man unable to pay the exorbitant electricity bills, which include taxes and surcharges totaling above 30 percent, but it is also diminishing our exports, which are no longer competitive even within the region because of the higher input cost of electrical power.

Despite a massive increase in electricity

prices in the current fiscal year, the circular debt is projected to increase by another Rs545 billion before settling around Rs392 billion. These Rs392 billion increases in circular debt would be adjusted against the reduction in the previous debt stock through subsidies aimed at keeping the total circular debt at Rs2,310 trillion by June next year.

On a conclusive note, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), other lending agencies' loans, or even investors, cannot restructure the energy sector unless we set our house in order. No amount of loans and reforms is going to sort out the power mess unless the deep-rooted local problems of power theft,



inefficiency, rampant corruption, and poor governance are addressed first.

Otherwise, the national debt will keep on increasing, with energy prices spiraling out of control. The actual problem is that we cannot have any meaningful reforms without a strong representative government in place.

That's the only way Pakistan may escape the predicament it currently finds itself in. And for it to happen, a free and fair election must be held where the people can select their representatives.

The writer is an economic analyst.

Courtesy: Business Recorder.

O P E D:

PRIORITIZING THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE IN BALOCHISTAN

HAMZA NASIR

Health economics, a discipline that explores the allocation of healthcare resources in the face of scarce supply, is essential for maximizing the efficiency, equity, and sustainability of healthcare systems globally. Healthcare is considered a human right for all citizens; therefore, healthcare is a national priority. The importance of understanding and prioritizing health economics has never been more evident.

The importance of health economics in Balochistan cannot be understated. It is crucial for policymakers to prioritize the well-being of Balochistan's future and understand why decision-makers must prioritize a healthier future for Balochistan.

Balochistan, despite being the largest province of Pakistan in terms of area, has one of the weakest healthcare sectors in the country. There are no good healthcare facilities where people can seek medical aid for their ailments. In the year 2000, during a global summit of the United Nations, the majority of heads of state came to a consensus to work towards achieving the health-related MDGs by 2015.

However, there has been limited progress in Balochistan towards attaining these health-related objectives. The main reason behind our failure to achieve the goals set out in the MDGs is that our healthcare facilities in both urban and rural Balochistan are in very bad condition. The quality and availability of services at these healthcare centers have worsened, mainly due to the weak and corrupt

political government in the province, which has not made the necessary improvements to the healthcare system. Internal politics within healthcare institutions, involving both professionals and non-professionals, have severely hampered their efficiency.

A small group of individuals wield significant influence over the entire healthcare system in Balochistan. Hospitals and clinics are facing shortages of crucial items, including proper medications and up-to-date medical equipment, ambulances, well-trained doctors and nurses, and other critical components for good healthcare.

Provincially, there are hospitals in each district's main town, and they also run Basic Health Units (BHUs) and Rural Health Centers (RHCs) to offer basic healthcare in cities and rural areas. They have 553 BHUs, 89 RHCs, and 89 Maternal Child Healthcare Centers (MCHs) for the scattered population. In the main city, Quetta, there are five hospitals: BMC, Civil, Fatima Jinnah Chest & General Hospital, Helpers Eye Hospital, and Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Hospital. The BHUs are



managed by the People's Primary Health Care Initiative (PPHI), a semi-government organization. Additionally, there are 567 Civil Dispensaries (CDs) in the province.

The healthcare situation in Balochistan is extremely poor, whether it is the doctor-to-patient ratio (1:1000) or the nurse-to-patient ratio (1:50). Many children die before the age of five, and maternal and infant mortality rates are alarmingly high.

In rural areas, healthcare services are inadequate, and hospitals are in a discouraging state. Even in district hospitals like Sibi, Khuzdar, and Loralai, there are specialists, but they lack essential medicines and equipment. Patients often have to turn to private hospitals in other regions for better care, and even the BMC and Civil hospitals in civil hospitals in Quetta have not provided satisfactory services with non-functional MRI machines for the past 5 years.

The situation in the provincial headquarters in Quetta is quite similar. It's facing a problem because five of its biggest hospitals are dealing with a lot of Afghan immigrants coming in. Meanwhile, in the private health sector, they focus more on making money and often don't follow the idea of helping people in need. The poor condition of the provincial headquarters implies an even worse condition in rural areas.

In Balochistan, 23 hospitals in various districts are inefficient (Published in *The Balochistan Point* on February 18, 2015), with issues like missing doctors, medicines, and transportation, leading to fatal outcomes for serious patients. The unequal distribution of wealth in the sector is causing such disastrous consequences, and the government of Balochistan is not being provided the necessary budgetary allocation for these improvements.

The amount spent on health services is

hardly sufficient to bring any meaningful change in the system. Poor public health services in the province leave the patients with no choice but to opt for private hospitals. Patients are being avoided in government hospitals to benefit private hospitals and clinics.

Improving healthcare in Balochistan, Pakistan, is of paramount importance, and learning from successful healthcare systems worldwide can provide valuable insights. This comprehensive approach includes enhancing healthcare worker education, supporting research and innovation, modernizing healthcare infrastructure, empowering local health officers, establishing robust oversight, implementing an efficient Health Management Information System, fostering public-private collaboration, seeking international support, optimizing resource allocation, and involving the community in healthcare decisions. Customizing these lessons to the Balochistan context can lead to the development of an accessible, high-quality, and efficient healthcare system. As members of the community, we can also contribute by promoting health awareness, supporting local health initiatives, and actively participating in community healthcare programs.

It is through this collaboration between the government, healthcare professionals, the community, and taking inspiration from successful global healthcare systems that Balochistan can make significant strides toward accessible, high-quality, and efficient healthcare for all residents.

The Author is a graduate of Economics from BUIEMS, Quetta and can be reached at hamzan039@gmail.com.

GHAURI MISSILE

Technical Design

- **Range (km) : 1,350-2,300**
- **CEP (m) : 190 (Previously thought to be several thousand meters)**
- **Diam. (m) : 1.32-1.35**
- **Height (m) : 15.852-16**
- **L. W. (kg) : 15,852-16,250**
- **Stage Mass (kg) : 15,092**
- **D. W. (kg) : 1,780-2,180**
- **Thrust (Kg f) : Effective: 26,051 (-709) Actual: 26,760-26,600**
- **Burn time (sec.) : 110**
- **Isp. (sec.) : Effective: 226 – SL due to vains steering drag loss of 4-5 sec. Actual: 230 Vac.: 264**
- **Thrust Chamb. : 1**
- **Fuel : TM-185 20% Gasoline 80% Kerosene**
- **Oxidizer : AK-271 27% N2O4 73% HNO3 Iodium Inhibitor**
- **Propellant Mass (kg) : 12,912**
- **Warhead (kg) : 760-987-1,158**



**Type:
MRBM**

**Designed:
1994-2001**

**Variants:
Ghuri
II & III**

**Warhead:
HE/NE**

**Propellant:
Liquid-
propellant**

THE SWORD OF DEFENSE

GHAURI MISSILE WEAPON SYSTEM

**INTERACTION
TEAM**



The Ghauri (Hatf 5) constitutes a significant aspect of Pakistan's ballistic missile capabilities, functioning as a road-mobile system thrust by liquid propellants. Within Pakistan's arsenal, it holds the distinction of being the most extensively tested missile system, highlighting its reliability and operational preparedness. The missile is deployed and launched using a dedicated transporter erector launcher, accentuating its

mobility and versatility in diverse strategic scenarios.

NAME/CODENAME OF THE MISSILE

The missile was named after the 12th-century Sultan Shahabuddin Ghauri by a senior scientist involved in the program upon its development. Sultan Muhammad Ghauri, renowned for his successful campaigns in the northwestern region of India, defeated Prithviraj in 1192 and formally established his kingdom in 1206.

Despite this historical association, the missile has been officially codenamed "Hatf5" by the Joint Staff Headquarters (JS HQ). The Hatf codename is derived from the name of the sword of the holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

VERSATILITY AND DISTINCTIVENESS

The versatility of the Ghauri weapon system, in alignment with other Pakistani ballistic missiles, is of notable consideration. It can be deployed with both conventional and nuclear capabilities. The missile's guidance system is a pivotal feature, utilizing a combination of inertial guidance and terminal guidance systems throughout its trajectory. This dual-system approach significantly enhances precision and control over its flight path.

The comprehensive development and design of the missile have been conducted at the Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), emphasizing the indigenous expertise and technological prowess integral to its creation.

While bearing a noticeable visual resemblance to North Korea's Nodong-1 MRBM, the Ghauri distinguishes itself through its advanced capabilities.

GENESIS OF THE GHAURI-I

The foundational phase of the Ghauri weapon system, designated as Ghauri-I, took shape during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Boasting a range of 1250-1500 km, a length of 15.9 m, a body diameter of 1.35 m, and a launch weight of 15,850 kg, this iteration showcased remarkable versatility by accommodating various payloads, including nuclear weapons, chemical agents, high explosives, or sub-munitions.

