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Dawn –

'DONROE DOCTRINE' IN ACTION

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

This article shares a long and troubling pattern in United States foreign policy, particularly in Latin America, where regime change has often followed a familiar script of coercion, coups, and military intervention. Highlighting historical precedents from Chile, Guatemala, Panama, Grenada and beyond, the writer argues that Washington's recent assault on Venezuela under Donald Trump is not an aberration but a continuation of imperial conduct. The capture of President Nicolás Maduro and his transfer to the United States is presented as a blatant violation of international law and Venezuelan sovereignty. Global condemnation followed swiftly, with several states warning that such unilateral force sets a dangerous precedent and risks dragging the world back into an age where power trumps law.

The article situates this intervention within the Trump administration's National Security Strategy, which revives and distorts the Monroe Doctrine into what the writer terms the Donroe doctrine. This policy seeks exclusive American dominance over the Western Hemisphere and its natural resources, while pushing out rivals such as China. Venezuela's vast oil reserves emerge as a central motive behind the intervention, exposing commercial greed beneath the rhetoric of security and counter-narcotics. The writer warns that tactical gains may conceal strategic folly, as past adventures in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya ended in chaos and long-term instability. With American public opinion divided and international legitimacy eroding, the article concludes that the Venezuela episode is likely to repeat history, where short-term success gives way to enduring failure.

Overview:

The article examines US intervention in Venezuela as part of a broader historical pattern of regime change in Latin America. It highlights how strategic dominance, resource control, and unilateral force undermine international law and global stability. The article warns that reviving imperial doctrines risks long-term geopolitical and moral costs.

NOTES:

The article highlights a consistent pattern in United States foreign policy marked by repeated regime change operations particularly in Latin America, where military intervention, covert action, and coercion have been used to remove governments that resisted American dominance. By recalling historical cases such as Chile, Guatemala, Panama, Grenada, and Cuba, the writer shows that the assault on Venezuela under Donald Trump fits squarely within this legacy rather than standing as an isolated incident. The capture of President Nicolás Maduro and his transfer to the United States is presented as a grave breach of international law and state sovereignty, provoking widespread international condemnation and warnings about the dangerous precedent such unilateral action sets. The article explains how the Trump administration's National Security Strategy revived and distorted the Monroe Doctrine into the so-called Donroe doctrine, aimed at asserting exclusive American control over the Western Hemisphere while excluding rival powers like China. Venezuela's vast oil reserves emerge as a central driver behind the intervention, revealing commercial ambition beneath the language of security and counter-narcotics. The article also stresses that past US-led regime change efforts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya ended in prolonged instability and suffering. It suggests that apparent tactical success in Venezuela is likely to give way to strategic failure, regional chaos, and further erosion of America's global legitimacy.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: US foreign policy, interventionism, international law, great power politics
- ❖ Current Affairs: Latin America, Venezuela crisis, global security order
- ❖ Political Science: Imperialism, sovereignty, balance of power
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's stance at the UN and principles of non-intervention

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the US has often removed governments in Latin America to control politics and resources. Venezuela is rich in oil, which makes it a target. The US claims security reasons, but actions suggest economic motives. For example, Trump openly spoke about taking Venezuela's oil. Past cases like Iraq show that removing governments often creates chaos instead of peace. This helps beginners see why many countries oppose such actions.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Over 40 US interventions have occurred in Latin America over 150 years
- ❖ Venezuela holds the world's largest proven oil reserves
- ❖ The Bay of Pigs invasion took place in 1961
- ❖ The Chilean coup occurred in 1973
- ❖ A Reuters Ipsos poll showed most Americans fear deeper involvement in Venezuela

To sum up, The article reminds that power without restraint breeds instability. By reviving doctrines rooted in dominance and exclusion, the United States risks repeating its own failures. Venezuela may become another chapter where force silences law, resources eclipse rights and short-term triumph sows long-term disorder. History suggests that empires often stumble not from weakness, but from excess

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Egregious – outstandingly bad or offensive
 - Synonym: shocking
 - Antonym: acceptable
- ❖ Predatory – exploiting others for gain
 - Synonym: exploitative
 - Antonym: protective
- ❖ Sovereignty – supreme authority of a state
 - Synonym: independence
 - Antonym: subjugation
- ❖ Corollary – a natural consequence or extension
 - Synonym: offshoot
 - Antonym: contradiction
- ❖ Unilateral – taken by one actor alone
 - Synonym: one-sided
 - Antonym: collective
- ❖ Aggrandisement – increase in power or wealth
 - Synonym: expansion
 - Antonym: restraint

LOOKING AHEAD

Author: Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Summary:

As Pakistan steps into 2026, its foreign policy shaped by seven pressing questions that demand vigilance rather than optimism. The foremost concern remains India's posture. Despite India's unresolved Operation Sindoor, its ability to act aggressively has narrowed, as the global community no longer buys its narrative on terrorism. The perception in New Delhi of facing two fronts, Pakistan and China, along with gaps exposed during the May confrontation, has constrained its options. Still, complacency would be costly, and Pakistan must keep its defences sharp. Water security stands as an existential issue. India's unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty has raised alarms, and Pakistan has made clear that any diversion of its rivers will be treated as an act of war. International opinion, reinforced by a recent UN report, has rejected India's pretext for holding the treaty hostage, leaving space for future negotiations through additional protocols.

The article then turns to diplomacy beyond India. Managing renewed engagement with the United States, without unsettling ties with China, emerges as a delicate balancing act. While the reset with Washington may remain transactional, it opens doors for investment in minerals and energy. However, China remains a cornerstone, with CPEC 2.0 signalling enduring trust. Pakistan's challenge lies in addressing security concerns and local grievances, especially in Balochistan, through firm state authority and responsive governance. Relations with Afghanistan remain fraught due to persistent TTP attacks under Taliban protection, prompting Pakistan to pursue a layered strategy of diplomacy, border control, and local participation. At the same time, closer ties with Gulf states particularly Saudi Arabia through a defence pact, add deterrence while requiring neutrality in inter Arab disputes. Improved relations with Iran, enhanced by shared concerns after regional conflict and a push to leverage Pakistan's economic geography through broader regional connectivity, round off a year that will test coherence, restraint and strategic clarity.

Overview:

The article outlines Pakistan's foreign policy outlook for 2026 through seven key questions. It examines security challenges, regional diplomacy, great power balancing, water disputes, and economic connectivity. The article argues that success depends on preparedness, stable governance, and strategic patience.

NOTES:

The article maps Pakistan's foreign policy landscape for 2026 through seven interconnected challenges that demand caution, preparedness, and strategic balance. It highlights that India remains the primary security concern, though its capacity for aggression has narrowed due to global scepticism toward its terrorism narrative and its perception of facing both Pakistan and China. Despite this, Pakistan cannot lower its guard especially after lessons from the May confrontation. Water security emerges as a red line, with India's unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty framed as an existential threat, one that Pakistan has clearly linked to the risk of war, while international opinion has largely rejected India's justification. Beyond India, the article stresses the importance of carefully managing renewed engagement with the United States without weakening the strategic partnership with China, noting opportunities for American investment alongside the continuity symbolised by CPEC 2.0. Afghanistan remains a serious concern due to continued TTP attacks under Taliban protection, pushing Pakistan toward a multipronged approach combining diplomacy, border management, and local participation. Growing defence ties with Gulf states especially Saudi Arabia, add deterrence but require Pakistan to avoid entanglement in inter-Arab rivalries. Improving relations with Iran, particularly after recent regional turmoil, and leveraging Pakistan's

economic geography through wider regional connectivity complete the picture, with the article concluding that political stability, economic continuity, and firm state authority are essential to navigate these pressures successfully.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: South Asian security, great power competition, diplomacy
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy challenges, water security, regional relations
- ❖ Current Affairs: India Pakistan relations, Afghanistan, Middle East ties
- ❖ Political Science: Deterrence, alliance management, statecraft

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan faces many foreign policy challenges at once. India remains a security concern, especially over water. The Indus Waters Treaty is vital because rivers sustain farms and cities. Pakistan seeks better ties with the US while staying close to China. Trouble with Afghan based militants continues. New defence ties with Saudi Arabia add protection. Economic links with neighbours could boost trade and stability.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ India suspended parts of the Indus Waters Treaty in recent years
- ❖ China has committed to CPEC 2.0
- ❖ Taliban took over Kabul in August 2021
- ❖ Pakistan and Saudi Arabia signed a defence pact in 2025
- ❖ May 2025 clashes exposed gaps in Indian military preparedness

To wrap up, Pakistan's foreign policy in 2026 will succeed only through steadiness, not slogans. Security, diplomacy and economics now intersect at every turn. The margin for error remains thin. Strategic patience, internal stability, and credible governance will decide whether Pakistan merely reacts to events or shapes them with confidence.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Complacent means overly satisfied; synonym careless; antonym vigilant
- ❖ Deterrence means prevention through threat; synonym dissuasion; antonym encouragement
- ❖ Transactional means based on exchange; synonym conditional; antonym principled
- ❖ Hegemonic means dominant in power; synonym overpowering; antonym equal
- ❖ Proxy means acting indirectly; synonym surrogate; antonym direct
- ❖ Multilateral means involving many states; synonym collective; antonym unilateral
- ❖ Writ means authority of the state; synonym control; antonym lawlessness
- ❖ Abeyance means temporary suspension; synonym pause; antonym enforcement

ROAD TO EXITING IMF

Author: Nadeem ul Haque | Shahid Kardar

Summary:

The writers in this article argue that official discussions endlessly recite words like exports, productivity, human capital, and governance as if naming outcomes were the same as designing reforms. What remains absent is the practical road map of behavioural change, institutional overhaul, and rule based systems that could actually prevent recurring crises. Pakistan does not return to the International Monetary Fund because of bad planning or external shocks alone, but because its economic architecture systematically produces balance of payments failures. Rent seeking, protected elites, distorted energy prices, discretionary regulation, and a hostile business

environment choke productivity and exports, while fiscal deficits erode credibility and shut doors to global capital. IMF programmes appear as predictable consequences of a structurally extractive state.

The article shifts from illusion to mechanics, arguing that growth cannot be engineered through committees, projects, or policy slogans. Real expansion emerges when firms can invest, scale, hire, and export within predictable rules instead of navigating bureaucratic sludge. The authors identify energy and taxation as the two fault lines where every reform effort collapses. The power sector suffers not from shortage but from mispricing, politicised governance, inefficiency, and circular debt that morphs into inflation and borrowing. Likewise, the tax system punishes those already compliant while shielding privileged non-payers through exemptions, complexity, and coercive enforcement. High rates and unpredictability shrink the formal economy instead of expanding it. A sustainable exit from IMF dependence, they argue, requires transparent energy pricing, accountable utilities, simple broad based taxation, and a regulatory state that rewards productivity rather than privilege.

Overview:

The article argues that Pakistan's IMF dependence is structural but not accidental. It examines rhetorical reform plans, exposes distortions in energy and taxation systems, and calls for rule based governance that enables growth, credibility, and export driven stability.

NOTES:

The article stresses that Pakistan's repeated reliance on the IMF is not a temporary crisis but a structural outcome of a distorted economic system that suppresses productivity and credibility. It highlights how policymakers confuse aspirations with reforms by treating goals such as higher exports, improved human capital, and better governance as solutions rather than outcomes of concrete institutional change. The writers argue that rent seeking, elite protection, discretionary regulation, and a hostile business climate consistently generate balance of payments crises. They explain that growth cannot be manufactured through plans and committees but emerges from predictable, rule based environments where firms can invest, scale, and export freely. The energy sector is identified as a central fault line plagued by mispricing, politicised governance, inefficiency, and circular debt that ultimately fuels inflation and borrowing. Likewise, the tax system is portrayed as structurally broken, burdening compliant taxpayers while shielding powerful non-payers through exemptions, complexity, and arbitrary enforcement, which shrinks the formal economy and discourages investment. The article concludes that only transparent energy pricing, accountable utilities, simple broad based taxation, and the dismantling of discretionary economic controls can break the cycle of recurring IMF dependence and restore long term stability.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Economic reforms, structural weaknesses, public finance
- Economics: Taxation systems, market distortions, productivity growth
- Current Affairs: IMF engagement, fiscal crisis, energy sector reforms
- Public Administration: Regulatory governance, institutional accountability
- International Relations (economic dimension):
- External financing and credibility

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that countries borrow repeatedly when their systems discourage production and exports. For example, if electricity prices rise unpredictably and factories face endless permits, businesses cannot grow. This reduces exports and foreign dollars, creating shortages. When tax authorities chase only registered taxpayers while rich sectors stay untaxed, revenue stays low and deficits grow. Circular debt in the energy sector means the

government keeps paying for losses, much like a family covering one credit card with another. Over time, borrowing becomes the only option, which is why Pakistan keeps returning to IMF programmes.

Facts and Figures:

- IMF crises recur every few years in Pakistan
- Energy sector involves nearly two dozen uncoordinated entities
- Circular debt acts as a permanent fiscal drain
- Tax exemptions shield large parts of the economy
- Informality expands when regulation becomes coercive

To put it simply, the article makes clear that Pakistan cannot escape IMF cycles through speeches, plans, or wishful targets. Freedom lies in dismantling distortions that reward inefficiency and punish enterprise. When rules replace discretion, pricing reflects reality, and taxation treats privilege and productivity alike, growth will follow naturally. Until then, the IMF will remain not a visitor, but a recurring resident in Pakistan's economic house.

A SEARCH IN LIMBO

Author: Ayesha Razzaque

Summary:

The article provides an in-depth analysis of how Pakistan handles leadership appointments in higher education, beginning with Paul Theroux's idea that every country carries a smell its people no longer notice. The writer connects this sensory reflection to the six month long chaotic search for the chairperson of the Higher Education Commission, which she likens to the stench of a winter dumpster fire. Around seven hundred and fifty applicants applied under basic criteria that focused largely on academic credentials rather than reform capacity. After months of delay, the search committee forwarded five shortlisted names to the Prime Minister's Office, only for all to be rejected in one stroke. The result was institutional paralysis, wasted time, and an already struggling regulatory body left without leadership or direction.

The article exposes how this failure is part of a wider culture within Pakistani academia where vice chancellor appointments resemble a revolving door of familiar faces chasing better posts rather than building long term institutional strength. Political lobbying, social media theatrics, and influence networks have replaced merit based reform vision. The writer argues that PhDs and publication records mean little for governance roles that demand deep understanding of systemic problems and the ability to execute change. Because leadership positions are treated as rewards rather than strategic responsibilities, the talent pipeline has eroded over decades, pushing capable professionals away. The author ends on cautious hope that the restart of the search may signal seriousness, though past habits suggest smoke may continue to fill the room.

Overview:

The article criticises Pakistan's flawed leadership selection process in higher education, using the stalled HEC chair search as evidence of political interference, shallow merit criteria, and institutional decay. It calls for reform focused appointments grounded in competence rather than connections.

NOTES:

The article highlights how Pakistan's higher education governance suffers less from lack of applicants and more from a deeply flawed leadership selection culture driven by influence, short sighted thinking, and weak reform vision. It points out that the six month long stalled search for the HEC chair exposed how superficial criteria such as PhDs and publication counts were prioritised over proven capacity for institutional reform. Despite hundreds of

applicants, the final shortlist failed to satisfy the Prime Minister's Office, resulting in a complete reset that left the HEC paralysed. The writer stresses that this dysfunction reflects a wider revolving door system in universities, where vice chancellors treat posts as career stepping stones rather than long term responsibilities, encouraging quick publicity gains instead of structural improvement. Political lobbying, regional power blocs, and even social media theatrics have replaced transparent merit based processes, turning leadership appointments into contests of influence. The article further underlines that because senior public sector roles are not treated as strategic reform positions, decades of favouritism have weakened the talent pipeline and driven capable professionals away from public service. Real reform, the writer argues, demands leadership chosen for problem solving ability, reform experience, and clear institutional vision, supported by political commitment free from petty interference. Without this shift, public institutions will continue to stagnate regardless of how many search committees are formed.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Public Administration: Institutional reform, leadership selection, bureaucratic culture
- Pakistan Affairs: Governance crisis in public sector bodies
- Current Affairs: State capacity and reform failures
- Governance and Management: Meritocracy versus patronage systems

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows how poor leadership choices damage institutions. For example, the HEC remained without a permanent head for over six months, freezing major decisions. Imagine a school without a principal where teachers wait for orders and students suffer confusion. The same happens at national level when regulators lack authority. Instead of selecting leaders who can reform systems, officials choose familiar names with strong connections. Over time, talented professionals stop applying, leaving only lobby driven candidates in the race.