INAUGURAL TEST AND DEPLOYMENT

The Ghauri-I underwent its inaugural test launch on April 6, 1998, at the Tilla Test Firing Range near Malute, Jhelum Cantt. Deployed from a transporter erector launcher, the missile successfully struck its designated target in the Baluchistan desert, marking a significant milestone. Though reports indicate its entry into service in 2003, but some other sources claim that its full feasibility was established after a successful flight test in

2004. Acknowledged by the Pakistani military as a nuclear weapon-delivery capable missile, Ghauri-I demonstrated versatility by accommodating various warhead types.

In contrast to the collaborative Shaheen program involving Pakistan's Air Force and Army, the Ghauri program is exclusively focused on the defined objectives of the Pakistan Army. Particularly, its primary goal was to achieve high accuracy in targeting the enemy's valuable assets.

GHAURI'S VARIANTS

The subsequent evolution in the Ghauri missile series, Ghauri-2, commenced two years after the introduction of its predecessor, Ghauri-1, under the guidance of the Khan Research Laboratories (KRL). Serving as a more extended-range adaptation of the Hatf 5, Ghauri-2 underwent significant modifications, including the substitution of the previously employed heavy steel construction with a more lightweight aluminum alloy. Additionally, the propulsion system was upgraded with enhanced propellants, contributing to an overall improvement in performance.



This second iteration of the Ghauri missile boasted an elongated motor assembly, coupled with the incorporation of superior propellants, resulting in a notable increase in its operational range to 2,300 km.

On the other hand, Ghauri-III, presumed to be an intermediate-range ballistic missile capable of covering distances ranging from 3,000 to 3,500 km, lacks detailed information, and reports suggest that its development came to a halt during the developmental process.

RECENT TEST FLIGHT, LIQUID-FUEL TECHNOLOGY, AND POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS

Pakistan has effectively conducted numerous training launches of the Ghauri medium-range ballistic missile since its inception. The most recent launch, as reported by the military's media branch, ISPR, took place on 24/10/2023. The purpose of this launch was to assess the "operational and technical readiness of Army Strategic Forces Command."

Mansoor Ahmed, an authority on Pakistan's nuclear program, commented on the test, stating, "While this specific test serves as a training exercise, it not only validates enhanced technical and performance parameters but also presents an economical avenue for testing new reentry vehicle technologies." He further emphasized that the Ghauri, being the sole liquid-fueled ballistic



missile in Pakistan's strategic forces, provides valuable experience in liquid-fueled technology, potentially paving the way for the development of a satellite launch vehicle if Pakistan opts for that path.

Ahmed clarified that the Ghauri is powered by TM-185, a mixture of gasoline and primarily kerosene, along with fuming nitric acid. He highlighted that although kerosene has historically been used for space rocket applications, but fuming nitric acid is not commonly employed.

A more conventional combination, he noted, would involve kerosene and high-test peroxide, potentially offering a higher specific impulse translating to greater efficiency in delivering cargo to orbit.

In conclusion, the Ghauri missile system stands as one of the fundamental pillars of Pakistan's ballistic prowess. Its recent test features its operational readiness and hints at its potential applications in reentry vehicle technologies. With a dual-guidance system, capable of handling conventional and nuclear payloads, the Ghauri missile weapon system enhances Pakistan's arsenal, contributing to the bolstering of Pakistan's national security.

INTERVIEW

Brig. Agha Ahmad Gul (R)

Founder & Consultant of BTTN



Brig. Agha Ahmad Gul (R) is an illustrious military veteran and scholar with a remarkable 34-year career in the Pakistan Army, holding pivotal roles nationally and internationally in Command, Staff and Instructional capacities. A distinguished Master's graduate in War Studies and Defense & Strategic Studies, his expertise spans geopolitics, military systems and the geo-historic study of Baluchistan. He has been a global ambassador for Pakistan and has authored impactful articles in prestigious military journals, earning esteemed accolades including the **Commendation Card** and **Sitara-e-Imtiaz**. In the civil sector, he steered QESCO as CEO, occupied senior roles in Sui Southern Gas Company and served as Vice-Chancellor at the University of Baluchstan, Quetta. As the Founder and Consultant of BTTN, inaugurated on August 26, 2021, Brig. Gul visited **Rabita Forum International** on November 4, 2023, receiving a warm welcome and an honorary memento from the RFI team. His exclusive and insightful interview with Nusrat Mirza, Chairman RFI, is featured into two parts. Part I is published in this issue for the benefit of our readers.



INTERVIEW:

GUEST: BRIG. AGHA AHMAD GUL (R)

**INTERACTION
TEAM**

HOST : NUSRAT MIRZA

CHIEF EDITOR OF THE MONTHLY INTERACTION



Q. It is a privilege to welcome you, Brigadier (R) Agha Ahmad Gul, to our interview today. As a distinguished authority on the affairs of Pakistan, especially Balochistan, your profound insights are expected to provide a unique and historical perspective. We anticipate that this conversation will not only shed light on previously unheard information but also spark the interest of our readers in the dynamics of Balochistan and Pakistan. Recognizing the strength of our nation and the presence of remarkable individuals like you, we believe your wisdom, if harnessed, holds the potential to restore Pakistan to the visionary heights imagined by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslims of the subcontinent.

Brig. Gul, I extend my gratitude once again for sharing your valuable time with us. To commence, could you please delve into your early life, education, and the environmental factors that have influenced your journey?

Ans. I am humbled by the kind words you've expressed about me and want to convey my sincere gratitude. Well, I am

grateful for your complimentary remarks and would like to share some aspects of my educational journey. I attended a school where we used 'taat' (a mate) to sit on instead of desks or chairs. Beginning my primary education in Quetta, I completed my fifth grade in Zhob. My educational journey continued in Sibbi and then Ziarat, where the headquarters was located at that time. Interestingly, a classroom in Ziarat was only slightly larger than the current studio room, accommodating boys and girls from 6th to 10th grade in the same space.

Later, I enrolled in college, initially unaware that it was the only college in the entire Baluchistan region, established in 1948. During my childhood, British Baluchistan, now known as North Baluchistan, had only nine schools and lacked a college. I graduated from Quetta College, the sole college at the time, with a B.Sc. degree before joining the Army.

Joining the Army had its allure, fueled by



the perception that there would be less studying. Moreover, the backdrop of the 1965 war, coupled with the fervor generated by Madam Noor Jahan's songs, motivated many to join the military. However, the actual experience proved to be different, and the military's demanding education system transformed my viewpoint.

When I joined the Army, the level of study required was so intense that it made me question the value of what I had studied in college; it felt like a mere waste of time. My passion for history flourished in the military environment, where competitive tests were a regular occurrence. As a gunner, I had to undergo specific tests related to gunnery. During the entrance exam, only seven captains were selected, and I managed to secure the top position in the test as I studied a lot, owing to the fear of failure. Despite the taunts from others, challenging me to prove myself in the subsequent course, I dedicatedly studied until midnight, and Alhamdulillah, I excelled in that as well. This experience shattered my preconceived notion that the military lacked a focus on education.

A year later, I underwent another interview, and as a result, I was sent to the United States of America as a Major for a nine-month course, returning as an honors graduate. Subsequently, I participated in a competitive



test for Staff College, where I ranked among the top five or six. Following this, I became a teacher/lecturer at Staff College Quetta, which was built by the British in 1907. I later realized that I was the first teacher from Baluchistan in the institution. After that, I was posted as a teacher at the National Defense College and served there for about two years. Then, after two or three years of working elsewhere, I was made the Commander of the Joint Services Staff College.

Now, I believe the story of reading and writing should have concluded here, but it didn't. When I retired, the then governor, MR. Owais Ghani suggested that the University of Balochistan was not functioning properly and that I should take charge. I agreed to lead it under one condition: no one would dictate to me what to do or how to do it; I would work based on merit. Taking over the university posed a significant challenge in those days, but with the help of Allah, the Almighty, there was not a single strike in the two years. Within a year, the university's ranking improved from 38th to 11th out of 52 public universities in Pakistan.

After that, I decided that I wouldn't pursue more jobs because there is a significant difference between a civil job and an Army job. In the army, we used to persuade our seniors with arguments, but in civilian employment, it was not the same. When faced



with undue demands from higher-ups, I would refuse by citing that it goes against the rules. Their responses were quite 'innocent'; they would argue that rules are made by humans, suggesting I could create a new rule. However, I would assert that it is beyond my control. Consequently, I deemed myself unsuitable for a civilian job. Subsequently, I refrained from taking up any employment, despite receiving substantial offers, including one from the then Governor for the position of Chairman of the Public Service Commission, which I declined.

Lt. Gen (R) Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, a friend of mine for 45 years, and we continue to maintain a strong friendship. It is often said that acquiring 45 to 50 friends is not a challenge, but sustaining a friendship for 45 to 50 years is indeed a formidable task.

In January 2021, (Lt.) Gen (R) Khalid Ahmed Kidwai inquired if there was any think tank operating in Balochistan. I responded in the negative, and he then suggested the need for a think tank in Balochistan, a sentiment I agreed with. He requested me to draft a concept paper, which I did. After making some amendments, he approved the concept paper and encouraged me to establish and run the think tank in Balochistan. Despite my initial reluctance, he persuaded me to proceed.