Facts and Figures:

- About 750 applicants applied for the HEC chair position
- The search process lasted nearly six months
- Only five candidates were shortlisted and all rejected
- Decision making at HEC remained stalled throughout the period

To sum up, The article shows how institutions decay not from lack of talent but from distorted priorities. When influence replaces competence, reform becomes impossible. Until leadership is treated as responsibility rather than reward, smoke will keep rising from the same burning structure. The writer leaves us with a quiet warning that without serious change, dysfunction will remain the nation's most familiar scent.

TRUMP'S OVERPLAYED HAND

Author: Jawed Naqvi

Summary:

The article shows that Donald Trump's intervention in Venezuela reflects more impulse than strategy. The removal of Nicolás Maduro has not created a vacuum, nor has it weakened the Bolivarian state in any decisive way. Decades of Russian, Chinese, and Iranian investment have reinforced Venezuela's political spine, much as popular resistance restored Hugo Chávez after his earlier abduction. The episode echoes an old script, from Iran in 1953 to Latin America's Cold War coups, where oil interests and fear of independent politics drove coercive action. Trump's anxiety over BRICS and the Bolivarian project rooted in Chávez's 1998 revolution explains why Venezuela and Iran

remain constant targets despite sanctions fatigue. Beneath the rhetoric of law enforcement and order, crude oil remains the central prize.

The article argues that Trump has stretched American power too far, too fast. His Venezuela adventure fits a broader pattern of bombing campaigns across several countries, sold domestically as strength yet hollow abroad. Resistance on the ground, civilian casualties, and global unease have begun to turn a swift operation into a political liability. Even allies appear cautious, while domestic opinion within the United States shows discomfort with deeper entanglement. By tying military force to domestic political theatre and great power decline, Trump risks converting a tactical seizure into strategic loss. The article concludes that history rarely favours empires that confuse muscle with mandate, and Venezuela may prove another costly reminder.

Overview:

The article explores the United States' military action against Venezuela, framing it as an overextension driven by fear of BRICS, resource ambition, and ideological hostility toward the Bolivarian revolution. It highlights resistance within Venezuela, global backlash and the risk that Trump's use of force may weaken rather than restore American authority

NOTES:

The article explains regime change as a recurring feature of US foreign policy. It links Venezuela to earlier interventions driven by oil interests. It highlights BRICS as a challenge to sanctions based coercion. It examines the Monroe Doctrine mindset in modern form. It shows limits of military power against popular resistance. It reflects domestic political motives behind foreign adventures. It underlines how tactical success can lead to strategic failure.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: Covers US foreign policy, interventionism, great power rivalry, and BRICS.
- ❖ Current Affairs: Includes the Venezuela crisis and global power shifts.
- ❖ Political Science: Addresses imperialism, hegemony, and resistance politics.
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Connects through global norms on sovereignty and intervention.

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that Venezuela was targeted mainly because of oil and independent politics. The US feared losing control as BRICS gained strength. Even after Maduro's removal, resistance continued. For example, Chávez returned to power after a similar attempt. This teaches that military force cannot easily erase popular support or foreign backing.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Venezuela holds some of the world's largest oil reserves.
- ❖ Chávez came to power in 1998 through elections.
- ❖ The US has bombed or intervened in over seven countries in recent years.
- ❖ Iran and Venezuela are both sanctioned BRICS members.
- ❖ Resistance during the operation caused civilian and guard casualties.

To sum up, this article suggests that Trump mistook spectacle for strength and force for authority. History shows that empires falter when they confuse dominance with destiny. Venezuela may not bow, but Washington may yet stumble.

CHALLENGING TIMES

Author: Fahd Humayun

Summary:

A brief Pakistan India confrontation, followed by Israel Iran tensions and Pakistan's strikes in Afghanistan, created the illusion of closure. Yet the aftershocks tell another story. India insists the crisis with Pakistan is only paused, not settled. Washington keeps pressure on Tehran. Terrorism inside Pakistan persists. Stability, if it exists at all, rests on fragile ground. India's regional standing has suffered due to battlefield losses, strained neighbourhood ties, and American claims of mediation. This has placed the BJP on the defensive, increasing the temptation to seek symbolic victories abroad to rewrite the narrative of the May crisis. The danger lies in how easily a minor incident in India held Kashmir could now be framed as justification for renewed conflict, especially when unrest there is spreading and Indian intelligence capacity shows limits.

After US actions elsewhere, the possibility of American escalation against Iran would place Pakistan in an unenviable position, squeezed between legal principles and strategic pressure. The writer argues that Pakistan must focus on reducing exposure on both fronts through crisis management mechanisms, external mediation, and credible deterrence. Clear signalling is needed to India and Afghanistan about the costs of proxy warfare through groups such as the TTP and BLA. Framing such violence as a threat to regional trade and investment could raise reputational costs for those involved. On Iran, Pakistan's military leadership may still influence Washington's calculus by highlighting spillover dangers, especially in Balochistan. The core message is restraint with readiness, where survival depends on diplomacy backed by clarity and caution.

Overview:

The article analyses South Asia and the wider region after 2025 crises, arguing that current stability is temporary. It stresses low crisis thresholds, proxy warfare risks, great power pressure, and the need for deterrence, communication, and strategic signalling.

NOTES:

The article highlights the lowered threshold for India Pakistan conflict initiation. It explains India's incentive to seek external distractions after regional setbacks. It underlines absence of effective crisis management mechanisms in South Asia. It connects proxy warfare in Afghanistan with regional security. It examines risks posed by possible US action against Iran. It stresses deterrence through reputational and economic framing. It shows the role of external actors such as the US, China, and Gulf states in crisis moderation.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: covers South Asian security dynamics and crisis escalation.
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: regional threats, deterrence, and counterterrorism.
- ❖ Current Affairs: Iran tensions, Afghanistan instability, and US regional policy.
- ❖ Political Science: relates to deterrence theory and crisis management.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that peace in South Asia is fragile. Even small incidents can trigger conflict. For example, unrest in Kashmir could spark wider confrontation. Pakistan also faces threats from militant groups across the Afghan border. At the same time, pressure from big powers over Iran complicates choices. Managing these risks requires communication, deterrence, and support from allies.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Pakistan and India fought a four day confrontation in May 2025.
- ❖ Terror attacks inside Pakistan continued after Afghan cross border strikes.
- ❖ Balochistan's strategic value has risen due to trade and connectivity.
- ❖ US pressure on Iran increased after regional conflicts in late 2025.

To wrap up, The article warns that miscalculation now carries heavier costs than before. Pakistan's challenge lies in balancing firmness with foresight. Peace will not come from wishful thinking. It will depend on discipline, diplomacy, and credible deterrence in a region where margins for error have shrunk.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Inflection means turning point; synonym shift; antonym continuity.
- ❖ Provisional means temporary; synonym tentative; antonym permanent.
- ❖ Equivocal means ambiguous; synonym unclear; antonym definite.
- ❖ Cascade means chain reaction; synonym spillover; antonym containment.
- ❖ Predicament means difficult situation; synonym dilemma; antonym ease.
- ❖ Institutionalise means formalise; synonym establish; antonym dismantle.
- ❖ Reputational means linked to image; synonym credibility based; antonym obscure.
- ❖ Spillover means spread effect; synonym overflow; antonym isolation.

WITH THE SLEEVES ROLLED UP

Author: Jawed Naqvi

Summary:

The article explores the world sliding toward authoritarianism, where power has begun to trample principle and restraint is fast eroding. The author argues that the United States under Donald Trump has lurched sharply to the extreme right, dragging Europe into a parallel drift marked by militarism and democratic backsliding. Countries such as Hungary, Poland, Austria, and Italy appear primed for right wing consolidation, while Britain, France, and Germany quietly recalibrate toward hard power. The European Union emerges as selectively moral, condemning Russia in Ukraine yet accommodating Trump on Venezuela and tightening its stance on Iran and Palestine. Nato's cohesion looks fragile, global institutions weaken, and force increasingly replaces law as the currency of international conduct.

Across Venezuela and Mexico, mass rallies confront American pressure, while Canada signals strategic independence by warming ties with China. The global left, though fragmented, refuses to remain passive. Figures like Jeremy Corbyn and Jean Luc Mélenchon channel popular anger against European complicity in war and subservience to Washington. In the United States, grassroots activism, alternative media, student movements, and electoral mobilisation challenge Trump's authority despite repression and violence. The Middle East and Gulf interpret recent seizures of assets and broken guarantees as warnings of a harsher era. South Asia absorbs these shocks unevenly. Pakistan voices opposition to the Venezuela episode, Bangladesh witnesses protests, and India appears paralysed by domestic politics and Western alignment. The image of rolled up sleeves signals a moment when resistance, not resignation, defines political survival.

Overview:

The article presents an analysis of the global rightward shift led by the United States and echoed in Europe. It contrasts authoritarian consolidation with popular resistance, arguing that silence and neutrality now invite democratic decay.

NOTES:

The article highlights a profound shift in the global political climate marked by the ascendancy of extreme right forces, democratic erosion, and a growing preference for coercion over consensus. It underscores how the United States under Donald Trump has catalysed this transformation, emboldening right wing movements across Europe and encouraging militarised responses in traditionally democratic states. The European Union is portrayed as morally inconsistent, forceful against some adversaries while accommodative toward American excesses, which further weakens international norms. Nato's internal strain and the decline of global institutions reflect a broader loss of faith in multilateral safeguards. At the same time, the article stresses that popular resistance has emerged as a counterweight to authoritarian consolidation. Mass protests in Latin America, recalibrated diplomacy by middle powers like Canada, and renewed activism across Europe and the United States illustrate society's refusal to acquiesce. The role of alternative media, student movements, and grassroots mobilisation is emphasised as central to preserving democratic space. The Middle East and Gulf interpret recent interventions and asset seizures as signals of a volatile era where guarantees no longer hold. South Asia's varied responses, from Pakistan's vocal stance to India's political paralysis, reveal how domestic priorities shape external behaviour. Overall, the article conveys that the present moment demands active engagement, as passivity now risks irreversible democratic decline.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: global power shifts, crisis of liberal order, and multilateral decline.
- ❖ Current Affairs: US foreign policy, Europe's political drift, Middle East tensions, and Latin America.
- ❖ Political Science: address populism, democratic backsliding, and mass movements.
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: regional implications of global instability.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that many powerful states now prefer force over dialogue. For example, US actions in Venezuela and asset seizures weaken trust worldwide. Protests in Venezuela, Mexico, and student movements in America show public pushback. Canada's outreach to China reflects middle power autonomy. India's silence contrasts with its earlier leadership in the Global South, showing how domestic politics shape foreign policy.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Several European states now have strong far right governments.
- ❖ Large scale protests have occurred in Venezuela, Mexico, and Bangladesh.
- ❖ BRICS states have conducted joint naval exercises to protect trade routes.
- ❖ US midterm elections remain a key institutional check on presidential power.

To sum up, The article suggests that history is accelerating and neutrality is evaporating. When power sheds restraint, resistance becomes responsibility. Sleeves are rolled up because survival now demands engagement. Those who hesitate may watch democracy erode beyond repair.

IWT: THE LEGAL RESPONSE

Author: Ahmer Bilal Soofi

Summary:

This article is written as a precise legal roadmap crafted in response to India's growing use of water as strategic pressure. The author argues that despite India's political posturing and accelerated hydropower activity on the western rivers, the Indus Waters Treaty remains fully binding under international law. Citing the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the author stresses that unilateral suspension carries no legal standing. Opinions from the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the World Bank reinforce this position. While Pakistan must continue to follow treaty procedures as a legal baseline, India's decision to hold obligations in abeyance frees Islamabad to rely on wider principles of international law. Coercive countermeasures remain lawful in theory, though only as a last resort. The article insists that Pakistan's strength lies not in rhetoric but in disciplined legal resistance.

The article outlines a step by step strategy to build an unimpeachable legal record. Every Indian move, from site selection to tenders and physical construction, must trigger immediate and documented protest. Requests for design information must never be misread as consent. Administrative decisions must be challenged as threats of water coercion under international water law and the UN Charter. Tendering and contract awards are treated as irreversible steps taken at India's own risk if disputes remain unresolved. Once machinery moves and excavation begins, Pakistan must formally object and preserve its rights for arbitration. Technical objections must focus on storage limits, spillway design, drawdown capacity, and cumulative impact. The article concludes that persistent, methodical protest communicated globally offers Pakistan the strongest peaceful defence of its lower riparian rights.

Overview:

The article explains how Pakistan should respond legally to India's actions on western rivers. It emphasises treaty law, international water law, and procedural discipline as tools to counter water coercion without escalation.

NOTES:

The article explains binding nature of bilateral treaties under international law. It highlights limits on unilateral suspension under the Vienna Convention. It shows role of World Bank and arbitration bodies in treaty disputes. It explains lower riparian rights and water coercion as an internationally wrongful act. It outlines procedural safeguards under the Indus Waters Treaty. It demonstrates how legal protest builds grounds for countermeasures. It links water disputes with security and diplomacy.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: treaty law, dispute resolution, and coercive diplomacy.
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: cover Indus Waters Treaty and water security.
- ❖ Current Affairs: link India Pakistan relations and strategic resources.
- ❖ Environmental Studies: connect river management and cumulative impact.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan depends on rivers flowing from India. If upstream storage increases, downstream water can drop. For example, gated spillways can allow sudden releases or prolonged shortages. International law requires consultation before construction. Written protest protects rights even if construction continues. Legal records matter more than public statements.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ The Indus Waters Treaty was signed in 1960.

- ❖ Western rivers fall under Pakistan's use with limited Indian rights.
- ❖ Hydropower projects require prior design sharing under Annexure D.
- ❖ International arbitration recognises cumulative impact of multiple projects.

To sum up, The article avoids emotional appeals and relies on precision, patience, and persistence. In water disputes, silence equals surrender. Law, when used carefully, becomes defence. Pakistan's real leverage lies not in threats but in record, restraint, and resolve,

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Abeyance means temporary suspension; synonym pause; antonym enforcement.
- ❖ Riparian means relating to river banks; synonym riverside; antonym inland.
- ❖ Acquiesced means accepted silently; synonym consented; antonym resisted.
- ❖ Estoppel means legal bar from denial; synonym preclusion; antonym allowance.
- ❖ Pondage means water storage capacity; synonym reservoir; antonym release.
- ❖ Coercion means forceful pressure; synonym compulsion; antonym persuasion.
- ❖ Jurisprudence means legal doctrine; synonym legal theory; antonym arbitrariness.
- ❖ Irreversible means impossible to undo; synonym final; antonym reversible.
- ❖ Material breach means serious violation; synonym fundamental breach; antonym compliance.

PEOPLE ARE EATING LESS

Author: Zafar Mirza & Miftah Ismail

Summary:

The article explores everyday hardship hidden beneath polished economic headlines. Using the latest Household Integrated Economic Survey, the authors dismantle the official claim of inclusive growth with cold arithmetic. They acknowledge the technical strength of the survey and praise its digital execution and wide coverage. Literacy has improved, internet access has expanded, and clean fuel use has increased. Yet these surface gains fail to offset deeper distress. Child immunisation still excludes millions, especially in Balochistan and former Fata districts. Household incomes appear to have nearly doubled since 2018–19, but this rise collapses once inflation enters the frame. Consumption has grown faster than income, widening inequality between rich and poor, particularly in cities. What looks like progress on paper masks a steady erosion of real purchasing power.

Furthermore, the article exposes the human cost of this erosion. After adjusting for inflation, almost all households except the richest rural quintile are poorer than six years ago. Urban poor households have lost nearly a quarter of their real income. Food now consumes a larger share of household budgets, yet people eat less. Per capita intake of wheat, rice, pulses, milk, meat, eggs, sugar, and tea has fallen across urban and rural areas. Only tomatoes and cooking oil escape this decline. Food insecurity has surged, while spending on education has shrunk sharply. Health costs remain stubbornly high. The authors argue that macroeconomic stabilisation has been achieved by squeezing households through taxes and utility prices. They conclude with a call for deep structural reform, national consensus, and long term planning insulated from political churn. National success, they insist, must be measured by real household welfare, not IMF milestones.

Overview:

The article analyses Pakistan's economic condition through household data rather than macro indicators. It shows how inflation, taxation, and policy choices have reduced real incomes, increased food insecurity, and widened inequality despite apparent statistical improvements.

NOTES:

The article highlights how headline improvements in literacy, internet access, and clean fuel use conceal a deeper economic squeeze revealed by the Household Integrated Economic Survey 2024–25. Although average household incomes appear to have nearly doubled since 2018–19, consumption has risen even faster, which means real purchasing power has declined after adjusting for inflation. Inequality has widened sharply, especially in urban areas, where the poorest households have suffered the steepest losses in real income. Food now absorbs a larger share of household budgets, yet per capita consumption of essential items such as wheat, rice, pulses, milk, meat, eggs, and sugar has fallen across both rural and urban Pakistan. Food insecurity has increased markedly, education spending has dropped, and health expenditure remains largely unavoidable. The survey exposes a growing disconnect between macroeconomic stabilisation and household wellbeing, showing that high taxes, rising utility costs, and weak governance have shifted the burden of adjustment onto ordinary citizens, leaving most families poorer despite apparent economic recovery.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: include poverty, inequality, and economic governance.
- ❖ Current Affairs: cover inflation, taxation, and household welfare.
- ❖ Economics: relate it to real income, consumption, and inequality.
- ❖ Governance and Public Policy: address structural reform and political instability.

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows why higher salaries do not always mean better lives. For example, if income rises but food and electricity prices rise faster, families suffer. A household may earn more rupees yet buy less wheat or milk. When education spending falls, children drop out. When food intake shrinks, health worsens. Inflation quietly cancels income gains.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ The survey covers 32,000 households nationwide.
- ❖ Average household income rose from Rs41,545 to Rs82,179.
- ❖ Real income fell for most households after inflation adjustment.
- ❖ Food insecurity rose from 15.9 percent to 24.4 percent.
- ❖ Education spending dropped from about 4 percent to 2.5 percent of household budgets.

In a nutshell, the article strips comfort from economic jargon and replaces it with numbers that bite. Growth without equity becomes arithmetic cruelty. Stability that starves households breeds silent collapse. Unless reform serves the poorest table first, progress will remain cosmetic and hunger will speak louder than data.

REVOLUTION TODAY

Author: Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Summary:

The article examines a stark thought experiment that fast forwards Pakistan into 2050 to hold up an unforgiving mirror to the present. The imagined future is not science fiction but a straight line drawn from today's realities: a swelling population, a relentless youth bulge, climate shocks, insurgencies, and a state that tightens its grip in the name of order. The author strips away comforting slogans about the country turning a corner and argues that economic, political, and social decay is picking up speed.

The article then turns to the battered idea of revolution in a post Cold War world where it has been diluted, misused, or deliberately emptied of substance. In Pakistan, the left was criminalised early, while the language of revolution was later hijacked by dictators and opportunists. Although digitally connected youth across the Global South have shown their ability to bring regimes to heel, recent examples reveal how quickly such uprisings can lose their way without a shared ideological compass and organised grassroots power. The author argues that outrage alone is not enough. What is missing is a coherent political project that can translate digital mobilisation into structural transformation. The article insists that revolutionary horizons can still be imagined, if not yet realised.

Overview:

The article reflects on Pakistan's present crisis by projecting it into the future and questioning whether incremental change can avert systemic collapse. It critiques the hollowing out of revolutionary politics, examines the limits of digital youth mobilisation, and outlines the ideological foundations required for meaningful transformation in Pakistan.

NOTES:

The article presents a forward looking critique by imagining Pakistan in 2050 to underline how present political, economic, and social trends could harden into a dystopic reality if left unchecked. It stresses that rapid population growth, an enduring youth bulge, climate disruptions, and recurring insurgencies are already reshaping everyday life, while the state increasingly behaves as an overbearing authority in the name of order. The author argues that claims of national turnaround are largely illusory and that decay is accelerating rather than slowing. Against this backdrop, the article revisits the idea of revolution, showing how it has been diluted since the Cold War, criminalised in Pakistan's early history, and later misused by authoritarian figures and populist pretenders. While recent youth led mobilisations across the Global South demonstrate the power of digitally connected masses, the article cautions that such movements often falter without clear ideology, organisation, and grassroots anchoring. It highlights the absence of mass based political parties with coherent agendas and warns that online outrage alone cannot dismantle entrenched structures of power. Despite acknowledging these limitations, the article outlines core ideological pillars for genuine transformation, including moving beyond capitalism toward redistribution and ecological renewal, ending repression in ethnic peripheries, dismantling the dominance of the security state, confronting patriarchy, and adopting an anti imperialist and non aligned foreign policy. The central argument is that while revolutionary change appears distant, imagining and articulating such horizons remains essential to resisting systemic collapse and reclaiming political purpose.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- ❖ Pakistan Affairs with emphasis on political decay, youth bulge, and state structure
- ❖ Political Science: focus on revolution, ideology, and mass movements
- ❖ Current Affairs: cover youth politics, digital mobilisation, and social change
- ❖ International Relations: touch anti imperialism and non alignment

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that large youth populations can be a force for change or chaos. For example young people in countries like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh helped topple governments, but without clear plans many movements later lost direction. Digital activism allows people to come together quickly, yet without unions or local organisations it often fails to bring lasting reform. Another example is state power, where governments expand control during crises, much like emergency laws during climate disasters or unrest.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Pakistan's projected population by 2050 is around 400 million
- ❖ Half of the labour force is expected to remain between the ages of 15 and 29
- ❖ Climate breakdown and internal conflict are identified as major future stressors
- ❖ Youth led movements have recently emerged in South Asia and parts of Africa

To wrap up, the article argues that without ideology, organisation, and moral clarity, anger burns out and change stalls. Yet it also reminds us that history does not move in straight lines. Even in dark times, the possibility of revolution survives, not as a slogan, but as a long and difficult struggle to reimagine politics, power, and purpose.

A NATIONAL AGENDA FOR 2026

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article argues that Pakistan's problems overlap and reinforce one another, making piecemeal fixes ineffective. Political polarisation sits at the heart of instability. A country locked in permanent confrontation cannot govern itself well. The article urges a political truce between government and opposition to cool tempers and restore predictability. Signals from PTI and recent calls for reconciliation by the PPP offer a narrow opening. Yet the government's conduct has undermined trust through aggressive rhetoric, legislative overreach, and pressure on dissent. Parliament has been reduced to a rubber stamp, while judicial independence has been weakened. Looming behind this standoff is the establishment, which appears unwilling to tolerate any genuine accommodation, preferring controlled instability over inclusive politics. Excluding a popular opposition, the article warns, corrodes democracy and weakens governance, especially in a federal system where cooperation across provinces is essential.

The article then turns to the economy and human development, where the crisis deepens. Macroeconomic stabilisation achieved through IMF support offers temporary relief but rests on borrowed time. High debt, low reserves, and looming external financing needs expose the fragility beneath the surface. Structural reforms in taxation, spending, and energy remain stalled. Privatising PIA is a step forward, yet many loss making state enterprises continue to drain public resources. Pakistan remains trapped in low growth, weak investment, and chronic borrowing. At the same time, the human development picture is alarming. Education, health, literacy, and gender outcomes have deteriorated. Millions of children remain out of school, poverty has surged, and child stunting reflects silent suffering. Rapid population growth magnifies these pressures, adding millions each year to a system already stretched thin. Militancy compounds these challenges, with violence rising to decade highs. The author concludes that leadership will be judged by its ability to rise above narrow interests and confront these intertwined crises with purpose and courage.

Overview:

The article shares a national agenda for 2026 built around political reconciliation, economic reform, human development, population management, and security. It argues that stability cannot be achieved without inclusive politics, structural economic change, and sustained investment in people.

NOTES:

The article highlights that Pakistan's crises are deeply interconnected and cannot be resolved through isolated or short term measures. It stresses that political polarisation lies at the core of instability, as continuous confrontation between government and opposition erodes governance, weakens democratic norms, and fuels uncertainty. The

author underlines the need for a political truce and inclusive dialogue, noting that exclusion of a popular opposition damages democracy and undermines federal cooperation. The role of the establishment is presented as a critical constraint, as its resistance to political accommodation perpetuates controlled instability. On the economic front, the article points out that recent macroeconomic stabilisation is fragile and heavily dependent on external borrowing. Structural weaknesses in taxation, public spending, energy management, and state owned enterprises remain unresolved, trapping the country in low growth and weak investment. Equally serious is the human development crisis, marked by declining education and health indicators, rising poverty, widespread child malnutrition, and unchecked population growth. The article also stresses that militancy and terrorism require a comprehensive national response that goes beyond force, combining security measures with social, economic, and political interventions.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: focuses on governance and political stability
- ❖ Current Affairs: covers economy, security, and social indicators
- ❖ Economics: addresses growth models, debt, and structural reform
- ❖ Governance and Public Policy: examines institutions and federalism

Notes for Beginners:

Political stability matters because investors avoid uncertainty. For example prolonged protests scare away investment. IMF support helps balance budgets but cannot fix weak industries. Pakistan needs about twenty three billion dollars in external financing over five years. Education neglect harms growth since skilled workers drive productivity. Over twenty million children remain out of school. Poverty stands near forty four percent. Population grows around two point five percent yearly, adding six million people annually. Militancy cannot be solved by force alone. Jobs, education, and local trust matter.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Pakistan faces external financing needs of around twenty three billion dollars over the next five years.
- ❖ Literacy stands at about sixty percent, leaving forty percent of the population illiterate.
- ❖ More than twenty million children remain out of school.
- ❖ Poverty has risen to approximately forty four percent according to the World Bank.
- ❖ Around forty percent of children under five suffer from stunting.
- ❖ Population growth is about two point five percent annually, adding nearly six million people each year.
- ❖ Terrorism related fatalities reached a decade high in the previous year.

To sum up, The article works as a reflection of Pakistan's present and a warning about its future. It makes clear that stability cannot be manufactured through loans, repression, or cosmetic reforms. Only political reconciliation, structural economic change, investment in human development, population management, and an inclusive approach to security can place the country on a sustainable path. What remains uncertain is whether the political leadership can summon the will to act before these overlapping crises harden into irreversible decline.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Polarised means sharply divided. Synonyms include fragmented and split. Antonyms include united and cohesive.
- ❖ Modus vivendi means workable arrangement. Synonyms include compromise and accommodation. Antonyms include deadlock and confrontation.
- ❖ Anaemic means weak or sluggish. Synonyms include feeble and stagnant. Antonyms include robust and dynamic.

PRIVATISATION PERIL

Author: Dr Niaz Murtaza

Summary:

The article warns against mistaking haste for reform in Pakistan's renewed push for privatisation. Using the PIA sale as a test case, the author questions whether the process served the public interest or merely cleared the way for a poorly structured deal. Although PIA had posted a profit in 2024 after years of losses, largely due to debt removal and tax relief, the government rushed into selling a majority stake without explaining how it fixed the minimum price. The valuation appears shaky because it ignored future income potential and the strategic value of landing rights. Even more troubling are the payment terms, under which the buyer secured control by paying a fraction upfront while deferring most obligations, a move that effectively handed over a national asset at a discount. The author argues that this opacity weakens public trust and revives old accusations of selling state property cheap.

The article then widens its scope to analyze privatisation as an ideology rather than a tool. Past experiences show a pattern of weak pricing, cartel formation, job losses, and rising consumer costs. The author challenges the neoliberal claim that the state has no role in business, arguing instead that governments must operate in sectors where private actors lack capacity or incentive, especially strategic or pro poor domains. The absence of aviation expertise among PIA's buyers raises further doubts about future performance, especially when losses are already anticipated. Rather than treating privatisation as a cure all, the article urges policymakers to consider alternatives such as professional autonomous boards, partial management transfers, employee ownership, or public share offerings. The core message is that reform must be guided by transparent criteria and national interest, not ideology or political convenience.

Overview:

The article critically examines Pakistan's recent PIA privatisation, highlighting flaws in valuation, transparency, and buyer capacity. It questions the assumption that privatisation is always the best solution and proposes alternative models for managing or restructuring state owned enterprises.

NOTES:

The article highlights serious procedural and conceptual flaws in Pakistan's recent privatisation drive by closely examining the sale of PIA. It stresses that although the airline's long history of losses made reform unavoidable, the timing and structure of the sale were questionable. The author points out that PIA had already returned to profit in 2024 due to debt removal and tax relief, which gave the state room to design a stronger and more transparent process. Instead, the government failed to explain how it set the minimum bid price and ignored standard valuation principles based on future income streams and strategic assets such as landing rights. The payment structure is described as deeply problematic because the buyer gained effective control by paying only a small portion upfront while deferring most obligations, amounting to a hidden subsidy. The article also criticises the lack of disclosure before bidding, arguing that such opacity fuels public suspicion and undermines confidence in reform. Beyond PIA, the author challenges the ideological belief that privatisation is always the solution, recalling Pakistan's past experiences of underpriced sales, cartelisation, layoffs, and poor post privatisation performance. He questions the capacity of the current buyers, who lack aviation expertise, and warns that anticipated future losses may stem from managerial weakness rather than inherited problems.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: focusing on economic governance and SOE reform.

- ❖ Economics: addressing privatisation, valuation, and market failure.
- ❖ Current Affairs: covering fiscal management and public sector reform.
- ❖ Public Policy: examining state versus market roles

Notes for Beginners:

Privatisation is meant to reduce state losses, but process matters. PIA lost around one hundred billion rupees in 2023 yet showed a profit of twenty six billion rupees in 2024 after debt relief. The airline was sold for one hundred thirty five billion rupees for a seventy five percent stake. Only seven point five percent was paid upfront. Past privatisations show that weak oversight can lead to layoffs and higher prices. In some cases, better management rather than sale could have improved performance.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ PIA lost around Rs100 billion in 2023 but reported a profit of Rs26 billion in 2024 after debt removal and a one time tax deferral.
- ❖ Seventy five percent of PIA was sold for Rs135 billion, with a stated minimum bid price of Rs100 billion.
- ❖ Only about seven point five percent of the sale amount was paid upfront by the buyer.
- ❖ The remaining twenty five percent shares would be sold later for Rs45 billion at full price.
- ❖ Nearly forty percent of Pakistan's state owned enterprises are profitable, contrary to claims that all SOEs are a burden.

To wrap up, The article reminds us that selling assets without care can deepen mistrust and economic weakness. Privatisation should serve the public good, not ideology or expediency. Without transparency, fair valuation, and capable buyers, reform risks becoming another costly misstep rather than a path to recovery.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Privatisation means transfer of ownership to private hands. Synonyms include divestment and sell off. Antonyms include nationalisation and public ownership.
- ❖ Net present value means current worth of future income. Synonyms include discounted value. Antonyms include sunk cost.
- ❖ Opaque means lacking transparency. Synonyms include obscure and unclear. Antonyms include transparent and open.
- ❖ Cartelisation means market control by collusion. Synonyms include collusion and monopoly building. Antonyms include competition and free market.

TRUMPIAN IMPERIALISM

Author - Zahid Hussain

Summary:

The article shows a blistering indictment of Trump's return to naked power politics, where the language of peace masks the clenched fist of imperial ambition. The abduction of Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, dragged to a New York prison, is presented as a shocking spectacle that strips away any remaining illusion about Trump's claims of statesmanship. The author argues that this act was neither about narcotics nor crime but about oil, plain and simple. Trump's own words about maintaining an American presence in Venezuela to control its resources betray the real motive. The meeting with US corporations to carve up Venezuelan oil fields after Maduro's removal drives the point home. The article warns that this action violates international law and

accelerates the collapse of an already fragile global order. Trump's self-portrayal as a peacemaker rings hollow as brute force replaces diplomacy and sovereignty is trampled without shame.

The article situates the Venezuela episode within a longer arc of American interventionism in Latin America. Sanctions, covert pressure, and political meddling against Hugo Chávez and later Maduro paved the way for the final blow. Trump's use of drug trafficking charges is described as a fig leaf to justify an illegal invasion, especially when similar charges elsewhere have been quietly forgiven. The author warns that Trump's ambitions stretch far beyond Venezuela. Threats against Colombia, Cuba, Iran, Greenland, and even Canada reveal a worldview anchored in the resurrected Monroe Doctrine, rebranded as Trump's personal dominion. The silence or tacit approval of European states and parts of the Muslim world deepens the danger. By backing Israeli aggression in Gaza and flirting with war against Iran, Trump pushes the world onto a razor's edge. History's bitter lessons from Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan are brushed aside, yet the author is certain that America will once again pay the price for mistaking force for authority.

Overview:

The article examines US foreign policy under Donald Trump as a revival of imperial interventionism driven by resource control and disregard for international law. It argues that the Venezuela operation marks a dangerous escalation with global consequences.

NOTES:

The article underlines a sharp revival of American imperial conduct under Donald Trump, using the forced removal of Venezuela's president as a symbol of unrestrained power politics. It highlights how the rhetoric of counter narcotics and peace serves as a smokescreen for resource driven intervention, with oil emerging as the central motive behind Washington's actions. The article traces a consistent pattern of US interference in Latin America through sanctions, political pressure, and regime change efforts against nationalist governments, culminating in the open use of military force. It stresses that the abduction of a sitting head of state represents a grave breach of international law and accelerates the erosion of an already weakened global order. The article also notes the complicity or silence of European states and parts of the Muslim world, which normalises such actions. It expands the scope beyond Venezuela by pointing to Trump's broader ambitions in Colombia, Cuba, Iran, Greenland, and even Canada, framed through a revived Monroe Doctrine mindset. By linking these actions to US support for Israeli aggression in Gaza and threats against Iran, the article warns that unchecked militarism risks repeating historical disasters, as America once again confuses coercion with authority and power with legitimacy.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: imperialism, regime change, and international law.
- ❖ Current Affairs: US foreign policy, Latin America, and Middle East conflicts.
- ❖ Political Science: addresses hegemony, power politics, and sovereignty.
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: relates to Pakistan's diplomatic positioning and Gaza developments.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that powerful countries sometimes use force to control resources. For example, Venezuela has vast oil reserves, which makes it a target. The US said it was acting against drugs, but later spoke openly about oil interests. This shows how excuses are used to justify intervention. Past wars in Iraq and Afghanistan show that such actions often fail and cause chaos instead of stability.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Venezuela holds one of the world's largest proven oil reserves.
- ❖ US sanctions on Venezuela began during Hugo Chávez's era and expanded later.