At that time, Mr. Farrukh Bazai, one of our

previous colleague, served as the Vice Chancellor of IT University Balochistan. I approached him regarding the National Command Authority's intention to establish a think tank and inquired about the support he could offer. His response was that he could provide whatever assistance I needed.

Expressing my primary requirement for a location, Mr. Bazai showed me various places. Upon inspecting the first location, I deemed it the most suitable. This location comprised two large halls, where we subsequently constructed the think tank, set up research rooms, a process that took approximately three to four months.

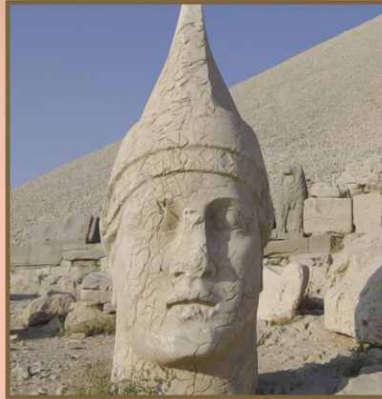
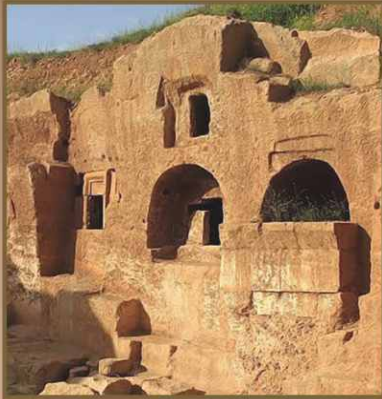
And then there was a high-powered delegation led by Lt. Gen (R) Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, and I assembled our team. We selected the first team based on 100 percent merit as the selection criteria. We shortlisted around 32 individuals. We commenced the interviews in the morning, and I appreciate my team; though they were all younger than me, they sat with great dedication until the evening. It was getting dark when we concluded the interviews. Most of them are still working, indicating a successful selection. The first task we received was to write a paper on the Afghanistan situation, as the Taliban was on the verge of taking over.



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CULTURAL CORNER

THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION



MESOPOTAMIA: THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION

**INTERACTION
TEAM**



Mesopotamia, etymologically derived from the ancient words "meso" signifying between or in the middle of, and "potamos" meaning river, designates the region nestled between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This historical expanse, encompassed by the Zagros Mountains in the northeast and the Arabian Plateau in the southeast, corresponds to present-day Iraq, extending into parts of Iran, Syria, Kuwait, and Turkey.

Recognized as 'Al-Jazirah' (the island) by the Arabs due to its fertile landscape surrounded by water, Mesopotamia holds a prominent place in the eastern Mediterranean, commonly acknowledged as the Fertile Crescent and revered as the cradle of civilization. Coined by Egyptologist J.H. Breasted in 1916, the term "Fertile Crescent" describes the region positioned at the north end of the Persian Gulf, often linked with the biblical Garden of Eden.

Mesopotamia boasts a rich historical tapestry, serving as the home to diverse civilizations over millennia, each contributing significantly to global culture and progress. In this land between two rivers, numerous fundamental aspects of contemporary daily life, now taken for granted, trace their origins. Pivotal developments such as writing, the wheel, a code of laws, the sail, and the concept of the 24-hour day, beer brewing, civil rights, and crop irrigation all found their roots in Mesopotamia. The great civilizations that flourished in this fertile expanse laid the groundwork for advancements that have indelibly shaped the trajectory of human history.

● HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Mesopotamia boasts a history that spans several millennia, with its roots dating back to the Neolithic era (7000-1700 BCE, the New Stone Age characterized by the beginning of a settled human lifestyle). The region witnessed the emergence of some of the world's earliest



city-states and complex societies.

Over the centuries, Mesopotamia experienced the rise and fall of various empires and dynasties, including the Akkadian Empire (2334-2218 BCE), the Babylonian Empire (1894-1595 BCE), and the Assyrian Empire (14th-7th century BC). Each of these powers left an indelible mark on the cultural, political, and architectural landscape of the region. The city of Babylon, with its iconic Hanging Gardens, became a symbol of Mesopotamian grandeur and engineering prowess.

● DISTINCTIVE FEATURES:

Several factors contribute to Mesopotamia's distinction as the cradle of civilization:

1. **Agricultural Innovation:** Mesopotamians were early adopters of agriculture, developing sophisticated irrigation systems to harness the fertile soil along the riverbanks. This innovation allowed for surplus food production, supporting the growth of urban centers.
2. **Writing System:** The invention of cuneiform writing in Sumer (a civilization in the historical region of southern Mesopotamia) marked the birth of recorded history. This system of wedge-shaped symbols on clay tablets enabled the Mesopotamians to document laws, literature, and administrative records,



- providing insights into their daily lives. Historian Samuel Noah Kramer, in his seminal work "History Begins at Sumer," provides a comprehensive exploration of Sumerian achievements, examining their contributions to literature, science, and governance and the creation of a sophisticated system of mathematics.
3. **Legal and Social Systems:** The Code of Ur-Nammu (the first known legal code) and the more famous Code of Hammurabi are among the earliest known legal codes, offering a glimpse into Mesopotamian social and legal structures. These codes emphasized justice, punishment, and social hierarchy.
4. **Religious Beliefs:** Mesopotamians were polytheistic, worshiping a pantheon of gods and goddesses. Temples, known as ziggurats, were erected to honor these deities. The Epic of Gilgamesh, an ancient Mesopotamian literary work, explores themes of mortality, friendship, and the quest for immortality.
5. **Technological Advancements:** Mesopotamians excelled in various technological innovations, including the development of the wheel, the potter's wheel, and advancements in metalworking and astronomy.

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PAKISTAN INSTITUTE OF NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PINSTECH)

INTERACTION TEAM

This series is dedicated to showcasing the remarkable achievements and vital contributions of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and its affiliated institutions. It aims to provide readers with insights into Pakistan's nuclear advancements, including nuclear science, energy production, healthcare breakthroughs, agricultural innovations, and environmental conservation, all driven by PAEC's pioneering efforts. The series draws extensively from the insightful book "Johari Nishtar e Tehqeeq," the first-ever Urdu book on the topic, authored by the well-known scholar, analyst, and Chief editor of the monthly Interaction, Nusrat Mirza. It offers a unique perspective on untold stories, significant milestones, and the unwavering commitment of PAEC and its dedicated scientists and researchers.



The Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PINSTECH) was established in 1965 in Nilore, Islamabad. It is a leading institution dedicated to nuclear research and development. Initially focused on civilian research, it shifted towards primary weapons development during the 1971 Indo-Pak war. However, since the 1990s, it has refocused on civilian applications. This state-of-the-art institute operates under the jurisdiction of the

Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), overseeing the peaceful applications of nuclear technology in Pakistan.

PINSTECH is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, laboratories, and research centers, making it a leading institution in the region for nuclear research and development. The institute actively participates in educational programs, training initiatives, and collaborative projects with international organizations to further scientific knowledge and promote the peaceful applications of nuclear technology.

PINSTECH has a vast research scope, contributing significantly to nuclear research,



including physics, reactor technology, medicine, and radiation protection. Its research scope extends to neutron studies, renewable energy, high-performance computing, systems biology, laser technology, and data science. Collaborating with prestigious institutions globally, including CERN, ANL, and ORNL, showcases its international standing in scientific research.

The research divisions at PINSTECH highlight its commitment to excellence. The Directorate of Science, led by the Physics Research Division and Chemistry Research Division, focuses on cutting-edge research in nuclear and radiation studies. The Directorate of System and Services oversees health physics, nuclear engineering, electronics maintenance, and general services. Meanwhile, the Directorate of Technology encompasses materials, isotope applications, and isotope production divisions.

PINSTECH operates several nuclear

reactors, including PARR-I and PARR-II, illustrating its dedication to technological advancements. The institute's commitment to research is underscored by its state-of-the-art facilities, such as the Central Diagnostic Laboratory and Central Analytical Facility, making it a hub for researchers and students from across Pakistan. As PINSTECH enters a new era, it continues to expand its capabilities. Recent initiatives include expansion work aimed at enhancing the institute's ability to produce isotopes for medical use, especially for cancer treatment, and furthering the peaceful applications of nuclear technology.

In summary, PINSTECH, with its rich history and diverse research portfolio, stands as a beacon of scientific progress in Pakistan. From its origins rooted in geopolitical realities to its present focus on peaceful applications, PINSTECH exemplifies the country's commitment to advancing knowledge and technology for the betterment of society.

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MESOPOTAMIA: THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION

● DECLINE OF THE MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION:

The decline of Mesopotamian civilization was a multifaceted process marked by a series of interconnected factors. The region faced challenges such as environmental degradation, including soil salinity from extensive irrigation, and recurring droughts that strained agricultural productivity. Additionally, the Achaemenid Persian Empire's conquest of Mesopotamia in 539 BCE marked a turning point.