- ❖ The Monroe Doctrine dates back to 1823 and asserted US dominance in the Americas.
- ❖ The US has a long history of interventions in Latin America during the Cold War and after.

To sum up, The article argues that Trump's imperial swagger is not strength but desperation dressed as confidence. When power forgets restraint, it plants the seeds of its own undoing. Venezuela may be today's battlefield, but the shockwaves will travel far. History suggests that empires stumble not when challenged by rivals, but when they stop listening to their own past.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Brazen means shamelessly bold; synonym blatant; antonym restrained.
- ❖ Imperialism means expansion of power over others; synonym domination; antonym self rule.
- ❖ Abduction means forceful seizure; synonym kidnapping; antonym release.
- ❖ Tacit means unspoken but implied; synonym implicit; antonym explicit.

SOLVING PAKISTAN

Author: Khurram Husain

Summary:

The article reflects why Pakistan keeps circling its problems without ever truly cracking them. The writer begins by dismantling the popular demand for quick solutions, arguing that most people are not actually interested in fixing anything. They prefer narratives that confirm their existing beliefs, a tendency sharpened by social media algorithms that feed users comforting opinions instead of challenging truths. When confronted with uncomfortable realities, people either shut down, lash out, or retreat into emotional reactions. This intellectual narrowing, the author suggests, has weakened society's ability to debate seriously and think critically. Against this backdrop, calls for "solutions" often float in a vacuum, detached from a clear understanding of what problem is even being addressed.

Then, the article shifts to a practical framework for reform. The writer insists that meaningful progress begins with defining priorities, not chasing everything at once. Pakistan's economic challenges range from foreign exchange shortages and revenue failures to debt burdens and unsustainable growth models. Trying to fix all simultaneously only leads to paralysis. In the absence of national consensus and strong institutions, the author urges a narrow, pragmatic focus on areas capable of triggering wider change. He identifies digital payments and renewable energy as two such levers. Expanding digital transactions can document the economy, curb informality, and unlock modern business models. Solar energy paired with batteries can break the stranglehold of high power costs and circular debt. These sectors already show momentum, yet cash dominance and outdated power structures still hold the country back. If Pakistan pushes these transitions decisively, the author believes, economic transformation could follow like falling dominoes.

Overview:

The article suggests that Pakistan's crisis persists not due to lack of ideas but due to poor problem definition, weak institutions, and resistance to uncomfortable truths. It proposes focused technological reforms in digital finance and renewable energy as realistic drivers of long term economic change.

NOTES:

The article highlights the role of cognitive bias and social media in weakening public discourse. It stresses problem identification as a prerequisite for policy design. It discusses structural economic weaknesses such as low documentation, energy inefficiency, and debt traps. It presents digitalisation as a tool for tax broadening and

transparency. It links renewable energy with cost reduction and private sector growth. The article argues for targeted reforms instead of scattered policy ambition. It also underlines institutional capacity and political consensus as essential for sustainable development.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: covers economic reforms, energy crisis, and governance challenges.
- ❖ Current Affairs: includes digital economy, financial inclusion, and renewable energy transitions.
- ❖ Economics: relates to informal sector, productivity, and sustainable growth.
- ❖ Public Administration: addresses institutional reform and policy prioritisation.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that fixing a country requires choosing what to fix first. For example, if most payments happen in cash, the government cannot track income properly which leads to low taxes and weak services. Digital payments help record transactions just like bank statements help families manage money. Similarly, solar energy allows homes and businesses to avoid high electricity bills and power cuts. When energy becomes cheaper and reliable, factories can run longer and costs fall. Small reforms in the right places can create large economic change.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ About 90 percent of retail transactions occur digitally by number but only 33 percent by value
- ❖ Around Rs55 trillion passed through digital channels in one quarter compared to Rs10 trillion by paper instruments
- ❖ Cash still dominates major commercial settlements
- ❖ Energy sector circular debt remains among Pakistan's largest fiscal burdens

To put it simply, the article reminds us that nations do not collapse from lack of ideas but from scattered focus and intellectual comfort zones. Pakistan's recovery will not come from grand speeches or borrowed programmes. It will come from choosing battles wisely and pushing through resistance with discipline. Digital finance and clean energy are not magic cures, but they offer stepping stones toward a stronger economy.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Algorithmic means controlled by automated systems; synonym programmed; antonym manual
- ❖ Cognitive means related to thinking; synonym mental; antonym emotional
- ❖ Visceral means instinctive or emotional; synonym gut level; antonym rational
- ❖ Unsustainable means unable to continue; synonym fragile; antonym durable
- ❖ Pragmatic means practical; synonym realistic; antonym idealistic

REGIME CHANGE REDUX

Summary:

The article works as a warning that the world is sliding back into the dark habits of regime change, where power tramples principle and sovereignty hangs by a thread. The forced capture of Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro by US troops is presented not as a regional drama but as a global alarm bell. A head of state paraded like a prize of war exposes how openly Washington now treats international law with contempt. The article argues that this act signals the collapse of the so called rules based order, where independence of nations has become conditional on obedience to stronger powers. What once hid behind diplomatic language now stands naked in daylight.

The editorial places this moment within a longer pattern of American interference in Latin America. During the Cold War, ideology served as the excuse, while corporate interests guided policy. Today, the mask has changed but

the motive remains. Control over oil and minerals now drives intervention, turning regime change into a commercial instrument. The blunt dismissal of the United Nations by US officials reflects a new arrogance where Washington appoints itself judge and executioner. Even more troubling is the muted reaction of the international community. Some states have quietly approved the overthrow, while others have issued weak protests that ring hollow. This selective outrage, the article warns, is corroding the moral spine of the global system. If sovereignty is respected only when convenient, the international order will soon crumble.

Overview:

The editorial condemns the revival of US led regime change, using Venezuela as a case study to show how power politics now override international law. It warns that silence from the global community is accelerating the breakdown of the world order.

NOTES:

The editorial shows the open return of regime change as a central instrument of great power politics, with the United States no longer hiding behind diplomatic language or ideological justifications. It shows how the forced removal of Venezuela's president reflects the collapse of respect for sovereignty and the transformation of international law into a tool of convenience rather than obligation. The article traces a historical continuity from Cold War interventions in Latin America to present day actions driven by control over oil and minerals, revealing how economic interests now replace ideological battles. It highlights the growing arrogance of US leadership which openly dismisses the authority of the United Nations and positions itself as global enforcer. Equally significant is the silence and selective outrage of the international community, which weakens multilateral institutions and accelerates the erosion of the rules based order. The editorial ultimately frames sovereignty as the backbone of global stability, warning that once it becomes conditional, no state remains secure.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: Sovereignty of states, interventionism, regime change politics, decline of multilateralism, power politics
- ❖ Current Affairs: US foreign policy trends, Latin American crisis, global response to unilateral military actions
- ❖ International Law: Violation of state sovereignty, use of force, UN Charter principles
- ❖ Political Science: Imperialism, hegemony, coercive diplomacy, erosion of global norms
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's diplomatic stance at the UN, implications of great power interventions for developing states

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that powerful countries sometimes remove governments they dislike. For example, the US has intervened many times in Latin America to protect business interests. Earlier it claimed to fight communism, now it talks about stability while seeking oil and minerals. When other countries stay silent, such actions become easier. If one nation's sovereignty is ignored, others can be targeted next.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ The US has intervened in several Latin American states during the Cold War
- ❖ Venezuela holds some of the world's largest oil reserves
- ❖ The United Nations Charter prohibits the use of force against sovereign states
- ❖ Recent US action involved direct military capture of a sitting president

In a nutshell, when sovereignty becomes optional and silence becomes policy, chaos soon follows. Venezuela today may be the stage, but tomorrow another nation could take its place. Unless the international community finds its voice, the promise of a lawful global order will fade into history.

TRUMP'S OVERPLAYED HAND

Author: Jawed Naqvi

Summary:

The Author in the article shows Donald Trump's gamble in Venezuela, where brute force was used not to fill a power vacuum but to crush a defiant political experiment backed by global rivals. The author argues that the kidnapping of President Nicolás Maduro was never likely to collapse the Bolivarian state, which rests on heavy Russian, Chinese, and Iranian investment. History is brought forward as a warning bell, recalling how Hugo Chávez was once seized in a CIA backed coup only to return on the shoulders of public resistance. Beneath the noise of security claims, the real fuel remains oil, just as it did in past imperial adventures from Iran in 1953 to Latin America throughout the Cold War. Trump's deeper anxiety, the piece suggests, lies in the rise of BRICS, whose growing financial coordination threatens to weaken sanctions as Washington's favourite weapon of coercion.

The article then reveals the Bolivarian revolution itself, rooted in Simón Bolívar's vision of sovereignty and anti imperialism, which Chávez transformed into a social project funded by oil wealth. Through healthcare, literacy drives, food subsidies, and land redistribution, Venezuela sought to break free from neoliberal dominance and US influence. This challenge to the Monroe Doctrine made Caracas a constant thorn in Washington's side. Trump's recent military raids across several countries and his self styled role as global enforcer reveal a reckless attempt to revive Pax Americana through firepower. The resistance during the assault on Maduro, which reportedly killed dozens of Cuban guards and many Venezuelans, is portrayed as the beginning of a nightmare rather than a victory. The article closes by suggesting that Trump may have overplayed his hand, as Israel's visible cheerleading has split his own political base, while global backlash grows. What was meant to display strength may yet expose the limits of American dominance.

Overview:

The article argues that Trump's intervention in Venezuela is less about restoring order and more about suppressing an anti imperial project while countering the rise of BRICS. It shows how military force, resource politics, and fear of shifting global power have combined to produce a dangerous overreach.

NOTES:

The article highlights regime change as a recurring tool of US foreign policy driven by strategic and economic interests. It explains the geopolitical significance of BRICS as an alternative financial and political bloc. It traces historical continuity from Cold War interventions to present day coercion. It links resource control, especially oil, with foreign military action. It discusses challenges to US hegemony through Latin American integration and South South cooperation. It shows how domestic politics in the US shape aggressive external behaviour. It underlines resistance movements as limits to imperial power.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: cover hegemony, regime change, great power competition, and emerging multipolarity.
- ❖ Current Affairs: US intervention in Venezuela, BRICS expansion, and global power shifts.
- ❖ Political Science: address imperialism, revolutionary movements, and state sovereignty.

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that powerful states often remove governments that threaten their interests. Venezuela's vast oil wealth and its independent policies made it a target. By joining hands with countries like China, Russia, and Iran, Venezuela reduced US influence, which angered Washington. For example, BRICS cooperation could allow

trade outside the dollar system, weakening American sanctions. When people resist foreign control, like Venezuelans did after Chávez's earlier kidnapping, regime change becomes harder to enforce.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Venezuela holds one of the world's largest proven oil reserves.
- ❖ BRICS includes major emerging economies such as China, Russia, India, Brazil, and Iran.
- ❖ US sanctions have targeted Venezuela for more than a decade.
- ❖ American forces reportedly carried out raids across several countries in the past year.

To wrap up, Trump's show of strength in Venezuela appears less like a masterstroke and more like a spark in dry grass. Empires often stumble when fear guides strategy and force replaces wisdom. The Bolivarian experiment may be wounded, yet it is far from buried. In trying to crush resistance, Washington may have awakened a broader pushback against its fading dominance.

A DISORDERED WORLD

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article shows how world drifting away from rules toward raw force, where disruption has replaced diplomacy and strength now dictates outcomes. The author argues that President Trump's unilateral conduct has accelerated the collapse of the post war international order. From tearing apart the global trading framework to launching military strikes across regions, Washington has shown open disregard for sovereignty and international law. The promise to end wars has given way to aggressive action, revealing a foreign policy built on domination rather than cooperation. Trump's "America First" approach, openly described by his own aides as a world ruled by power and force, has stripped the language of multilateralism of its meaning.

The article then places this behaviour within a broader global decay where large powers increasingly act without fear of consequence. The UN secretary general's warning about an "age of impunity" captures this moment, as wars rage in Gaza, Ukraine, Venezuela, Iran and South Asia with little accountability. International institutions meant to restrain conflict now stand paralysed, their authority weakened by veto politics and major power withdrawals. The author highlights how multilateralism has lost credibility, especially after the US exit from dozens of global organisations. Alongside military force, a new resource struggle has erupted, particularly over rare earth minerals that fuel modern industries and defence systems. China's near monopoly has already reshaped economic power, forcing the US to scramble for alternative supply chains across Africa and Ukraine. The Middle East once shaped by superpower rivalry now faces destabilising competition among regional actors themselves. All these currents, the author warns, point toward a fractured world where uncertainty reigns and law bends before power.

Overview:

The article presents a bleak portrait of a collapsing global order marked by unilateralism, weakened international institutions, unchecked aggression, and fierce competition over strategic resources, pushing the world into a volatile, rule-less era.

NOTES:

The article highlights decline of the rules based international system. It explains unilateralism in great power politics. It discusses erosion of multilateral institutions like the UN. It introduces the concept of an "age of impunity." It links geopolitics with resource competition over rare earth minerals. It shows shifting power balance

between the US and China. It examines instability in the Middle East driven by regional rivalry. It connects geoeconomics with modern global conflict.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: Global order, power politics, multilateralism, and US foreign policy.
- ❖ Current Affairs: Middle East conflicts, US China rivalry, and global institutional decline.
- ❖ Political Science: Realism, state power, and international anarchy.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that powerful countries now often act without following global rules. For example, military strikes happen without approval from the United Nations. International bodies were created after World War Two to prevent such conflicts, but today they struggle to stop wars. The fight over rare earth minerals shows how modern power depends on resources used in phones, electric cars, and weapons. China controls much of this supply, which has forced the US to seek new partners in Africa and Ukraine. Regional rivalry in the Middle East now adds to instability.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ The United Nations was formed in 1945 to prevent future global wars.
- ❖ The US has withdrawn from 66 international organisations, including 31 UN bodies.
- ❖ China controls a major share of global rare earth mineral processing.
- ❖ Rare earths are essential for electronics, defence systems, and green energy.
- ❖ Major conflicts currently rage in Gaza, Ukraine, and parts of the Middle East.

To sum up, When power replaces principle and institutions lose authority, chaos finds space to grow. The return of raw force, paired with fierce resource rivalry, signals a dangerous turn in world affairs. Unless restraint replaces dominance, the world risks sliding into an era where law survives only on paper and strength alone decides the fate of nations.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Unilateral means acting alone; synonym independent; antonym collective.
- ❖ Impunity means freedom from punishment; synonym immunity; antonym accountability.
- ❖ Fragmenting means breaking apart; synonym disintegrating; antonym unifying.
- ❖ Sovereignty means supreme state authority; synonym independence; antonym subordination.
- ❖ Volatility means instability; synonym turbulence; antonym stability.

IMPROVING EXPORTS

Summary:

The prime minister's speech at Davos rightly diagnosed Pakistan's economic illness as an export deficit that keeps dragging the country into balance of payment crises. Yet the article argues that this truth has been repeated so often that it now rings hollow. Governments have talked the talk for decades but failed to walk the reform path. Pakistan remains trapped in low value, narrow export baskets, while manufacturing and agriculture limp along under weak productivity and poor competitiveness. Borrowing and remittances have been used as crutches, not cures, allowing structural disease to fester beneath surface stability.

The article exposes the gap between short term stabilisation and long term growth. While the government has managed to calm macroeconomic turbulence, it has done so at the expense of industrial momentum and export strength. Core problems remain untouched. An inefficient energy sector bleeds manufacturers dry. A skewed tax

system punishes documented businesses while sparing the powerful. These burdens push investors away and choke productivity. The editorial makes it clear that slogans cannot substitute strategy. Without deep reforms to diversify exports, fix energy pricing, overhaul taxation and attract long term investment, export led growth will remain a mirage in the desert rather than a road to prosperity.

Overview:

The article argues that although Pakistan correctly identifies exports as the engine of sustainable growth, repeated failure to implement structural reforms has turned export led development into empty political rhetoric rather than an economic strategy.

NOTES:

The article underlines that Pakistan's recurring economic crises stem from its chronic failure to expand and diversify exports, despite repeated political promises of export led growth. It highlights how successive governments have relied on borrowing and remittances as temporary lifelines instead of pursuing deep structural reforms to raise productivity in manufacturing and agriculture. The editorial points out that recent macroeconomic stability has come at the cost of slowed growth and weakened export competitiveness, revealing the limits of short term stabilisation policies. It stresses that an inefficient energy sector continues to impose heavy costs on producers, while an unjust tax system discourages investment and burdens documented industries. Together, these structural flaws choke productivity, narrow the export base, and deter long term capital. The central argument is that without comprehensive reforms to energy pricing, taxation, industrial efficiency, and export diversification, Pakistan's vision of sustainable, export driven growth will remain a slogan rather than an economic reality.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Includes export performance, industrial policy and economic reforms.
- ❖ Economics: covers productivity, trade deficits and growth models.
- ❖ Current Affairs: addresses IMF dependence, economic stabilisation and reform challenges.
- ❖ Public Administration: relates to tax reform and policy implementation.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan often spends more dollars than it earns, which creates crises. For example, when exports stay low, the country borrows from IMF to pay for imports like fuel and machinery. If factories faced cheaper electricity and fair taxes, they could produce goods at lower cost and sell more abroad. Countries such as Vietnam increased exports by reforming industry and attracting investment. Without similar steps, Pakistan keeps running in circles instead of moving forward.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Pakistan has faced repeated balance of payment crises over decades.
- ❖ Exports remain concentrated in low value sectors like textiles.
- ❖ Energy costs in Pakistan are among the highest in the region for industry.
- ❖ Tax burden falls heavily on documented manufacturing sectors.

To sum up, Growth cannot be wished into existence through speeches at global forums. It must be built brick by brick through reform, discipline and productivity. Until Pakistan fixes the foundations of its economy, export led growth will remain a distant horizon rather than a destination within reach.

AFGHAN BORDER CLOSURE

Summary:

The prolonged closure of the Pakistan Afghanistan border after last year's clashes is presented not as a choice made lightly, but as a move forced by the Afghan Taliban's failure to rein in cross border militancy. The prime minister's remarks underline that peace cannot grow where terror finds shelter. The drop in terrorist attacks after sealing the border shows that the decision saved lives, especially in a year already soaked in blood. In that sense, the state drew a hard line in the sand, choosing vigilance over vulnerability, even when the economic cost was bound to sting.

The article shows how the closure has knocked the wind out of border economies, with traders bleeding losses, perishable goods going to waste, and livelihoods hanging by a thread. The longer the stalemate drags on, the more Pakistan risks losing its gateway to Central Asia. The editorial places the ball firmly in Kabul's court, arguing that only firm guarantees against groups like the TTP can unlock normal ties. Until then, ordinary people on both sides pay the price for militant shelter and political inaction. It still nudges Islamabad to explore partial trade under tighter security, suggesting that borders need not stay sealed forever if smarter controls can keep danger at bay.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's decision to keep its border with Afghanistan closed after security clashes, weighing the clear gains in counterterrorism against the heavy economic costs for border communities and regional trade. It calls for a balanced approach that protects national security while gradually restoring commerce under strict safeguards.

NOTES:

The article shows that Pakistan's continued closure of its border with Afghanistan is rooted in hard security realities rather than political impulse, as repeated clashes and Kabul's failure to curb militant groups have left Islamabad with little room to manoeuvre. It highlights the prime minister's position that while trade restrictions were not desirable, they became unavoidable due to the Afghan Taliban's inaction against cross border terrorism. The editorial points out that the sealing of the border contributed to a noticeable decline in terrorist attacks, particularly in a year marked by extreme violence, suggesting that the measure helped protect lives. At the same time it calls for attention to the severe economic strain on border communities, traders, transporters, and daily wage earners who depend on cross border commerce. Losses running into billions, spoiled goods, and stalled shipments illustrate the human cost of prolonged closure. The article also warns that continued disruption threatens Pakistan's broader regional trade ambitions, especially access to Central Asian markets. While placing primary responsibility on Kabul to provide firm security guarantees and rein in groups such as the TTP, it encourages Pakistan to consider partial reopening under strict security protocols so that economic activity can slowly resume without compromising safety.

CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Focus on border security and regional relations
- ❖ International Relations: Pakistan Afghanistan dynamics
- ❖ Current Affairs: terrorism and trade disruptions
- ❖ Security Studies: Examining counterterrorism strategies
- ❖ Economics: Cross border commerce and regional markets

Notes for Beginners:

Border trade is vital for people in KP who rely on daily commerce with Afghanistan. When crossings shut, truck drivers lose income and shopkeepers cannot sell goods. After the border was sealed, terrorist attacks reportedly fell, showing improved security. At the same time, traders reported losses worth billions of rupees and food items spoiled at ports. Pakistan also risks losing access to Central Asian markets if closures continue. Partial reopening with strict checks could allow business while keeping militants out.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ The border has remained closed since clashes in October last year, making it the longest closure in recent years
- ❖ Terrorist attacks reportedly declined after the border was sealed
- ❖ 2025 was described as the bloodiest year in a decade for Pakistan
- ❖ KP's business community reported losses running into billions of rupees
- ❖ Perishable goods were left to rot at ports, including Karachi
- ❖ Cross border trade is a major component of KP's regional economy
- ❖ Continued closure risks limiting Pakistan's access to Central Asian markets

To sum up, The article reminds that nations cannot trade safety for profit, yet cannot starve their border regions in the name of security forever. The real key lies in Afghanistan's willingness to shut down militant sanctuaries. Until that happens, Pakistan must guard its frontiers with iron resolve while searching for smart ways to keep economic arteries alive.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Stalemate means a deadlock with no progress. Synonyms include impasse and standstill. Antonyms include breakthrough and resolution.
- ❖ Intransigence means stubborn refusal to change. Synonyms include rigidity and obstinacy. Antonyms include flexibility and compromise.
- ❖ Curtail means to reduce or limit. Synonyms include restrict and cut back. Antonyms include expand and extend.
- ❖ Vigilance means careful watchfulness. Synonyms include alertness and caution. Antonyms include negligence and carelessness.

AMERICAN 'ARMADA'

Summary:

Though Donald Trump appeared to step back from striking Iran, the steady flow of American warships and fighter jets into the region tells another story, one written in steel rather than speeches. The so called "armada" sailing toward the Gulf, coupled with regional reports of Israeli readiness and Iran's vow to retaliate with full force, paints a picture of a powder keg waiting for a spark. The author suggests that these threats may be tactical pressure meant to drag Tehran to negotiations, yet history teaches that brinkmanship often slips through the cracks of control and erupts into catastrophe.

The article further exposes the shifting justifications used by the US and its allies, who alternately claim moral concern for Iranians, fear of nuclear ambitions, or anger over Tehran's regional allies, while the deeper aim appears to be weakening a long standing geopolitical rival. Trump's self portrait as a peacemaker is sharply contrasted with policies that echo warmongering, from Venezuela to Iran. The recent military surge, the editorial argues, may

simply be Washington preparing the battlefield after earlier logistical hesitation. In this fragile moment, the writer urges rational voices, including countries linked to Trump's Board of Peace, to pull the brakes before the region slides into another ruinous conflict that no nation can afford.

Overview:

The editorial analyzes rising US military pressure on Iran despite public signals of restraint, warning that escalating deployments risk triggering a devastating regional war. It critiques Western double standards toward Iran, highlights the dangers of brinkmanship, and calls for diplomacy rooted in respect for sovereignty rather than coercion. The article ultimately frames peace not as a slogan but as a choice that demands restraint from global powers.

NOTES:

The US employs military buildup as a coercive diplomatic tool in Middle Eastern geopolitics. Brinkmanship remains a dangerous yet recurring strategy in international conflicts. Western narratives on Iran frequently shift between humanitarian concerns, nuclear fears, and regional influence. Regime change appears as an underlying strategic objective. Military posturing can quickly escalate into full scale war. Middle Eastern stability remains highly sensitive to great power interventions. Diplomatic engagement is presented as the only sustainable path to conflict resolution.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- ❖ International Relations: Conflict and cooperation, coercive diplomacy, balance of power, regional security dynamics
- ❖ Current Affairs: US Iran tensions, Gulf militarisation, Middle East instability
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's diplomatic positioning within peace initiatives and regional stability efforts
- ❖ Foreign Policy and Strategic Studies: Power projection, military deterrence, regime change strategies

Notes for Beginners:

This article explains how powerful countries sometimes use military presence as pressure instead of direct talks. The US sending warships to the Gulf works like a visible warning, similar to placing police outside a house to force surrender without entering. Iran's promise of strong retaliation shows how deterrence operates, where each side tries to scare the other into backing down. The mention of nuclear concerns and regional allies reflects how security fears often justify confrontational policies. Historically, such buildups have triggered wars, such as the Gulf conflicts of the past decades. The deployment of additional fighter jets and naval fleets highlights how quickly political tension can turn into armed confrontation.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ An American naval "armada" has been sent toward the Gulf region
- ❖ Additional US fighter jets were deployed to regional bases
- ❖ Iran warned any attack would be treated as an all out war
- ❖ Reports suggest Israel is seeking an opportunity to strike Iran
- ❖ The US previously halted a planned strike in mid January

To wrap up, The article reminds that peace cannot survive on threats alone. Power posturing may win headlines, but it risks igniting fires that diplomacy could extinguish. In a region already scarred by endless wars, restraint stands as the last line between stability and devastation.

SOES: AN ECLECTIC APPROACH

Author: Ishrat Husain

Summary:

The article highlights painful history to show how emotionally charged decisions often backfire, as seen in the Pakistan Steel Mills case, where judicial reversal neither revived the firm nor protected public wealth but instead pushed it into collapse. Rather than clinging to ideological camps of full state control or wholesale privatisation, the piece argues for a rational middle path rooted in evidence. With eighty five commercial SOEs spread across key sectors and more than half currently profitable, the author stresses that ownership alone does not define success or failure. Each enterprise, he insists, must be judged on its purpose, market role, and financial health. The article then lays out a practical framework built on public policy relevance, market failure, and financial viability. SOEs tied to food security, infrastructure, defence, or strategic national interests may warrant state control, though restructuring should follow where performance lags. Where private markets can function efficiently, government presence loses justification. The writer reinforces this logic through Pakistan's banking and telecom transformations, where privatisation strengthened performance, boosted tax revenues, and stabilised financial indicators. Applying the same yardstick to PIA leads to a blunt verdict: the airline drained public resources for decades despite repeated reforms, while private competitors thrived in a competitive market. According to the Author, Pakistan must abandon ideological reflexes and adopt an eclectic, data driven strategy that serves economic welfare rather than political slogans.

Overview:

The article analyzes simplistic views on privatisation and state ownership, proposing a structured approach for evaluating SOEs based on public policy goals, market efficiency, and financial sustainability. Through historical lessons and sectoral success stories, it demonstrates that performance depends on governance and competition rather than ownership alone, using PIA as a case where privatisation was economically unavoidable.

NOTES:

SOE reform should rely on empirical assessment rather than ideological positions. Public policy relevance determines whether state ownership remains justified. Market failure provides a rationale for government intervention. Financial viability requires sustained profitability and healthy balance sheets. Restructuring must precede divestment where possible. Privatisation success in banking and telecom sectors shows the role of competition and regulation. PIA illustrates how chronic losses justify private sector transfer.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Public sector reforms, privatisation policy, economic governance
- ❖ Economics: Market failure, public versus private ownership, financial sustainability
- ❖ Current Affairs: PIA privatisation, SOE restructuring, fiscal burden of public enterprises
- ❖ Public Administration: Institutional performance, regulatory frameworks, state enterprise management

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that governments should run businesses only when private companies cannot serve the public effectively. For instance, highways or defence industries often stay under state control due to national importance. In contrast, banking and telecom services improved after privatisation because competition pushed efficiency. Pakistan's nationalised banks once held eighty percent of assets but now hold around twenty percent, showing how markets transformed the sector. PIA lost about Rs850 billion over time despite repeated reforms, which

demonstrates how public funds can vanish without structural change. These examples show that smart regulation and competition matter more than who owns an enterprise.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Pakistan has 85 commercial state owned enterprises
- ❖ 51 SOEs are currently profitable
- ❖ Government once injected Rs46 billion into lossmaking banks
- ❖ Nationalised banks' asset share fell from 80 percent to about 20 percent
- ❖ Major private banks paid Rs245 billion in taxes in 2024
- ❖ Cumulative bank tax contributions exceeded Rs1.6 trillion since 2004
- ❖ Non performing loans dropped from 25 percent to below 7 percent
- ❖ PIA accumulated losses of approximately Rs850 billion

To sum up, The article reminds that good policy grows from evidence, not slogans. By weighing public interest, market capacity, and financial reality, it provides a roadmap for SOE reform that can rescue public finances and restore efficiency. In essence, it urges Pakistan to govern with a calculator rather than a megaphone.

DEMOCRACY & CAPITALISM'S SHADOW

Author: Farid Panjwani

Summary:

The article reflects the uneasy connection between democracy and capitalism, a relationship often praised as natural but riddled with contradictions. Citing the World Inequality Report 2026, the writer opens with a stark truth, where a tiny global elite commands most of the world's wealth while half of humanity clings to crumbs. For a time, democracy and capitalism walk hand in hand, as political freedoms fuel markets and economic growth nourishes social mobility. Even Marx admitted capitalism's power to unleash massive productive energy, which once expanded the middle class and strengthened democratic aspirations. The author suggests that this harmony is short lived. Democracy rests on political equality, while capitalism thrives on economic disparity. As wealth accumulates in fewer hands, growth marches on but fairness fades, and cracks begin to spread across the democratic structure.

The article shows how economic power mutates into social and political dominance. Wealth breeds exclusive networks, what Bourdieu termed social capital, which soon transforms into political leverage through lobbying, campaign financing, and elite access to lawmakers. The market gradually bends the state to its will, sidelining democratic ideals in favour of profit. Piketty's insight that capital grows faster than labour explains why inequality deepens without merit. Despite this reality, democracy fails to correct capitalism's excesses because dominant media narratives deflect public anger away from economic structures. Corporate owned platforms glorify billionaires as self made heroes, blame the poor for systemic failures, and redirect frustration toward migrants or minorities. This misdirected rage erodes trust in democracy itself, as shown by declining democratic faith among financially insecure citizens. The author concludes that democracy can survive only if it restrains capitalism through social protections, public investment, and political education that exposes the true roots of inequality.

Overview:

The article challenges the assumption that democracy and capitalism naturally reinforce each other, showing how unchecked wealth concentration undermines political equality. It explains how economic power converts into

political control, how media narratives shield capitalism from criticism, and why popular anger is diverted toward false targets. The writer ultimately calls for structural reforms and civic education to preserve democratic integrity.

NOTES:

Democracy and capitalism initially reinforce growth and freedom but later clash due to inequality. Capital accumulation leads to wealth concentration and social stratification. Economic power evolves into political influence through lobbying and elite networks. Media ownership shapes public narratives in favour of capitalist interests. Misdirected public anger weakens democratic accountability. Piketty's theory highlights faster growth of capital over labour income. Strong institutions and social contracts are essential to restrain market excesses.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- ❖ Political Science: Democracy, power structures, political inequality
- ❖ Sociology: Social stratification, social capital, elite networks
- ❖ Economics: Income inequality, capitalism, distribution of wealth
- ❖ Current Affairs: Global inequality trends, democratic decline

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows how wealth inequality can weaken democracy over time. For example, when rich business groups fund political campaigns, leaders may protect corporate interests instead of public welfare. The report cited reveals that the top ten percent owns about seventy five percent of global wealth, while half the world shares only two percent. This imbalance explains why ordinary workers struggle despite economic growth. Media often praises billionaires as success icons, like tech tycoons, while ignoring inherited wealth or tax advantages. Meanwhile, social anger gets redirected toward migrants or minority groups instead of economic systems. These patterns demonstrate how inequality becomes self reinforcing.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Top 10 percent of people own about 75 percent of global wealth
- ❖ Bottom 50 percent hold only 2 percent of global wealth
- ❖ Return on capital grows faster than income from labour
- ❖ Only 52 percent of financially insecure Americans view democracy as the best system

In a nutshell, according to the Author, the democracy cannot flourish under unchecked capitalism. When wealth rules the marketplace, it soon governs politics as well. To protect political equality, societies must rein in economic excess, strengthen public institutions, and educate citizens against misleading narratives. Without such guardrails, democracy risks becoming a hollow shell beneath a mountain of gold.