While the Persians brought a degree of stability to the region, the subsequent conquests of Alexander the Great in the 4th

century BCE marked the final blow. The Hellenistic influence (a period after Classical Greece, between the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC and the death of Cleopatra VII (30 BC)) altered the cultural landscape, and Mesopotamia gradually faded into the broader tapestry of the expanding Greek and Roman civilizations.

● CONCLUSION:

Mesopotamia, with its strategic location, fertile land, and innovative civilization, stands as a cornerstone in the mosaic of human history. The legacy of this ancient cradle of civilization endures through its contributions. As we reflect on the achievements of Mesopotamia, we gain a deeper understanding of the foundations upon which subsequent civilizations built their own unique cultures and institutions.

REPORT ON THE BOOK LAUNCH CEREMONY

THE SECURITY IMPERATIVE: PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR DETERRENCE AND DIPLOMACY

BY AMBASSADOR (R) ZAMEER AKRAM

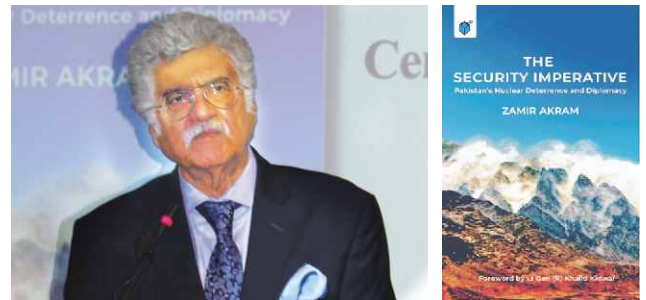
INTERACTION
TEAM



The Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS), in collaboration with the Global and Regional Studies Center of the Institute of Business Management (IoBM), hosted the book launch ceremony of "THE SECURITY IMPERATIVE: PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR DETERRENCE AND DIPLOMACY," authored by former Ambassador Zameer Akram on November 15, 2023.

Ambassador (R) Zameer Akram elucidated the motives behind his book, emphasizing the necessity of portraying Pakistan's stance on its nuclear program to the global audience. He countered Western propaganda, highlighted the challenges Pakistan faced, and asserted that the nuclear program was essential for both civilian and defense purposes. Critiquing the double standards of the United States, which supported India's nuclear program while imposing sanctions on Pakistan, Amb. Akram traced the program's origins to the threats faced by Pakistan since its inception and defended its legitimacy.

Dr. Huma Baqai praised Amb. Akram's unbiased analysis, lauding him as a diplomatic "Mujahid." She acknowledged the book's revelations, stating that attempts were



made to block its publication due to its critical content. Dr. Baqai highlighted Amb. Akram's meticulous research, presenting a clear narrative of Pakistan's nuclear program and dispelling doubts through historical references.

Ambassador (R) Qazi Khalilullah, Executive Director of CISSS, commended Zameer Akram's boldness in addressing all aspects of Pakistan's nuclear program. He outlined the continuous criticism from the U.S., urging Pakistan to abandon or modify its program, and stressed that despite objections and sanctions, Pakistan remained steadfast due to security concerns posed by India and external interventions.

Defense Analyst Ikrum Sehgal emphasized the long-overdue need for awareness and understanding of Pakistan's nuclear program.



Sehgal praised Amb. Akram's courage in presenting the truth, shedding light on the program's challenges and successes. He underscored the importance of aligning Pakistan's security and foreign policies with the current geopolitical landscape.

Mr. Talib S. Karim, President IOBM, highlighted the book's significance as a guiding light for the younger generation. He stressed the need for education and scientific knowledge, expressing concern over the educational gap in Pakistan. Mr. Karim credited Pakistan's perseverance in the face of negative propaganda and diplomatic challenges to achieving its nuclear goals.

Ambassador (R) GR Baloch thanked attendees and congratulated Zameer Akram for providing a valuable resource on a crucial subject. He praised the collaboration between CISSS and IOBM and hinted at future seminars, emphasizing the importance of Akram's book in this collaborative effort.

Research Officer at CISSS, Safia Malik, highlighted the book's excellence while presenting the book's review. She praised Akram's insightful grasp of the subject and recommended the book as essential reading for those interested in understanding Pakistan's security policies and countering negative propaganda.

Numerous scholars and researchers

hailing from CISSS, Rabita Forum International (RFI), IOBM University, and various other organizations and universities actively took part in the seminar, contributing to a rich dialogue and enhanced comprehension of Pakistan's nuclear trajectory.

The valuable presence of former Ambassadors Alam Brohi and Hassan Habib, along with Dr. Shahida Wizarat, enriched the proceedings. The seminar concluded with the signing of an MOU, paving the way for future collaborations between CISSS and IOBM, with a shared objective of promoting sustained engagement in well-informed discussions on crucial issues.



SEMINAR

KASHMIR BLACK DAY

**MODI COMMITTED A CONSTITUTIONAL TERRORISM
BY SUSPENDING ARTICLE 370 AND 35-A OF THE
CONSTITUTION MADE BY HIS OWN PARLIAMENT:**

AMBASSADOR QAZI M. KHALILULLAH (R)

**INTERACTION
TEAM**



The Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS) organized a seminar on October 27 to commemorate "Kashmir Black Day" at its office. The seminar, which centered on the theme of "Indian occupation of Jammu

and Kashmir," was presided over by the Executive Director of CISSS, former ambassador Qazi M Khalilullah. Distinguished attendees included former ambassador Aalam Brohi, Pro. Vice Chancellor of DHA Suffa University, Brig. (R) Saeed Ahmed Minhas, and other notable figures.

Former Ambassador Qazi M. Khalilullah, in his opening remarks, asserted that the entry of the Indian army into Kashmir on October 27, 1947, initiated a prolonged attack on the innocent residents. This unfortunate situation continues to impact Kashmiris today. Despite

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WORLD CLASS POLICING AWARD FOR INTERNATIONAL POLICE ASSOCIATION



Congratulations to Pakistan's **Sir Dr. Muhammad Shoib Suddle** for achieving the International Police Association's "World Class Policing award" flanked by the President and Secretary General of International Police Association during the 66th World Congress at Athens, Greece, 28 Oct 2023.

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UN resolutions, their full implementation has not taken place.

Lord Mountbatten, who was the Governor General at that time, faced criticism for unjust actions in the border division and failed to fulfill his commitment to conduct elections for Kashmiris' right to self-determination. The removal of Kashmir's special status, outlined in Article 35-A and Article 370 of the constitution, resulted in increased international criticism. Countries like China, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Iran, and organizations including the United Nations and various human rights groups expressed their disapproval.



Former Ambassador Alam Brohi talked about the unlawful killings and war crimes happening during the Indian Army's control of Kashmir for the last hundred years in a seminar.

The Pro. Vice Chancellor of Suffa University, Brig. (R). Prof. Saeed Ahmed Minhas, compared the conflicts in Gaza and Kashmir, highlighting their similarities. He emphasized that both issues are globally important, with the international community overlooking the fundamental geographical divisions.

In both regions, people have been facing armed brutality for 75 years, and



the intruders are nuclear powers.

Both Gaza and Kashmir hold significance for their local populations, with a Muslim majority. Despite resolutions from international humanitarian organizations, implementation has been hindered by the interests of nuclear powers.

Intruders in both areas aim for demographic changes, constructing new settlements and committing war crimes to achieve their goals. The oppression and lack of self-determination for the local populations are common themes in both conflicts.

At the end of the event, Qazi Khalilullah presented shields and memos to the participants. Before that, attendees asked questions related to the topic especially about the prevailing situation in Palestine, its aftermaths and impacts on rest of the world in general and on Muslims in particular. RFI Media Team covered the whole seminar.



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INTERVIEW WITH BRIG. AGHA AHMAD GUL (R)

We were assigned to suggest what Pakistan should do. I expressed to Gen. Khalid Kidwai that, respected brother, the situation is so dynamic that predicting events in Afghanistan in three months and recommending actions for our government is challenging. He responded, "This is your first assignment," so I had to agree. We gathered our team of 23 people, including myself, as I am not their president but their co-worker. We initiated the work and requested a month. After a month, when I presented the paper, it was noted in the final pages of the policy that the recommendations we made would need to be reviewed after three months due to the rapidly changing circumstances.

About four to five months ago, The German Ambassador visited BTTN, and I presented the same policy paper to him. I informed him that I was pleased to say that 70% of the policies we had guaranteed for just three months remained valid even after an extended period. Following the success of our paper and recommendations, my team and I were delighted to be able to recommend them to the government of Pakistan. The government of Pakistan has since implemented almost 70 percent of the proposed policies.

Q: Well, Brigadier Gul, you mentioned being sent to the US. When you were there for training, did they attempt to entrap you?

Ans. Yes, they did. Let me tell you briefly. They had an 'innocent' way as they used to take us to a club. In the evening, there were some gentlemen who were drinking. They might have taken their pictures while drinking, but I stated that I consider myself a Muslim.

Therefore, I would abstain from alcohol and pork. At that time, it was the era of Gen. Zia-ul-Haq. I was the only Pakistani in the training; there were people from 67 other countries. They used to take us and give us the opportunity to drink alcohol. One of their representatives said, "You have impressed many people, and we have a senior who is visiting and wants to meet you." In a meeting with the guy, after five or six minutes, when he asked me questions, I said, "Wait, are you from the CIA?" He was shocked; he didn't think I would understand it so quickly.