Difficult Words with Meaning:

- ❖ Conflation
- ❖ Meaning: Mistaken combination of two ideas as one
- ❖ Synonyms: Fusion, blending
- ❖ Antonyms: Separation, distinction
- ❖ Endemic
- ❖ Meaning: Deeply rooted and widespread
- ❖ Synonyms: Chronic, entrenched
- ❖ Antonyms: Occasional, rare
- ❖ Alienation
- ❖ Meaning: Feeling of powerlessness or isolation
- ❖ Synonyms: Estrangement, detachment

WHAT THE MOUNTAINS CAN TEACH US

Author: Afzal Ali Shigri

Summary:

The article highlights Pakistan's forgotten environmental wisdom, sparked by a rare parliamentary debate over the cutting of paper mulberry trees in Islamabad. The writer welcomes this concern yet urges the nation to widen its gaze toward the deeper ecological decay spreading across the country. Pakistan, now standing at the frontline of climate disruption, faces shrinking glaciers, harsher floods, water shortages, and unstable weather in the Indus basin. While governments respond through reports and foreign funded projects, disasters keep knocking harder each year. The author reminds us that the land now called Pakistan once sustained a fully functioning climate civilisation, particularly in Gilgit Baltistan, where communities survived for centuries in extreme conditions through an indigenous environmental philosophy rooted in the Bön belief system. Nature was treated as a living moral partner, not a resource to be exploited, and ecological balance was guarded through communal responsibility. The article then shows how this system operated through sacred watersheds, regulated forests, seasonal grazing, and rituals that aligned human life with natural cycles. Festivals such as May Fang and Nauroz acted as ecological regulators that structured agriculture, water use, and survival planning. When Buddhism and later Islam arrived, they strengthened rather than erased this conservation ethic, framing environmental care as a moral and spiritual duty. Stability endured until modern development shattered community control through unchecked construction, mining, dams, and centralised governance that stripped nature of its sacred value. The result has been faster glacier melt, violent floods, drying springs, food insecurity, and rising resource conflicts. The writer argues that Pakistan now searches for climate solutions abroad while ignoring a proven local model. He calls for climate governance rooted in culture, seasonal management, community institutions, and ethical responsibility, warning that imported policies without local wisdom will only deepen ecological ruin.

Overview:

The article highlights how ancient environmental practices in Gilgit Baltistan created long term ecological balance through cultural values and community governance. It contrasts this with modern development that dismantled these systems and intensified climate disasters. The writer advocates a return to locally grounded, morally driven climate policies to restore resilience across Pakistan.

NOTES:

The article underlines that Pakistan's present climate turmoil is not merely a technical failure but a cultural rupture from its own ecological heritage, particularly in Gilgit Baltistan where communities sustained environmental balance for centuries through collective norms and moral responsibility toward nature. It highlights how indigenous systems treated mountains, glaciers, forests, and rivers as living partners within a shared moral world, protected through sacred zones, regulated resource use, and seasonal controls embedded in festivals such as May Fang and Nauroz that governed agriculture, grazing, water management, and survival planning. The arrival of Buddhism and Islam reinforced this environmental discipline by linking conservation with spiritual duty, producing long term stability in a harsh climate. The breakdown began with modern development over recent decades, where unregulated construction, mining, dams, and centralised administration weakened community authority and stripped nature of its ethical meaning, turning it into exploitable material. This disruption accelerated glacier melting, intensified floods, dried springs, undermined food security, and fueled resource conflicts across the country. The writer stresses that true climate resilience cannot rest on technical reports alone but must be rooted in cultural values, seasonal ecological planning, and strong local institutions, arguing that Pakistan's neglect of its

mountain ecosystems has national consequences and that sustainable environmental governance requires restoring the moral and communal bond between people and the land.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- ❖ Environmental Science: Climate change impacts, sustainable resource management, ecological resilience
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Northern areas ecology, water security, development challenges
- ❖ Current Affairs: Climate crisis in Pakistan, floods, glacier melt, environmental degradation
- ❖ Public Policy and Governance: Local governance, community institutions, sustainable development
- ❖ Geography: Watersheds, mountain ecosystems, river systems

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that people in Gilgit Baltistan once protected nature through cultural rules and shared responsibility. For example, forests could not be cut freely and grazing followed seasonal limits. Festivals guided farming schedules and water use, much like a natural calendar. When modern roads and construction removed these controls, environmental damage increased. Today Pakistan faces severe floods and faster glacier melting, which affect water supply for millions in the Indus basin. This proves that local traditions once worked as effective climate management systems.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Mountain societies in Gilgit Baltistan sustained ecological balance for over 2,000 years
- ❖ Pakistan faces accelerating glacier retreat and worsening floods
- ❖ Seasonal festivals regulated agriculture, grazing, and water management
- ❖ Modern development over the past 60 years dismantled traditional conservation systems
- ❖ Water scarcity and food insecurity are rising nationwide

To sum up, the article reminds us that the answers to Pakistan's climate crisis are not buried in foreign policy manuals but written in the mountains of its own history. Where culture once guarded rivers and glaciers, careless development now invites disaster. If Pakistan hopes to secure its environmental future, it must blend modern science with ancestral wisdom and restore the moral bond between people and nature.

Difficult Words with Meanings:

- ❖ Degradation
 - Meaning: Decline in environmental quality
 - Synonyms: Deterioration, decay
 - Antonyms: Restoration, improvement
- ❖ Indigenous
 - Meaning: Native to a particular region
 - Synonyms: Native, original
 - Antonyms: Foreign, imported
- ❖ Resilience
 - Meaning: Ability to recover from shocks
 - Synonyms: Endurance, adaptability
 - Antonyms: Fragility, weakness

CLUELESS ON ECONOMY

Author: Dr Niaz Murtaza

Summary:

The article shows Pakistan's economic drift, where loud promises masked a governance model built more for survival than for national revival. The writer portrays 2025 as a year of authoritarian consolidation wrapped in the language of reform, where courts were weakened, political opponents silenced, and risky alliances revived, all under the banner of progress. Inflation did ease under IMF discipline, yet growth was sacrificed at the altar of austerity, leaving households trapped in lingering hardship. The regime now pins its hopes on 2026 as a year of recovery, though its capacity to deliver remains deeply flawed. Investment remains stagnant, exports show no spark, and grand economic planning has been reduced to hollow committees and diplomatic begging tours across Gulf capitals that have yielded little real capital inflow. Instead of serious industrialisation, the state flirts with speculative ventures such as crypto, mining, and defence exports, which risk derailing long term manufacturing strength.

The article then widens to examine both dominant economic paths facing Pakistan. Crony capitalism entrenches privilege without growth, while neoliberal prescriptions pushed by the IMF promise efficiency but erode equity and sustainability. Drawing on global experience, especially China's rise under strong state direction, the writer argues that development never emerges from blind market faith alone. Progress requires what he calls an intelligent economic design led by a capable state that nurtures industry, expands exports, reduces inequality, and stabilises external accounts. Pakistan, however, remains stuck in a toxic mix of pretend neoliberalism and real cronyism, producing import driven growth that drains reserves and drags the country repeatedly back to the IMF. With exports stagnant and deficits widening even at low growth rates, the regime now faces economic double jeopardy. Until democratic authority replaces hybrid control and strategic economic planning replaces improvisation, prosperity for the masses will remain a distant mirage.

Overview:

The article analyzes Pakistan's hybrid political economy, exposing how authoritarian control, IMF driven austerity, and crony capitalism have failed to generate sustainable growth. It rejects blind neoliberal reforms and advocates a state led development model focused on industrial expansion, export growth, and social equity.

NOTES:

Hybrid governance prioritises regime survival over economic progress. IMF stabilisation reduces inflation but suppresses growth. Pakistan lacks coherent export led industrial strategy. Crony capitalism distorts markets and blocks equitable development. Neoliberal deregulation alone has not produced prosperity globally. State led economic planning drove success in East Asia. Import driven growth worsens external deficits and reserve depletion. Weak exports trap Pakistan in recurring IMF dependence.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- ❖ Economics: Growth models, neoliberalism, state intervention, balance of payments
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Economic governance, IMF programmes, development challenges
- ❖ Current Affairs: Fiscal crisis, external debt, inflation control, growth slowdown
- ❖ Public Policy: Industrial policy, reform sequencing, economic planning

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why reducing inflation alone does not fix an economy. For example, IMF programmes often cut government spending, which slows business activity and job creation. Pakistan's growth in past years came

mainly from higher imports such as fuel, machinery, and consumer goods, not from selling more products abroad. When imports rise faster than exports, foreign reserves shrink, forcing the country to borrow again. China is cited as proof that strong government planning can guide industries, protect local firms early, and later compete globally. This shows that markets need direction, not abandonment.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Inflation declined after IMF measures but economic growth weakened
- ❖ External deficits continue to rise even at 2 to 3 percent growth
- ❖ Exports remain stagnant while imports increase
- ❖ Pakistan repeatedly returns to IMF due to falling foreign reserves
- ❖ China ranks low on the Economic Freedom Index yet achieved decades of rapid growth

To put it simply, without strategic planning, strong institutions, and democratic accountability, Pakistan's economy will continue to stumble from one bailout to another. Growth built on imports is a house of cards. Only a purposeful state guided by intelligent design can turn survival into stability and hardship into hope.

MULTIPOLAR SOUTH ASIA

Author: Khurram Abbas

Summary:

The article examines South Asia's slow drift away from bipolar rivalry toward a contested multipolar order. During the Cold War, the region largely revolved around two poles, with India remaining inward focused and Pakistan aligning closely with Western powers. However, over time the balance tilted sharply in Delhi's favour due to Pakistan's internal instability, a pro India shift in Dhaka, India's economic ascent, Beijing's earlier caution in regional security, and Washington's strategic bet on India as a counterweight to China. This convergence produced a more assertive India that increasingly shaped South Asian politics. Yet the author argues that the regional chessboard is once again in motion, as Pakistan seeks to reclaim strategic space, China expands its regional footprint, and Bangladesh resists Indian political influence.

The article explains that Islamabad's vision of multipolarity does not seek equal great powers but aims to dilute India's dominance by building alternative regional pillars. Pakistan promotes deeper Chinese engagement through economic, technological, and security cooperation, alongside strengthening Bangladesh's military capacity, particularly in air and naval domains. The author suggests that this would challenge India's hold over the Bay of Bengal and reduce its unilateral control of regional forums. Smaller states such as Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan could gain diplomatic flexibility through diversified partnerships. Yet the road is fraught with hazards, including intensified geopolitical rivalry, erosion of region wide cooperation, Indian pushback through diplomacy and economic leverage, and Bangladesh's internal political uncertainty combined with unresolved historical disputes. The author likens the moment to Pakistan's role in forming South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in 1985, questioning whether this new push will rebalance power or harden regional polarisation.

Overview:

The article traces South Asia's shift from bipolar rivalry to a contested multipolar structure. It highlights Pakistan's strategy to curb Indian dominance through closer alignment with China and Bangladesh, outlines the opportunities this shift offers smaller states, and warns of rising geopolitical competition that could fracture regional cooperation.

NOTES:

The article highlights how South Asia has gradually moved away from its Cold War era bipolar structure toward a more complex and competitive multipolar landscape. Which is driven by India's growing dominance in the early twenty first century and Pakistan's subsequent efforts to reclaim strategic relevance. The article explains that India's rise was facilitated by Pakistan's internal fragility, favourable political shifts in Bangladesh, expanding Indian economic power, cautious Chinese engagement in regional security, and strong Western backing of Delhi as a counterweight to Beijing. In response, Pakistan now promotes a multipolar regional order aimed at diluting India's structural supremacy rather than replacing it with another hegemon. This strategy revolves around deeper Chinese economic and security involvement in South Asia, alongside strengthening Bangladesh's political and military posture to challenge India's influence, particularly in the Bay of Bengal. The article also notes that smaller South Asian states stand to gain greater diplomatic flexibility as competing powers seek their cooperation, enabling issue based partnerships instead of rigid alignments. However, the writer warns that this shift could intensify geopolitical rivalry, weaken region wide cooperation frameworks, provoke Indian countermeasures through diplomacy and economic leverage, and face obstacles from Bangladesh's domestic instability and unresolved historical disputes with Pakistan, leaving the ultimate success of this multipolar vision uncertain.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- ❖ International Relations: Balance of power, regional security complexes, multipolar systems
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Regional diplomacy, strategic realignment, relations with neighbours
- ❖ Current Affairs: South Asian geopolitics, China's regional role, India Pakistan dynamics
- ❖ Foreign Policy: Alliance formation, power competition, sub regional cooperation

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows how regions change when power spreads among more actors. Earlier, South Asia mainly revolved around India and Pakistan. Now China's investments and military cooperation give smaller countries new choices. For example, when only one strong neighbour exists, weaker states depend on it for trade and security. When several powers compete, those states can negotiate better deals. The author notes how India's boycott of a regional forum in 2016 paralysed cooperation, proving how dominance can block collective action. A multipolar system could prevent such unilateral control but may also increase rivalry.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ South Asia functioned largely as a bipolar region during the Cold War
- ❖ India's dominance expanded in the early 21st century
- ❖ China's economic role grew through regional infrastructure initiatives
- ❖ Pakistan seeks stronger defence cooperation with Bangladesh
- ❖ India's 2016 boycott paralysed the main South Asian regional forum
- ❖ Mini lateral frameworks are increasingly replacing region wide institutions

To wrap up, the article portrays South Asia as a shifting battlefield of influence where old hierarchies face new challengers. Multipolarity promises strategic choice and reduced domination, but it also risks deeper rivalry and institutional breakdown. Whether Pakistan's new strategy becomes a balancing success or a catalyst for greater polarisation will shape the region's political destiny for decades to come.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR STATES

Author: Ahmer Bilal Soofi

Summary:

The article shows how Washington's withdrawal from sixty six international organisations went largely unnoticed amid dramatic actions such as the arrest of Venezuela's president, threats of annexing Greenland, and growing military assertiveness. The author argues that these moves strike at the heart of the post 1945 world order built around the prohibition of war under the United Nations Charter. The renaming of the US Department of Defence to the Department of War is presented as a symbolic yet deliberate rejection of the legal restraint that once governed the use of force. The author notes that Russia and China had anticipated this trajectory years earlier through a joint stance against unilateralism, recognising that American policy was drifting away from multilateral discipline toward raw power politics.

The article further explains how America's exit from global forums does not free it from international rules but instead surrenders leadership in shaping them. When Washington walks away, agenda setting power shifts to others, particularly emerging states and coordinated blocs from the developing world. Institutions of global governance are shown as living spaces where norms evolve into binding law, and absence from these arenas creates a strategic vacuum quickly filled by rival visions of world order. The author cites historical examples where developing states successfully advanced major legal frameworks despite US resistance, proving that multilateral progress does not depend on American approval. He concludes that while the Trump administration may underestimate the long term damage of withdrawal, the global rejection of aggression actually strengthens the norm of non intervention. The resistance seen across continents reflects a civilisational consensus forged after centuries of conflict, one that now stands threatened yet more visibly defended than ever before.

Overview:

The article examines America's retreat from international institutions and its renewed embrace of unilateral force, arguing that such actions undermine global legal norms while unintentionally empowering developing states and rival powers within multilateral systems. It frames this moment as both a danger to world order and an opportunity for emerging blocs to shape international governance.

NOTES:

US withdrawal weakens its influence in shaping global norms rather than escaping them. International institutions function as norm building platforms, not symbolic forums. Unilateralism challenges the post World War II legal order. Strategic vacuums invite rival powers and developing states to expand influence. Multilateral treaties have succeeded historically despite US opposition. Global resistance to aggression reinforces the norm of non intervention. Long term credibility loss follows institutional disengagement.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- ❖ International Relations: Unilateralism versus multilateralism, global power shifts, norm building
- ❖ Current Affairs: US foreign policy direction, global governance challenges

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that global rules are shaped inside international organisations. When a powerful country leaves these forums, others gain greater influence. For example, developing nations once created ocean laws that control deep sea minerals even though the US opposed them. Another case is the International Criminal Court, which continues to operate and prosecute crimes despite American resistance. This shows that international systems

move forward when many countries cooperate. The writer also highlights that the US is withdrawing from sixty six bodies, which creates space for China, Russia, and developing blocs to lead future rules.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ The United States withdrew from 66 international organisations
- ❖ The norm against war has existed since the 1945 UN Charter
- ❖ Developing states established major legal frameworks despite US opposition
- ❖ The International Criminal Court has issued around 60 arrest warrants
- ❖ The ICC has delivered 11 convictions with multiple investigations ongoing

To sum up, the article presents this moment as a critical juncture in global history. America's retreat from multilateralism weakens its leadership but strengthens collective resistance to unilateral power. While the world order faces strain, new actors now hold the pen that writes future rules.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

Unilateralism

- ❖ Meaning: Acting alone without collective agreement
- ❖ Synonyms: One sided action, solo policy
- ❖ Antonyms: Multilateralism, cooperation

Annexation

- ❖ Meaning: Forcible acquisition of territory
- ❖ Synonyms: Seizure, absorption
- ❖ Antonyms: Independence, release

POLICE & EWRM

Author: Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Summary:

The article highlights the shifting of Pakistan's counter-extremism approach from reaction to prevention through a strong early warning and response mechanism rooted in community trust. The writer explains that violent extremism rarely erupts overnight; it grows slowly through behavioural changes, radical narratives, and recruitment networks that often leave visible clues. Police stand at the frontline of detection, yet without public confidence their ability to intervene early remains crippled. EWRM, the author stresses, depends on proactive policing, risk analysis, and collaboration with communities, religious leaders, youth groups, and civil society. Trust building through transparency, cultural sensitivity, and rights-based policing emerges as the foundation of any successful prevention strategy rather than reliance on force alone.

The article then expands the prevention net to universities, families, and local institutions, showing how campuses can serve both as centres of awareness and potential spaces for radical recruitment. Tragic incidents such as the lynching of Mashal Khan and the suicide bombing at Karachi University illustrate what happens when early warning systems fail. The author also highlights the vulnerability of millions of out-of-school children and the communication gaps between police, social services, and health institutions. Legal frameworks such as the public liaison councils under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police offer promising models, yet limited training, low female representation, and weak coordination dilute their impact. The central message is extremism can be curbed only when communities, parents, teachers, and law enforcement act as partners rather than strangers.

Overview:

The article argues that early detection of radicalisation through community trust, institutional coordination, and preventive policing is essential to counter violent extremism. It presents EWRM as a people-centred security model that prioritises collaboration, awareness, and reform over reactive force.

NOTES:

The article emphasises that violent extremism is a gradual process that can be detected and disrupted through an effective early warning and response mechanism grounded in public trust. Police are positioned as the first line of detection, but their success depends on credibility, proactive engagement, and cooperation with communities, religious leaders, youth groups, and civil society organisations. The writer highlights that radicalisation leaves behavioural signals and social patterns that can be identified through risk analysis rather than force alone. Educational institutions are shown as critical spaces where early signs can either be ignored or addressed through awareness, reporting pathways, and preventive education. Tragic incidents at universities underline the cost of delayed intervention. The article also highlights the millions of out-of-school children who remain vulnerable to crime and extremist recruitment, stressing the need for collaboration among parents, local governments, police, and welfare services. Existing structures such as public liaison councils demonstrate the potential of community-police partnerships, yet their effectiveness is weakened by limited training, poor coordination, and the low presence of female officers.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- Public Administration: Institutional coordination, governance mechanisms
- Pakistan Affairs: Extremism challenges, policing reforms
- Sociology: Community trust, social vulnerability
- Current Affairs: PVE strategies, domestic security policies

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that violence can be prevented when warning signs are noticed early. For example, sudden isolation, aggressive speech, or obsession with extremist content may signal risk. Teachers and parents who observe such changes can alert authorities before harm occurs. The author notes that Pakistan has over 25 million out-of-school children, many vulnerable to crime and recruitment, which makes community engagement crucial. Liaison councils in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa already connect citizens with police to share concerns, proving prevention can work when trust exists.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan has about 25.3 million out-of-school children
- Over 900 public liaison councils operate in KP
- More than 10,000 community members assist policing efforts
- Female officers represent only about 3.2 per cent of police force
- Campus attacks exposed gaps in early warning systems

To sum up, The article reminds us that extremism feeds on silence, mistrust, and institutional weakness. When communities speak, police listen, and institutions cooperate, violence loses its breeding ground. True security, the writer suggests, grows not from guns alone but from trust, awareness, and shared responsibility.

Arab News Pakistan –

PAKISTAN AND SAUDI ARABIA'S STRATEGIC STABILITY IN 2026

Author: Nasim Zehra

Summary:

The article explores that how Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are transforming a long standing military relationship into a broad strategic partnership shaped by economics, security, and regional stability. The writer explains that while defence cooperation between the two states has existed for decades through training, troop deployments, and advisory roles, the period after 2024 marked a decisive deepening of this bond through a formal mutual defence agreement and intensified intelligence sharing and joint exercises. This new closeness is not driven by sentiment but by shared strategic needs in a region facing rising instability. Economic transformation acts as the new glue, with Riyadh's Vision 2030 pushing digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence, and fintech, while Pakistan advances its own digital frameworks through regulatory reforms and a rapidly growing IT export sector. Both sides now seek faster digital trade systems, regulatory cooperation, and technology linkages that bind their economic futures.

The article then reveals how mining and rare earth development has emerged as another pillar of convergence. Pakistan's reserves at Reko Diq and Saindak, alongside potential lithium and rare earth deposits, align with Saudi Arabia's massive untapped mineral wealth and its ambition to become a global mining hub. This cooperation is shaped by a shared reality, where China dominates rare earth processing while the United States seeks alternative supply chains, pushing both Islamabad and Riyadh toward a dual engagement strategy with East and West. Beyond economics, both states now champion regional stability, reject armed proxies, support Palestinian statehood before any normalization, and pursue strategic autonomy without rigid alliance politics. The partnership is further expanding into a wider security network with Türkiye to counter terrorism and regional destabilization. The writer concludes that by 2026, this layered alliance represents an attempt to create stability in a region otherwise defined by volatility.

Overview:

The article examines the evolution of Pakistan Saudi relations into a multidimensional strategic partnership. It highlights cooperation in defence, digital economies, mineral diplomacy, regional stability, and great power balancing, presenting the convergence as a stabilizing force in an increasingly fractured geopolitical landscape.

NOTES:

Pakistan Saudi ties have shifted from traditional military cooperation to institutionalized strategic partnership. Economic transformation drives modern alliances alongside security interests. Digital infrastructure and fintech cooperation shape future bilateral trade. Rare earth and mining diplomacy is emerging as a new geopolitical tool. Both states pursue strategic autonomy while engaging multiple global powers. Regional stability and rejection of proxy conflicts guide their shared doctrine. Security networks beyond formal alliances are gaining importance in West and South Asia.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects:

- International Relations: Strategic partnerships, balance of power, regional security cooperation
- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy realignment, economic diplomacy, defence cooperation
- Current Affairs: Middle East security, mineral geopolitics, digital economies

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows how modern alliances go beyond soldiers and weapons. For example, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia now cooperate in digital finance and software industries, similar to how countries link technology firms to boost trade. Pakistan's IT exports reached about 2.6 billion dollars, proving its growing digital economy. On minerals, both countries focus on copper, gold, and rare earth elements used in electric vehicles and advanced defence systems. Saudi Arabia estimates its untapped mineral wealth at over 1.3 trillion dollars. This mirrors how oil shaped alliances in the past, while minerals and technology shape today's geopolitics.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan IT exports crossed roughly 2.6 billion dollars
- Saudi Arabia estimates mineral wealth above 1.3 trillion dollars
- Defence cooperation intensified sharply during 2025
- Rare earth and lithium exploration expanded in Pakistan
- Digital currency and fintech pilot projects are underway

To sum up, The article shows Pakistan and Saudi Arabia as architects of a new regional equilibrium rather than passive players in global power struggles. Their partnership blends security with technology, minerals with diplomacy, and autonomy with cooperation. In an era of shifting alliances, this convergence stands as an effort to replace chaos with calculated stability.

Difficult Words with Meanings:

- Convergence
 - Meaning: Gradual alignment of interests or policies
 - Synonyms: Alignment, unification
 - Antonyms: Divergence, separation
- Recalibrating
 - Meaning: Adjusting strategy or direction
 - Synonyms: Readjusting, modifying
 - Antonyms: Fixing, maintaining
- Institutionalised
 - Meaning: Formally established within systems
 - Synonyms: Structured, formalised
 - Antonyms: Informal, ad hoc

THE YEAR OF PAKISTAN'S GEOECONOMIC POWER LITMUS TEST

Author: Adnan Rehmat

Summary:

The article reflects how 2025 pulled Pakistan back into the global spotlight after years of strategic drift, largely through a security breakthrough that reshaped its international image. A brief but decisive military clash with India in May altered long standing perceptions, with repeated public acknowledgements by United States leadership affirming Pakistan's tactical edge in the first formal air combat between the two nuclear rivals in half a century. By year's close, Islamabad had strengthened defence diplomacy, expanded arms exports across Asia, Africa, and Eurasia, and signed a strategic mutual defence pact with Saudi Arabia. Its presence also grew in Middle Eastern post conflict diplomacy and within regional blocs such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Economic

Cooperation Organization, and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, presenting Pakistan once again as a consequential geopolitical actor.

After that, the article shifts to 2026 as a decisive test, where Islamabad seeks to convert military credibility into economic strength and diplomatic leverage. Governance reforms now focus on digital transformation, energy security, climate policy, taxation, industrial growth, and exports, supported by unprecedented coordination between civilian leadership and the security establishment. Pakistan is also recalibrating its foreign policy through a delicate balance between China and the United States, institutionalising engagement with Beijing through revived strategic dialogues while launching new economic initiatives with Washington in crypto and rare minerals. Yet the author argues that the true measure of Pakistan's geoeconomic rise lies in managing relations with India. Recent political shifts in Bangladesh and symbolic diplomatic gestures offer a narrow opening for regional reconciliation through soft power rather than force. Success on this front, the writer concludes, would elevate Pakistan from a security state into a geoeconomic power with lasting influence.

Overview:

The article charts Pakistan's resurgence in 2025 through military credibility and expanding strategic partnerships, then frames 2026 as a pivotal year to translate geopolitical relevance into economic power. It highlights institutional reforms, balanced great power diplomacy, and regional reconciliation as key pillars of this transition.

NOTES:

Pakistan's military resurgence reshaped its global standing in 2025. Defence diplomacy expanded across multiple regions. Strategic alliances now complement security influence. Geoeconomics has emerged as a core foreign policy objective. Governance reforms target digitalisation, industry, and exports. Balanced engagement with China and the United States reflects hedging strategy. Regional diplomacy with India remains the critical test of sustainable influence.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics and subjects:

- International Relations: Geopolitics to geoeconomics shift, balance of power, middle power diplomacy
- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy evolution, civil military coordination, economic reforms
- Current Affairs: South Asian security dynamics, great power competition, regional diplomacy
- Strategic Studies: Defence exports, security credibility, hybrid governance models

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how military success can reshape a country's global influence. Pakistan's 2025 air conflict boosted its defence reputation, which helped secure new arms deals and alliances. For instance, defence exports expanded to countries across Asia and Africa, showing how security credibility attracts economic opportunity. Pakistan is now investing in digital reforms, minerals, and industrial growth to strengthen trade. At the same time, it balances ties with both China and the United States rather than choosing one side much like some European states engage both powers for economic benefit. The challenge ahead lies in improving relations with India, since regional stability directly affects investment and growth.

Facts and Figures:

- First formal air combat between India and Pakistan in nearly 50 years occurred in 2025
- Pakistan expanded defence exports to multiple countries across three continents
- Strategic mutual defence pact signed with Saudi Arabi
- Governance reforms launched in digital economy, energy, and exports
- Strategic dialogues revived with China alongside new US economic initiatives

To sum up, The article shows 2026 as Pakistan's moment of truth. Military strength has reopened global doors, but only economic transformation and diplomatic maturity can keep them open. If Islamabad converts power into prosperity and rivalry into regional cooperation, it may finally step onto the world stage not as a security actor, but as a geoeconomic force with enduring relevance.

CSS PLATFORM

THE CASE FOR GEO-ENVIRONMENT IN PEACE STRATEGY

Author: Dr Khalid Mahmood Shafi

Summary:

The article argues that the world has entered a dangerous phase where armed conflict and climate breakdown are feeding each other, pushing humanity toward a cliff edge. As 2026 begins, wars from Ukraine to Gaza and tensions in South Asia show that climate action cannot survive in a permanently militarised world. Despite lofty sustainability pledges, governments divert resources toward weapons, reconstruction, and security postures, while environmental damage mounts quietly in the background. The UN secretary general's warning about "climate hell" no longer sounds abstract; it describes a reality where conflict accelerates emissions, destroys ecosystems, and erodes global cooperation. The environment has become the unseen casualty of modern warfare, with consequences that will outlive ceasefires and peace accords.

The article shows how this pattern repeats across regions. In Ukraine, years of fighting have unleashed massive carbon emissions and caused environmental damage worth billions, while Europe shifts toward long term militarisation. In Gaza, bombardment has shattered water systems, poisoned land and consumed a carbon budget that fragile states can scarcely afford. In South Asia, rivalry between India and Pakistan threatens shared water systems and glaciers, even as climate shocks intensify. It shows that peace and climate resilience are inseparable. Without rethinking security itself, every new war will deepen environmental collapse, making lasting peace impossible.

Overview:

The article contends that modern conflicts are also environmental emergencies. It introduces the idea of geo environment as a missing pillar of security strategy, alongside geopolitics and geo economics. By linking warfare, emissions, ecological destruction and resource diversion, it argues that climate resilience must be treated as a core element of peace and security policy.

NOTES:

The article highlights the linkage between conflict and climate change. It shows how wars increase emissions and degrade ecosystems. It introduces geo environment as a new security framework. It explains how militarisation diverts funds from adaptation and resilience. It uses Ukraine, Gaza, and South Asia as case studies. It stresses water security, glacier melt, and shared geography and proposes environmental cooperation as a peacebuilding tool.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: Climate security, conflict studies, peacebuilding
- ❖ Current Affairs: Ukraine war, Gaza crisis, South Asian tensions, climate stress.
- ❖ Environmental Science: Climate change, emissions, environmental degradation
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Indus Waters Treaty, Siachen glacier, regional cooperation.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that wars damage nature as much as people. For example, fighting in Ukraine released tens of millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide, while destruction in Gaza polluted land and water. In South Asia, troops stationed on glaciers speed up melting, which worsens floods and water shortages. If countries fight over land and rivers, climate disasters grow stronger for everyone.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Around 77 million tonnes of carbon dioxide were emitted in Ukraine within 18 months of war
- ❖ Environmental damage in Ukraine exceeds €56 billion
- ❖ EU states aim to raise defence spending toward 5 percent of GDP by 2035
- ❖ Military escalation between India and Pakistan in May 2025 strained water agreements
- ❖ Gaza's reconstruction will add millions of tonnes of emissions

To wrap up, The article suggests that peace cannot exist on a burning planet. Wars today do not end when guns fall silent; their ecological scars last for decades. By placing geo environment at the heart of security thinking, states can shift from zero sum rivalry toward shared survival. Protecting borders means little if the Earth itself becomes unlivable. The real measure of security will be whether future generations inherit stability or ashes.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Militarisation: expansion of military influence; synonym armament; antonym demilitarisation
- ❖ Collateral: unintended secondary damage; synonym byproduct; antonym intention
- ❖ Resilience: capacity to recover from shocks; synonym durability; antonym fragility
- ❖ Hegemonic: dominating others; synonym overpowering; antonym cooperative
- ❖ Weaponised: used as a tool of coercion; synonym exploited; antonym neutralised
- ❖ Polycrisis: overlapping crises; synonym convergence; antonym isolation
- ❖ Aggravated: made worse; synonym intensified; antonym eased
- ❖ Precedent: earlier example guiding action; synonym benchmark; antonym anomaly

TRUMP'S UN!

Summary:

The article reflects Pakistan's calculated entry into Donald Trump's ambitious Gaza reconstruction and demilitarisation initiative, framed under the newly formed "Board of Peace." The article presents Islamabad as one of eight Muslim countries that have chosen to align with Washington's proposal, viewing it as a diplomatic gateway to end Gaza's prolonged devastation under the spirit of UN Security Council Resolution 2803. Trump's sweeping twenty point framework, backed by invitations to over sixty nations, is portrayed as both a bold attempt at conflict resolution and a personal power project. Pakistan's participation emerges as a continuation of its proactive foreign policy, aiming to push Palestinian statehood forward while positioning itself as a bridge builder within the Muslim world.

However, the writer peels back the celebratory surface to reveal rising global unease. European allies, particularly France and several NATO members, fear that Trump's initiative sidelines the United Nations and concentrates global authority in a privately steered body with permanent leadership. The editorial warns that this divergence could fracture international politics into rival camps, with Britain uneasy over Russia's involvement and China floating alternative peace frameworks. Financial pressure further complicates the picture, as Trump's demand of one billion dollars from each participating state threatens to strain fragile economies like Pakistan's. What appears as a peace drive thus risks mutating into a geopolitical tug of war with heavy diplomatic and economic costs.

Overview:

The article examines Pakistan's decision to join Trump's Gaza-focused Board of Peace, highlighting its strategic motivations, diplomatic ambitions, and the international backlash surrounding the initiative. It underscores the growing rift between the US-led bloc and European powers, the challenge to the UN's traditional authority, and

the financial burdens attached to participation. The article ultimately frames the initiative as a double edged sword, promising conflict resolution while igniting fresh global divisions.