Then he said to me, "I worked in the CIA for some time, now I am doing business, and I am asking you questions for business." I replied, "Look, I am a major with 10 years of service, and my expertise is related to war. Why are you asking about business?" He said, "I am asking because an officer of the Pakistan Army knows about everything. Now, look, your president (Zia UL Huq) was a soldier, and now he is a civilian." I said, "No, I have no knowledge about this." Then he said, "Well, we're going to have a session where prominent people will come from our company, so we want you to spend the weekend with us in Houston." Then all my (alarm) bulbs turned red. I said, "I have my exam here; I can't come with you."

Mirza Sahib, they were convincing me in such a way that, in the end, they said to me, "You are worried about the exam. Well, we will



pick you up on Saturday. A special jet will come and take you from here, and we will leave on Sunday night." Now, some bells that were not ringing in my mind started ringing. It was very clear that they wanted to take me to a place where they could compromise me. Then I called Brigadier Mahmood; he was also with me in my military academy and informed him about the entire situation. I said, "I am reporting the situation to you officially." He said, "It is fine; you are being very careful, and you should remain careful." So, I remained careful. I knew if I showed some weakness, they would either capture compromising images or record my compromising situation and blackmail me on a stage. So yes, they tried to trap me.

Q. Now the question is that Balochistan is a big province that has so many minerals, the population is less and the area is so much, yet why is Balochistan backward?

Ans: This is a very romantic statement that Balochistan is a very rich province full of minerals. Look, in Balochistan, the first thing that you can say was a really valuable asset was natural gas, methane, from the Dera Bugti area; I believe it was a huge asset. But, when minerals come out, they are not ready to be commercialized immediately. Spreading out takes time to earn from them. Sui Gas was actually discovered by Burma Shell. People in Balochistan often say that they have not been given their own gas. If you don't have the money to pay or if you steal, as is happening now, it ultimately becomes difficult to ensure its supply to all areas. When I was in SSGC, General Pervez Musharraf said, 'Tell them not to steal gas; we will give it to them for free.'

I also met Bugti Sahib; may Allah give him a place in Jannah, and I told him General Pervez Musharraf said that they will give free gas to them. Bugti sb said, "I don't know whether or not the gas is stolen, but it is a good

thing to give people free of cost gas." At that time, the name corporate social responsibility was very famous, which meant that the corporations had a responsibility to the society to pay. But in 1952, 62, or 72, this was not the concept of capitalism. The principle of capitalism was that you make money. How do you make it? This is none of the concerns of capitalism. It is, however, the concern of the government.

At that time, when I was in SSG, some 16 to 17 years ago, only 15 percent of the gas was left; all the remaining gas was coming from Sindh. Still, there are three sources, supplying gas throughout Pakistan: Balochistan, Sindh, and Kohat also has a little while there is no gas in Punjab. Yes, we import LNG to fulfill our energy requirements. The remaining thing is that of Recodiq and Saindak to talk about. Well, it is again a very romantic thing to say that there are stones of copper, gold, or silver lying on the ground everywhere. I have seen Saindak's mine. It is an open mine. It is going down vertically. There are such mines in Australia too. Extracting it, then refining it, then enabling it to be sold, all these need a lot of money. I went there in 1999 when I was also running WAPDA; it was closed in Balochistan. General Musharraf asked China to run it and give Pakistan 400 dollars a year as it was closed. China took over it, and I don't know how much money they are paying now.

China's investment was to be done there. Actually, Copper is not visible, and with the naked eye, it just seems like sand or stone. And the second thing is that Saindak is about 410 miles away from Quetta to the west. There is no drinking water there; water also has to be brought from below, Iran or Mir Java. Iran is 30 or 35 miles away from there. You also have to pay for the labor. The overheads are so much that the people just say that copper has come out, but the overheads say that a little

copper has come out.

Now we turn to Rekodiq, where the people were celebrating the presence of gold and copper. I mentioned this before, and I still maintain that when people claim Balochistan is rich in minerals, it is essential to examine the facts. Consider this: there are eight African countries that have been under the influence of France. In South Africa, diamonds are extracted, and in other locations, gold, and uranium are also found, albeit only in ores.

Diamonds, which are stones, all go to Debir, and after refinement in Belgium, stones that initially have little value are then sold for millions of dollars. Can someone point out one of these African countries and confidently say it is wealthy solely due to its mineral resources? I regret to say that the reality is that nations can truly prosper through trade. For instance, South Africa is involved in the production of war materials, contributing to its increased wealth. However, poverty persists across the entire continent of Africa. With 56 countries and a population of 1.3 billion, Africa faces widespread poverty.

Now, let's address the remaining minerals of Balochistan. Among them are chromite mines, with an average yield of 25 percent being regiment, and 75 percent being clay and gravel. In Turkey, chromite minerals boast a range of 72 to 80 percent chromite content. When extracted, the process involves a person from the top, followed by a middle one. I must emphasize that I personally attempted this for a while and concluded that it poses a very high risk, as the market may crash at any time. Instead of making money, there's a significant chance of becoming poorer. This risk is not unique to any specific region; you can find small minerals all around the world. Balochistan is no exception. This leads us to the question: how commercially viable is it at the national level?



Q. Brig. Gul, could you share your perspective on whether the people of Balochistan, in their current state of mind, are ready for commercialization?

Ans: Let me begin by defining Balochistan. As a student of history, I recognize four distinct Balochistan regions.

One of these is Baluchistan, historically known as Velochistan. When Alexander passed through in 326 BC, he named it Janduresia, a name that endured from 326 to 1730. Later, the Baloch migrated from Egypt and Syria. Some of my Baloch friends argue that they have always been present in the region.

I counter this by questioning the discrepancy between their claims and the historical accounts written by the British. I place significant trust in British records as they were rulers obligated to provide unbiased accounts of history. According to these records, the first Baloch, the grandfather of Balochis, settled in Iran during the time of



Hazrat Umar (R.A). Subsequently, they migrated to Makran and endured challenging conditions for five hundred years.

Even today, Makran lacks freshwater, with only four oases. The question arises: how did they survive and proliferate? Neither they nor I possess the answer. I propose that they likely did not exclusively remain in Makran.

Examining the origin of the word "Makran," derived from "mahi-khowran" or "fish eaters," includes Jiwani, Gwadar (90 miles to the east), Pasni (100 miles to the east), Ormara (150 miles to the east), and nothing beyond Ormara until Sanyami. The region was named Mahi-Khowran due to its reliance on fish consumption, later evolving into Makran.

In my analysis, the Baloch did not solely follow the Makran route. During Changaiz Khan's attacks (1225 to 1350 AD), those with foresight opted not to stay in Balochistan; instead, they migrated to Punjab or Sindh where water was available.

Based on my limited study, drawing a line from Sargoda to Sahiwal and moving south reveals Baloch settlements along the Arabian Sea. Prominent Baloch figures, including Zardari Sahib and our Prime Minister, trace their lineage to this region.

This represents the first Balochistan. I previously mentioned that conquering this Balochistan in 1730 was unnecessary due to pervasive poverty, manifesting as small scattered settlements like nomads rather than organized towns.

Following Nadir Shah's conquest of Delhi in 1729, in 1739, this entire region came under his rule from Mohammad Shah, known as Rangeela. The primary general among Nadir's forces was Ahmed Shah Abdali. Abdali later gave himself the title Badshah e Dur Duran, becoming Dur Duran, and from Ahmad Abdali, he became Ahmad Shah Durrani. In 1739, upon Nadir Shah's death,

Ahmad Abdali declared separation from Iran. The eastern and northern regions, including the Aamo River and the Arabian Sea, which were previously under Kachar's rule, came under his dominion. Before Nadir Shah's death in 1738, he proposed dividing Velochistan into two parts: Sistan Balochistan (west) and Qalati Balochistan (east). Qalat, initially a small town, saw Mir Nasir, a Brahvi, appointed as Khan. Now, my request is that the word 'Khan' is neither a Balochi word nor a Brahvi word. Then, where did it come from? 'Khan' is commonly used by Pathans, Turks, Turkish Mongols, or the Chinese, who refer to it as 'Khakan.' It was their term, and they instructed them to govern in our name. Now there are two Balochistans, one Sistan Balochistan and one Qalati Balochistan. We leave Sistan, as it went to Iran.

The British discovered, through their spies, that the Tsar of Russia had a plan. They believed they couldn't defeat the British in Europe because a significant portion of their wealth came from India, around the years 1828-1830. The British, comprising only 6,000 whites among their ranks while the majority were locals, learned that the Russians intended to assemble an army and launch an attack on India. The objective was to conquer India, claim its wealth, and thereby prevent the British from engaging in further conflicts with Russia in Europe. Upon confirmation of this intelligence, the British dispatched a team that traversed the Bolan Pass, now known as Quetta, identified by the name Shalkot. Simultaneously, another force was sent towards Peshawar. During this period, Peshawar was under the rule of Ranjit Singh. However, the British conveyed to Ranjit Singh that their intention was solely to pass through and not to engage in conflict. Ranjit Singh's dominion extended from the River Indus to the River Bayas, from the south of North Multan to

the north of Jamrud.

And his major objective was to conquer Afghanistan, including Haripur, a town you might consider small. The British, however, expressed disinterest in this area and decided to proceed. Upon the arrival of forces from both sides in Kabul, they encountered the weak and unprepared Afghan forces, leading to the British conquest of Afghanistan. Subsequently, they believed that the Russians would not back to Afghanistan, and in the event if they did, the British pledged to intervene. Cutting the long story short, in 1879, when the Russian embassy opened in Kabul, the viceroy instructed Kabul to close the Russian embassy and open a British one. Our Pathan brothers responded harshly and disrespected the message. Consequently, the viceroy sent forces back to Kabul, successfully conquering Afghanistan. During this time, they stayed in Kabul and did not retreat.

Following this, they established their border at 'Kakar Khurasan,' south of the Hindu Kush, to monitor Russian movements through the passes. In 1893, Abdurrahman, the King of Afghanistan, signed the Durand Line as the border between the two states. The term 'Durand' is used because the line was drawn by the English diplomat Mortimer Durand.

Q. Brig. Gul, You have provided a detailed account, and I have thoroughly read it. The question is, can we infer that this border arrangement extends to Iran, Tajikistan, and Azerbaijan as well?

Ans. This is indeed a fascinating narrative, and I appreciate your pertinent and timely question. In 1830, the British reached an agreement with the Tsar of Russia, wherein they agreed to evacuate the upper region from Afghanistan for Russian, with the condition that Russia would refrain from retaliatory attacks. The Tsar accepted this condition, and the agreement was consequently signed. In

1880, the British also delineated the borders of four Central Asian states: Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. The Iranians also agreed to the British- suggested border at that time. The borders of Qalati Balochistan with Iran were established in 1864, and with minor adjustments during Ayoub's era, the border was finalized.

Presently, when examining Pakistan's borders, no issues arise with Iran or China. The primary source of contention is with India, and there is a dispute with Afghanistan regarding the Durand Line. In various seminars, I have proposed to them that if they reject the Durand Line, why not demand that Indian Prime Minister Modi cede the entire country to them, citing the historical argument that their forefather, Ahmad Shah Durrani, had conquered India? Should Modi agree, we would willingly become part of Afghanistan. However, if they view the western part of Pakistan, west of the River Indus, as part of Afghanistan and wish to eliminate the Durand Line, then let's proceed. Before doing so, they must consider that the population of this region is nearly 10 crore, whereas the entire population of Afghanistan is 3 crore and 80 lacs. In Pakistan, the Pashtuns number 7 to 8 crore, and I, too, am a Pashtun. In Afghanistan, there are hardly 2 crore Pashtuns in their entire population. I've posed the question to them: would they be content being a minority by combining both areas, removing the Durand Line, or would they prefer to continue governing their own country? They had no response to this argument except to reiterate their refusal to accept the Durand Line. However, the correct approach lies in recognizing the dictates of history and geography, necessitating acceptance and coexistence within those confines without deviating to the left or right.

(Continue...)

REVITALIZING PAKISTAN'S ECONOMY:

THE ROLE OF THE SPECIAL INVESTMENT FACILITATION COUNCIL



**NOUREEN
CHOUDRY**



The establishment of a Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) is a commendable initiative aimed at attracting international investors across various sectors, including agriculture, livestock, industry, information technology, mining, and energy. In the face of an economic crisis in Pakistan, a proactive initiative was needed from the political and military leadership to implement measures for significant foreign investment.

The council also prioritizes addressing losses in public sector enterprises, which constitute over 6% of the GDP, involving approximately 197 entities. In 2016, the deficit was 0.5% of the GDP, rising to 4% in 2021. Loss-making enterprises, such as PIA, WAPDA, Railways, and Steel Mills, significantly contribute to this financial challenge, impacting over 0.4 million employees with a combined salary and benefits cost of 500 billion rupees.

The steel mill has been closed since 2015 but the employees are still being paid. PIA was so lackluster in the past few days that flight

operations had to be halted as fuel was not being supplied due to the unavailability of funds.

The IMF team held talks with the officials of the Ministry of Finance from November 2 to November 15, in which the privatization of loss-making public enterprises, reducing the revolving debt of electricity and gas, while increasing the tax net, especially through real estate and agricultural income, was discussed deeply. They emphasized the implementation of the tax, calling for the revenue target to be brought up to 15 percent of GDP, while present tax collection is up to 12% of the GDP.

The agriculture and livestock sector has the potential to double the production per acre by adopting modern methods, equipment, and technology. Increasing agricultural output will also have a productive impact on the industry. Exports can be doubled in the textile sector alone if the provided raw materials are inexpensive and production costs are minimal.

Similarly, improving the livestock sector can lead to a significant influx of foreign



exchange, and a \$500 billion global halal meat market is waiting to be explored. Our cattle are raised in a natural environment, so the taste and standard of meat are much better than other foreign competitors, yet the government has not paid this sector the due attention it requires. A lot of work can be done in this sector. Through SIFC, investors from Arab countries can invest generously, and very encouraging results can be obtained.

In the second week of November, A two-day conference was organized under SIFC in which the Director of the Project, Major General Shahid Nazir stated in his presidential address that Pakistan has an area of 9.1 million hectares that can be allocated for agricultural practices. In the same conference, a deal of 1.4 million hectares of land was signed with a foreign company, which will emphasize agriculture and livestock. At the conference, 70 economists, academicians, and corporate leaders including 25 foreign delegates shared their experiences. Although it has not been addressed as of now, work on it has been initiated through SIFC's platform, the details of which will be out soon.

In the mining sector, Reko Diq and Sandak are two projects in Chaghi, a district of Balochistan, that are anticipated to bring significant benefits to Pakistan, with Sandak in particular expected to be a game-changer. Chaghi holds the distinction of being the

largest district in Pakistan in terms of area, spanning approximately 50,545 square kilometers. The region boasts a renowned mountain range and numerous dunes containing natural reserves.

Sandak is abundant in gold, silver, and copper deposits, while Reko Diq represents one of the largest copper and gold reserves globally, with estimated reserves of 5.9 billion tons of ore grading 0.41% copper. The gold reserves amount to 41.5 million ounces, and the projected mining life is at least 40 years.

The arbitration favored the investing companies, imposing a fine of \$6.4 billion. Additionally, the London Court of Arbitration imposed a \$4 billion fine on another company's claim.

In 2019, the government of Pakistan established an apex committee to address the issue. A \$950 million agreement was reached with Chile's Intugasta Company, and negotiations with the Canadian company Barrick Gold resulted in the cancellation of the fines. Mark Brashov, the head of Barrick Gold, visited Pakistan with a delegation, finalizing the agreement during a meeting with the Prime Minister.

As part of the agreement, the Saudi Public Investment Fund (SIFC), a Saudi Arabian company, became involved in copper and energy transfer projects worldwide. On November 3rd, an agreement was signed under the SIFC with Barrick Gold for a \$7 billion investment. This project is expected to create 8,000 job opportunities. According to the agreement, 50% of the company's profit will be divided, with 25% going to the provincial government and the remaining 25% to the federal government.

The Saudi company holds a 10% stake in the metals business of the Brazilian mining company "Vale." To estimate project shares, the government has appointed an



international consultant. The project is projected to yield 58% copper, 28% gold, and the remaining percentage in silver annually, with commercial production expected to commence in 2028. It is anticipated that by 2032, the project could yield 800 kg of gold and 19 crore tons of copper.

If these projections hold true, it is expected that the country's debt-ridden economy will experience a revival, akin to the economic transformation witnessed in Arab countries in the 1970s when oil wealth significantly bolstered their economies overnight. Pakistan could experience a similar transformation.

Revealing the second Sendak project in Chagai, where gold, silver, and copper deposits were discovered in 1901 during British rule, Sendak Metal Limited was established in the 1980s after entering into an agreement with a Chinese company in 1990. In 1995, the development of mining and smelting plants, electricity and water supply infrastructure, and construction of residential colonies commenced.

A trial operation to assess hidden minerals in the mountain ridges and depths began in the same year. Experts estimated reserves of 1,500,000 metric tons of copper and 10,000 metric tons of gold.

By 2008, a 10-year contract was signed with a Chinese company, later extended by five years. During this period, 14,136 tons of copper, 11,033 kg of gold, and 1,706 kg of silver were extracted. The project yielded over 10 crore tonnes of raw materials in 23 years, with two shafts dug the southern shaft measuring 336 m deep, 100 m wide, and up to 900 m high, and the northern mine almost identical in dimensions. Most copper, gold, and silver deposits were extracted from these mines, while work on a third mine is currently underway.

As of March 2019, the project employed a



total of 1,659 individuals, with 1,200 from Chagai, Nushki, and other districts of Balochistan, and 250 being Chinese experts. In 2019, the minimum wage was USD 150, and the maximum was USD 1,500.

While the SENDAC project fell short of its estimated economic goals, REKODAC, being a substantial project, has the potential to significantly impact Pakistan's economy. If even half of the projected targets are achieved, Pakistan could emerge as a major economic power in the region, especially considering the valuable resource of Thar coal.

Successful execution of these projects could alleviate the country's reliance on IMF debts. However, it is crucial to simultaneously focus on the agricultural industry, recognizing that revolutionary economic development requires attention beyond mineral resources alone.

Chagai, after the nuclear explosion of 1998, is poised to become the cornerstone of Pakistan's economic growth. Sincerity and loyalty are imperative to safeguard our national interests in this transformative journey.

The author is a post-graduate in Mass Communication and a team member of Rabita Forum International (RFI).

THE CRISIS CONTINUES.....



BUSHRA BATOOL



The blockade on Gaza imposed after Hamas came to power in the Gaza Strip in 2007 hampered the economic growth and freedom of 1.8 million people living in the strip. The situation worsened recently as a result of an armed conflict when Hamas launched attacks inside Israel on October 7, 2023, which was reciprocated by Israel's military forces. This episode has intensified tensions in the Middle East and Gaza is bearing the brunt of it.

Gaza Strip hosts 8 refugee camps that were set up to house Palestinians who were displaced by two successive conflicts between Israel and the Arab world in 1948 and 1967 when an estimated 700,000 Palestinians fled or were forced to leave their homes. Out of 2.3 million people, 1.7 million are refugees, who live in or near these refugee camps.

Israel in the first week of the conflict ordered the relocation of 1.1 million

Palestinians from the north to the south of Gaza with a 24-hour deadline. Hamas however termed the warning as fake propaganda and told residents in the north to stand firm. Since then, Israel has accelerated its air and ground strikes into northern Gaza, destroying infrastructure and connectivity with the rest of the world.

More than a million people have been displaced, and hundreds of houses destroyed in the besieged zone, which has been deprived of water, food, and other basic supplies. More than 70 percent of the Gaza enclave's residents have been displaced by the war, many people say there is no safe place to live, not even the UN Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) schools, where families have sought shelter. The arrival of winter rains has brought new concerns for thousands of Palestinians who have lost their homes or fled to the south to escape military bombardment and are forced to live in flimsy tents.

The first humanitarian convoy crossed into Gaza via Rafah crossing on October 21. Pakistan has also extended its support and sent humanitarian and medical aid consignment twice to help them. The aid supplies going through Rafah crossing are just a fraction of what is actually needed to fulfill the needs of people strangled in war zones. According to reports, 53 trucks carrying food, medicine, health supplies, bottled water, and blankets entered the Rafah crossing in the first week of November, raising the total number of

trucks entering Gaza since October 21 to 914, which is far below the required quantities to meet the needs of over two million people in the enclave. According to U.N. aid officials, at least 100 trucks a day should reach this land under occupation to meet the basic needs of life.

Prior to the war, some 400-500 trucks carrying aid and other goods used to enter Gaza through various routes every day. Israeli air raids continue to target areas across Gaza. The Jabalia refugee camp has been struck multiple times by Israeli air raids. According to Gaza's Government Media Office, almost 200 people were killed and at least 777 wounded and 120 went missing in the first two bombings of the Jabalia camp in which Israel claimed to have killed two leaders of Hamas.

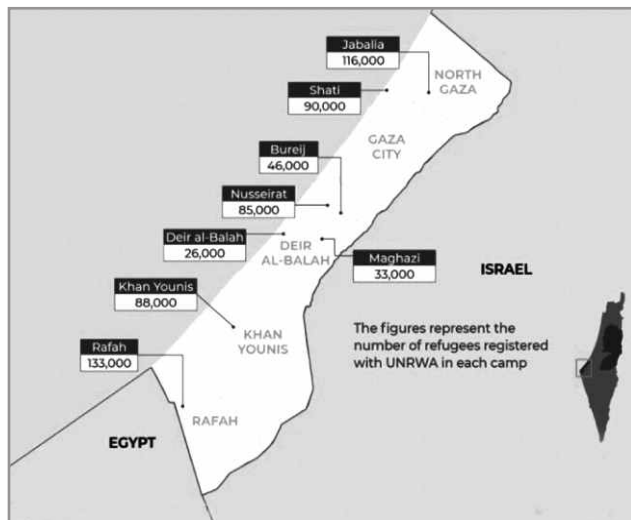
The Palestinians are subjected to the most heinous form of terrorism. UN rights office says Israeli attacks on Jabalia could be a 'war crime' amid growing horror at the rising number of civilians killed in this war. Instead of limiting the fighting to Hamas, unarmed civilians are killed alike mercilessly. Gaza's residents are grappling with shortages of food and water while hospitals are overwhelmed amid bombings. Water and sanitation facilities, water wells, reservoirs, and pumping

stations in Gaza have all been destroyed as a result of ongoing air attacks, resulting in a serious water shortage.

Water contamination in the Gaza Strip was already increasing the number of kidney patients by 13-14% every year, and this situation could further exacerbate kidney diseases. The Palestinian Red Crescent warned that Palestinian infants in Gaza are also suffering from dehydration due to the interruption of baby formula under the current siege. Airstrikes have directly damaged dozens of health facilities and hospitals, killing numerous healthcare workers and destroying ambulances. A vast number of displaced people, including pregnant women, injured people, and children, are sleeping on the streets.

According to the UN Population Fund, around 50,000 pregnant women in Gaza are unable to get health care due to the attacks on multiple hospitals. If the electricity goes out in a hospital, infants in incubators are in grave risk. Due to the shortage of body bags, people are storing dead bodies in ice cream trucks. On November 1, the Rafah crossing linking war-torn Gaza to Egypt opened for the first time in weeks as a result of a deal among Israel, Egypt, and Hamas, to evacuate foreign nationals and severely injured Palestinians. Hundreds of foreign nationals and dozens of injured have passed through since then.

More than 20,000 wounded people are still trapped in the Gaza Strip, according to Doctors without Borders (MSF), despite evacuations of foreign passport holders and badly injured Palestinians across the border to Egypt. So far, only foreign nationals living in Gaza are allowed to cross into Egypt. Many of them, having dual nationality or foreign passports were forced to say goodbyes to their loved ones who were prevented from crossing the border.



Al-Shifa Hospital, the largest medical complex in the Gaza Strip has been under siege by Israeli troops for several days now who claim to have found a 55-meter-long tunnel inside the hospital as a potential command center for Hamas operations. Many instances of raids were observed in the vicinity of the Al-Quds Hospital and Israeli authorities had warned The Palestinian Red Crescent to evacuate the facility. Prior to the siege, a statement released by one of the surgeons of Doctors without Borders (MSF) at Al-Shifa Hospital reflected the misery of staff and patients entangled in the hospital and notified about the presence of no food or water in the hospital.

Ventilators had stopped functioning, there were many bodies lying in front of the hospital gate, and ambulances sent to bring the patients were attacked. Several patients and premature babies died since the start of power outages, while critical infrastructure, including the cardiovascular facility and maternity ward, has been badly damaged, according to the UN agency. The World Health Organization (WHO) described the hospital as a 'Death zone' when a WHO-led team along with other UN officials managed to visit the hospital in the aftermath of Israel's occupation of the hospital.

The team also witnessed a mass grave at



the entrance of the hospital where more than 80 people were buried. The Director-General of WHO Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus while expressing great concerns said that the hospitals that are supposed to be safe havens turned into scenes of death, devastation, and despair. So far, 108 UNRWA members have been killed since October 7 and the killing of Dima Alhaj, a 29-year-old WHO staff member, alongside her six-month-old child and husband among other family members, is a brutal attack on humanity.

Although an Israeli military spokesman suggested his forces would evacuate infants and get them to a safer hospital, those who were trying to leave are being shot by the Israeli forces surrounding the facility. In a recent development, however, Twenty-eight prematurely born babies were evacuated from Al-Shifa to Egypt for urgent treatment.

Hospitals enjoy special protection under the international laws of war and attacks on medical facilities, ambulances, or any attempt to cease medical operations are considered a war crime and can be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). There is an exception however which maintains that if the hospitals are used for military operations that are harmful to the enemy, they lose the status of protection. Israel holds the claim that Al-Shifa has been used as a Centre point of Hamas' operations and the presence of a

tunnel is an evidence.

A video released shows the presence of an AK47 rifle among other ammunition and military equipment near the hospital's MRI unit. Such claims are however refuted by Hamas and hospital staff. This asymmetric warfare has now reached a point where validation of Israel's claims could rally international support against Hamas; otherwise, the former's credibility could shatter immensely. Although Israel is pushing ahead with its ground invasion of Gaza with the goal of eliminating Hamas, what we see is that Gaza is devastated, the bloodshed of innocents is seen all around, residential buildings apart, and even hospitals are not spared and are blown to destruction. 22 out of 36 hospitals in Gaza are no longer operational amid heavy bombardment and ground operations in the enclave.

As of 21st November, 14,128 Palestinians were killed in the conflict, whereas the death toll of Israelis is recorded to be 1,200, according to the State of Palestine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, two-thirds of them are women and minors, and thousands are injured, many among them are at the brink of death. The world is quite vocal about this Palestinian genocide and demonstrations against Israel's occupation and brutalities in Gaza are held all around the world, at least on a community level. In a virtual BRICS summit held recently, the group which is considered to be the 'Global South' denounced attacks on civilians and termed forced displacement of Palestinian people from Gaza or outside, a war crime.

Cyril Ramaphosa, South African President and the current Chair of BRICS, referred to Israeli aggression as a violation of international law and maintained that the collective punishment of Palestinian people is tantamount to genocide. Iran has reiterated its support to the Palestinian cause which is

pivotal to Iranian foreign policy since the 1979 Iranian revolution.

Although Iran's military and financial support to Hamas is evident and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Commander Hossein Salami's indication of the great (unused) capacities left of the Muslim world to defeat Israel makes it straight, that any direct involvement of Iran in the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel is denied. China recently hosted a delegation of Muslim countries seeking a ceasefire. Although India historically maintains its support for the Palestinian cause; it seems that the country refrains from taking



any partial position in this conflict as reflected by Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, appealing for a peaceful resolution through diplomacy. The fact is that India's crackdown on pro-Palestine marches at home speaks for itself that the country does not want to hurt Israel's interests not to displease the biggest benefactor of Israel, the US. In a significant development, Hamas and Israel's government agreed on a 4-day ceasefire and a hostage deal on November 22, and the transference of hostages was expected to begin from November 23 but faced delays, as reported by November 23.

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A CONQUEROR IS A CONQUEROR: A LESSON FROM HISTORY



In 1973 the war between Arabs and Israel was about to start. Meanwhile, an American Senator visited Israel on a special mission. He was chief of the Senate Arms Committee. A meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir was arranged immediately. Golda Meir welcomed him into her home, like any common housewife welcoming a family guest. She took him to the kitchen. While seating him at the kitchen dining table, she went over to prepare tea for the guest.

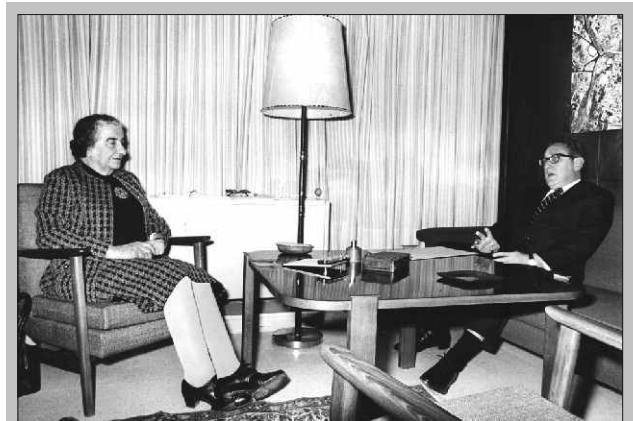
As the water was kept for boiling, she came over and sat on a chair near the dining table. She opened the discussion regarding planes, missiles, and guns. In the course of negotiations, she got the aroma of the brew.

She prepared two cups of tea and offered one cup to the Senator, and another to an American guard who was standing at the gate. On returning, she came back and continued talking with the Senator. After a discussion, they settled the arms deal. In the meantime, she stood up, collected all the cups, and

turned to the senator and said "I agree to this deal. You can send your secretary to my secretary for the written deal".

It may be remembered that Israel at that time was facing a serious economic crisis, but the huge arms deal was settled by Meir with the greatest of ease in the history of Israel. It was quite astonishing that earlier, the Israeli cabinet had rejected the same deal, because they thought it would be so costly, that the whole nation would have to make do with a single meal a day, for years to come.

Meir knew about their stand, and said, "Your doubts are well founded, but if we win this war, and defeat the Arabs, history will remember us as the victors, and in history, once a community is known as the victor, it forgets how many eggs they ate and how



Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir meeting with US Secretary of State Kissinger at her office in Jerusalem after his return from Damascus, December 16, 1973

many times they had food. Whether there was jam, honey, or butter on the table, and how many holes they had in their shoes. Or whether the sheaths of their swords were new or old! A conqueror is a conqueror."

Based on Meir's solid logic, the Israeli cabinet approved the deal. Later it was proved that the decision taken by Meir was right, and the whole world witnessed the Jews knocking on the doors of the Arabs with this artillery. A war took place, and the Arabs faced a shocking defeat at the hands of an old lady.

After a gap of one decade after the war, a reporter for the Washington Post interviewed Meir, asking "Was the logic you had in your mind for the arms was spur of a moment decision or you had had an advance strategy?" Meir's reply was very surprising.

She answered, "I got this logic from the Prophet (of the Muslims) Muhammed (peace be upon him). When I was a student, my favorite topic was comparative study of religions. Those days I studied the life of the prophet Muhammed (PBUH). One author stated that when Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) passed away, there was not enough money to buy oil for a lamp, his wife (Ayesha Siddiqah [Radi Allahu-ta'ala Anha]) mortgaged his battle shield to buy oil, yet there were nine swords hung on the wall of his house.

When I read this account, it occurred to me- how many people in the world would have known about the worst economic condition of the Islamic state? But everyone recognizes them as conquerors of half the world. So I decided that I would buy arms at any cost; even if we would have to starve or live in camps instead of buildings, but we would prove ourselves as the victor".

Meir revealed this secret but requested the interviewer to keep it "off the record", and refrain from publishing it because if she referred to Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H), the



Jews would have revolted against her and the Muslim position would have strengthened. Over time, the world situation changed. Golda Meir died.

By this time the interviewer had given up the profession of journalism. Meanwhile, another correspondent was busy interviewing 20 famous American journalists. In connection with this, he met the journalist who had interviewed Meir as a representative of the Washington Post. In this interview, he recounted the story of Meir that drew on the life of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

He said he was not ashamed to tell the story. Further, he said, "After this incident I studied the history of Islam and was astonished to know about the savoir-faire of Arabs. I learned that Tariq bin Ziyad conquered Spain through Gibraltar, while more than half his army did not have a complete suit of clothes. They subsisted for 72 hours at a time on water and dried bread.

It was then that the interviewer agreed with Meir's view that history counts victory; it does not count the eggs, jams, and butter on the table. "When the interview with Meir was published, the whole world learned of this entire story. This astonishing incident is history's wake-up call to the Muslims of the world. It teaches them a lesson; it reveals how 14 centuries ago, a shepherd (Hazrat Umar R.A., was a shepherd at his early age), clad in a cloak and worn-out shoes became the

leader of the world and conquered four continents.

Could enormous castles, grand palaces, magnificent gardens, splendid clothes, adorned rest places of silk and sleepless, gold silver, boxes, gems, and jewels, the spread of savory dishes, and the jingle of coins save them?

The locust swarm of Tartar forces did not reach the palace of Mu'ta'sim Billah by trampling over Baghdad. What a terrible and astonishing scene it was in the history of Islam when Mu'ta'sim Billah was bound in chains, standing like a prisoner before Halaku Khan (grandson of Changiz Khan).

At mealtime, Halaku Khan ate in simple plates, but offered plates of gems and precious metals to Caliph Mu'ta'sim Billah, mocking "Eat from these diamonds, gems, gold, and precious metals you have collected!" There stood the Sovereign of Baghdad,

helpless, powerless, lonely, destitute, saying, "How can I eat gold?" Halaku Khan replied, "Then why you have collected all this silver and gold?"

The Muslim, whose religion calls on him to make arms and rear horses, had no reply. Halaku Khan glanced at the palace doors and windows, asking, "Why did you not make iron arrows by melting these iron nets? Why did you collect these diamonds instead of paying money to your soldiers, so they could fight bravely against my forces? "It was the will of Allah", replied the grieved Caliph.

The arrogant Halaku shot back, "Whatever is now going to happen with you is also God's wish".

Then Halaku covered Mu'ta'sim Billah in a cloak and crushed him under the hooves of horses, and proceeded to make a graveyard of Baghdad.

Courtesy: Asian Tribune.

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THE CRISIS CONTINUES.....

During a four-day pause in fighting, 50 and 150 hostages are set to be released from Hamas and Israel's prisons respectively. The Qatar-mediated deal also provides that approximately 300-400 trucks would be allowed to enter Gaza for humanitarian aid per day.

Additionally, during the ceasefire, aerial surveillance of Israel is also supposed to be paused for six hours in Northern Gaza and completely in Southern Gaza. This is the first truce between the two conflicting parties since October 7, and the extension may be considered upon mutual consensus. The crisis has been ongoing for almost 8 weeks now. Although all the concerned parties welcomed this humanitarian truce but it needs to be seen to what extent it succeeds.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu categorically maintains that the war against Hamas would continue even after the ceasefire, until the group is eliminated and all hostages are returned. Hamas affirmed that in spite of striking a truce, our fingers would remain on the trigger and would retain the ability to defend our people and defeat the occupation.

The uncertainties in this Palestine-Israel war are still looming, though a short-term truce is agreed. The only way that could work out for lasting peace is that the pause in fighting must be observed and the conditions of the deal must be respected by both parties so as to make the deal workable.

The author is a Research officer at Rabita Forum International (RFI).



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