NOTES:

The editorial highlights Pakistan's strategic decision to join Donald Trump's Gaza reconstruction and demilitarisation plan under the newly created Board of Peace, presenting it as a diplomatic effort aligned with UN Security Council Resolution 2803 and the broader goal of Palestinian statehood. Islamabad views the initiative as both a peace mechanism and an avenue to strengthen its global standing, particularly within the Muslim world, where it has worked to foster consensus on handling the Palestine Israel conflict. Trump's leadership of a twenty point agenda and the inclusion of more than sixty potential member states signal an attempt to reshape conflict management beyond traditional UN frameworks. Yet the plan has triggered serious resistance from European allies who fear erosion of the rules-based international order and concentration of executive authority in a permanent body chaired by Trump. The growing rift risks dividing global politics into rival camps involving the US, Europe, Russia, and China, while the financial requirement of one billion dollars per member threatens to burden economically fragile states like Pakistan, potentially undermining participation and long-term effectiveness.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects:

- ❖ International Relations: Conflict resolution mechanisms, power politics, alliance formation, role of major powers in the Middle East, emerging global blocs
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's diplomatic strategy, engagement with Muslim world, stance on Palestine, evolving foreign policy priorities
- ❖ Current Affairs: Gaza crisis developments, US foreign initiatives, transatlantic disagreements, shifting global order
- ❖ Foreign Policy of Pakistan: Multilateral diplomacy, strategic outreach, balancing global powers, peace mediation efforts

Notes for Beginners:

This article shows how countries often join international plans to gain influence and support peace efforts. Pakistan joined the Gaza initiative to help Palestinians and strengthen its diplomatic standing. For example, just as nations join climate agreements to shape environmental policy, Pakistan joined this board to shape Middle East peace efforts. The United Nations usually handles global conflicts, yet this new body challenges its role, similar to how alternative trade blocs sometimes bypass the World Trade Organization. Over sixty countries have been invited, which reflects how large coalitions are formed to give legitimacy to global projects. The one billion dollar contribution demand highlights how financial commitments can limit participation, especially for developing economies.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Eight Muslim countries initially joined Trump's Gaza initiative alongside Pakistan
- ❖ Trump proposed a twenty point agenda for Gaza's reconstruction and demilitarisation
- ❖ More than sixty countries were invited to become primary members of the Board of Peace
- ❖ The initiative aligns with UN Security Council Resolution 2803
- ❖ Each participating country is expected to contribute one billion dollars
- ❖ European resistance includes France and several NATO member states
- ❖ The Board is proposed as a permanent global entity with executive powers

To wrap up, Pakistan's entry into Trump's Gaza plan reflects ambition tempered by economic and political risk. What promises stability could sow fresh discord among global powers. The article ultimately reminds that in international politics, even olive branches may carry hidden thorns.

WHY PAKISTAN JOINED TRUMP'S BOARD OF PEACE

Author: Kamran Yousaf

Summary:

The article explains why Pakistan chose engagement over isolation by joining the Board of Peace announced by Donald Trump during the World Economic Forum in Davos. The writer shows how Islamabad's decision emerged in a tense diplomatic climate where major European powers stayed away, China remained undecided, and Russia adopted a cautious posture. Inside Pakistan, the move sparked sharp political debate, with critics fearing that the initiative could quietly serve Israeli interests, weaken the Palestinian cause, and bypass the authority of the United Nations. The absence of any direct reference to Gaza in the Board's charter intensified suspicion, as its vague language seemed open to manipulation under the banner of peace building and governance restoration.

The article then shifts from fear to legal reality by showing the important clause that protects member states from forced participation in any mission without consent. The author argues that this provision gives Pakistan diplomatic breathing space to safeguard its red lines, especially on any coercive action against Palestinian resistance groups. The decision is framed not as ideological surrender but as pragmatic statecraft rooted in a hard truth of global politics: exclusion often leads to marginalisation. By staying at the table, Pakistan preserves influence, shields itself from pressure, and maintains its principled stance on Palestine while navigating a volatile international order where absence can prove costlier than cautious engagement.

Overview:

The article explains Pakistan's entry into Trump's Board of Peace as a strategic choice to remain relevant and protected in global diplomacy. It highlights public concerns over Gaza and UN bypassing, clarifies the charter's legal safeguards, and presents participation as calculated engagement rather than policy reversal.

NOTES:

- Pakistan uses pragmatic diplomacy to preserve influence in shifting global structures.
- Multilateral initiatives can carry hidden power politics beneath neutral language.
- Legal clauses within charters shape state autonomy in international missions.
- Strategic engagement often replaces moral isolation in real world diplomacy.
- Global forums increasingly compete with traditional UN mechanisms.
- Middle powers manage pressure through participation rather than withdrawal.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: Power politics, multilateral diplomacy, institutional bypassing
- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy decision making, Middle East positioning
- Current Affairs: Gaza developments, US led global initiatives
- International Law: State consent, sovereignty in peace missions
- Foreign Policy Analysis: Pragmatism versus ideology in diplomacy

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows how countries sometimes join controversial groups to protect their interests. For example, Pakistan feared that staying out could allow decisions about Gaza to occur without its voice. Just like a student joins a meeting to defend his position instead of skipping it, Pakistan chose presence over protest. Around twenty countries initially joined the Board, while major European powers stayed away. The charter allows each country to refuse missions it does not support, which protects national sovereignty.

Facts and Figures:

- About 20 countries joined the Board of Peace initially
- No major European power participated except Hungary
- The charter allows voluntary participation only
- Gaza is not mentioned once in the official document
- Pakistan has publicly ruled out coercive peace enforcement

To sum up, Pakistan's entry into the Board of Peace is not surrender but survival politics, shaped by influence, legality, and global realities. In a world where power drafts the rules, remaining present becomes a form of protection. The writer leaves us with a quiet truth: sometimes engagement is not agreement, it is insurance.

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS — EXTENDING THE ARGUMENT

Author: Inam Ul Haque

Summary:

The article works as a careful extension of an earlier argument that today's world no longer moves along neat lines. Conflict, technology, climate stress and shifting power centres now overlap like fault lines beneath our feet. Wars still reshape order, but not in predictable ways. Prolonged American military engagement has drained influence, while China has stepped into the space with a language of multilateralism. Meanwhile, artificial intelligence and technological diffusion have overtaken traditional defence spending, changing warfare's character and eroding old certainties. Violence persists, yet alliances fluctuate, institutions weaken, and societies absorb the shock. The author frames this moment as one of turbulence, where the old system decays before a new one fully arrives.

The article then widens the lens through the idea of a Polycene world where no single force dominates. Artificial intelligence races toward polymathic capability, reshaping cognition and production. Climate change pushes the planet toward polycrisis, triggering floods, droughts, migration, and state fragility. Geopolitics has grown polyamorous, with states pursuing multi alignment rather than rigid blocs. Warfare now spans land, cyber space, information and economy. Societies have become polymorphic through migration and identity overlap. Economies operate through interdependent webs, not bilateral exchange. Energy systems diversify under pressure. Governance grows harder as complexity multiplies. In this landscape, survival depends on adaptability, coalition building, and acceptance of interdependence as necessity rather than choice.

Overview:

The article explains how global order is fragmenting into a complex Polycene system shaped by AI, climate stress, hybrid warfare, and shifting alliances. It argues that binaries no longer explain politics, economics, or conflict, and future stability depends on adaptive, networked responses.

NOTES:

The article highlights how the contemporary global order has moved beyond clear binaries and entered a phase of layered complexity. It stresses that modern conflict is no longer confined to battlefields, as warfare now spans cyber space, information domains, economics, and technology, with artificial intelligence reshaping both military strategy and civilian life. Prolonged US military engagement is shown as a factor weakening American influence, while China's emphasis on multilateralism and regional blocs fills the resulting vacuum. Climate change emerges as a central destabilising force, creating overlapping crises through floods, droughts, migration, and economic shocks that strain fragile states and erode trust. The author introduces the concept of a Polycene world, where multiple forces operate simultaneously, making global politics polyamorous, economies interdependent through supply chains, societies polymorphic due to migration, and governance increasingly difficult due to expanding networks of actors and technologies. Energy transitions, AI driven complexity, weakening global institutions, and the decline of rigid ideological camps are presented as defining features of this era, with adaptability and coalition building identified as the core requirements for resilience and survival.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: Includes changing world order, hybrid warfare, multilateralism.
- ❖ Current Affairs: Covers AI, climate crisis, global instability.
- ❖ Political Science: Addresses complexity theory, governance challenges, power diffusion.
- ❖ Environmental Studies: links climate stress with security and migration.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the world is no longer simple. Countries now trade, fight, and cooperate at the same time. For example, cars are designed, built, and sold across many states. Wars now include cyber attacks and propaganda. Climate change causes floods and migration, which strain governments. AI changes jobs and security together.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Global supply chains account for about 70 percent of world trade.
- ❖ AI has overtaken traditional defence models in strategic relevance.
- ❖ Climate shocks increase migration and state fragility worldwide.
- ❖ Middle powers pursue multi alignment instead of rigid blocs.

To sum up, The article warns that clinging to old frameworks invites failure. The Polycene world rewards agility, not rigidity. In an age of overlapping crises, cooperation becomes survival instinct. Those who adapt will endure. Those who resist complexity may fade.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Dehumanisation means loss of human values; synonym brutalisation; antonym empathy.
- ❖ Polycene means many driven era; synonym multiplicity; antonym singularity.
- ❖ Polymathic means mastery of many fields; synonym versatile; antonym narrow.
- ❖ Polycrisis means overlapping crises; synonym convergence; antonym stability.
- ❖ Transactional means interest based exchange; synonym pragmatic; antonym ideological.
- ❖ Hybrid means mixed forms; synonym composite; antonym pure.

US ARMS SALES TO TAIWAN THREATEN PEACE IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT

Author: Cao Xiaolin

Summary:

The article argues indictment of Washington's decision to expand arms sales to Taiwan, a move the writer frames as both unlawful and destabilising. The author asserts that the United States has openly violated the one China principle and the three China US joint communiques, especially the August 17 agreement of 1982. By supplying advanced weapons to Taiwan, Washington is said to have infringed upon China's sovereignty and territorial integrity while injecting volatility into the Taiwan Strait. The article grounds China's position in international law, citing UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 and post Second World War instruments such as the Cairo Declaration and the Potsdam Proclamation, all of which affirm Taiwan as an inalienable part of China. From this perspective, the arms deal is not a defensive act but a provocation that erodes peace and encourages separatist tendencies. The second half sharpens the argument by locating the roots of tension in what the author calls collusion between US policymakers and Taiwan's pro independence leadership. The Democratic Progressive Party is portrayed as deliberately turning Taiwan into a powder keg by seeking external backing for a separatist agenda. The writer insists that China's responses are lawful and restrained, aimed at deterrence rather than escalation. Reunification is presented as inevitable, regardless of foreign interference or weapon transfers. The article closes with an unmistakable warning: Taiwan is a core interest and a red line for China. Any attempt to cross it will invite a firm response, while efforts to delay reunification are described as futile exercises against the current of history.

Overview:

The article argues that US arms sales to Taiwan undermine international law and regional stability. It presents the one China principle as the cornerstone of peace in the Taiwan Strait and frames external military support for Taiwan as the main driver of tension. The article reflects Beijing's view that reunification is unavoidable and that foreign interference only heightens risk.

NOTES:

The article highlights the legal basis of the one China principle and its recognition by the international community. It explains the strategic importance of UN General Assembly Resolution 2758. It underlines how arms transfers can alter regional security dynamics. It illustrates great power rivalry in East Asia. It reflects China's red line diplomacy and deterrence posture. It shows how internal disputes become international flashpoints through external involvement.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: includes China US rivalry and East Asian security.
- ❖ Current Affairs: covers Taiwan Strait tensions and arms diplomacy.
- ❖ Political Science: addresses sovereignty and separatism.
- ❖ International Law: examines recognition of states and territorial integrity.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that China sees Taiwan as part of its territory. The United States sells weapons to Taiwan, which China views as interference. For example, advanced missile systems increase fear of conflict. International rules since 1945 support China's claim. When outside powers intervene, tensions rise instead of easing.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ UN General Assembly Resolution 2758 was adopted in 1971.
- ❖ China US August 17 communique was signed in 1982.
- ❖ 183 countries recognise China under the one China principle.
- ❖ US arms sales to Taiwan increased in scale after 1982.

To sum up, this article reflects Beijing's conviction that history and law sit on its side. By arming Taiwan, Washington risks turning a sensitive fault line into an open wound. The message is stark and deliberate: peace flows from restraint, while interference courts instability.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Inalienable means unable to be taken away; synonym inherent; antonym transferable.
- ❖ Deplore means express strong disapproval; synonym condemn; antonym praise.
- ❖ Embolden means give confidence to act; synonym encourage; antonym restrain.
- ❖ Provocation means action causing reaction; synonym incitement; antonym appeasement.
- ❖ Separatist means seeking independence; synonym secessionist; antonym unionist.
- ❖ Communique means official statement; synonym declaration; antonym silence.
- ❖ Sovereignty means supreme authority; synonym autonomy; antonym subjugation.
- ❖ Inevitability means certainty of occurrence; synonym certainty; antonym improbability.

TECHNOLOGY, POWER AND THE ILLUSION OF SOVEREIGNTY

Author: Dr Syed Akhtar Ali Shah

Summary:

The author in this article tries to explain that how power, not principle, continues to script the conduct of world affairs, with technology now serving as its sharpest blade. The writer opens with the capture of Venezuela's leadership by American special forces as proof that sovereignty bends when strength knocks at the door. Through the timeless fable of the lion and the lamb, he illustrates how moral reasoning becomes irrelevant once outcomes are dictated by brute force. Across centuries, dominant states have relied on diplomacy, coercion, covert action, and warfare to impose their will, yet the instrument of control has always evolved with technology. From gunpowder empires to industrial armies, superiority in tools of power has consistently determined who commands and who complies.

The article explores this pattern through historical doctrines and imperial strategies, showing how the United States asserted dominance in the Western Hemisphere through the Monroe Doctrine, later transforming it into a licence for intervention. Similar logic shaped Western control of the Middle East and earlier British manoeuvres in Afghanistan to block Russian expansion. What unites these episodes is technological advantage, now amplified in the modern age through cyber warfare, drones, financial sanctions, satellite surveillance, and narrative control. Sovereignty today erodes without invasion, hollowed out through data, airspace, economic systems, and diplomatic legitimacy. Comparing the decline of the Mughal Empire, the writer argues that loss of technological command precedes political collapse. Nations fall not when flags are lowered, but when innovation lags and institutions stagnate.

Overview: The article argues that global politics remains governed by raw power, with technology acting as the decisive force behind dominance. It connects historical imperial strategies with modern hybrid warfare to show how sovereignty is increasingly undermined without conventional conquest.

NOTES:

Power politics outweigh legal and moral arguments in international relations. Technological superiority determines strategic dominance across eras. Doctrines of influence often mask expansionist ambitions. Modern warfare includes cyber tools, sanctions, and information control. Sovereignty now erodes through economic and digital mechanisms. Institutional stagnation accelerates national decline. Historical empires collapsed after falling behind technologically.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics and subjects:

- International Relations: Power politics, realism, spheres of influence, hybrid warfare
- International Law: Sovereignty, intervention, use of force
- Global History: Imperial expansion, great power rivalry
- Current Affairs: Technological warfare, sanctions regimes, global dominance

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that stronger countries shape outcomes using advanced tools rather than open wars. For example, sanctions can cripple an economy without firing bullets, while drones can strike targets without ground invasion. In the past, empires with better weapons defeated those with outdated armies. Today, countries with cyber capabilities can disrupt banking systems, elections, and infrastructure remotely. This shows that power has shifted from armies alone to technology and economic control.

Facts and Figures:

- The Monroe Doctrine was introduced in 1823
- Western dominance in the Middle East expanded after World War II
- Modern warfare now includes cyber tools, drones, and financial sanctions
- Empires historically collapsed after technological stagnation
- Hybrid warfare replaces traditional invasion strategies

To sum up, the article reminds us that power still writes the rules, only the ink has changed from gunpowder to algorithms. Nations that master technology command the stage, while those who fall behind plead for fairness after the verdict is already delivered. In today's world, sovereignty survives on innovation and strength.

A CRISIS OF GOVERNANCE, NOT FOREIGN CONSPIRACY

Author: Durdana Najam

Summary:

The article explores Afghanistan's insecurity, stripping away the convenient habit of blaming outsiders and laying bare the country's internal fractures. The Kabul restaurant bombing that killed seven people, including a Chinese national, is presented not merely as an act of terror by Islamic State Khorasan Province but as a symptom of a deeper institutional collapse. While accusations quickly surfaced against Pakistan, the writer warns against this reflex of externalising failure. Instead, she argues that the real breeding ground for violence lies within Afghanistan itself where weak governance, rival power centres and fragile security coordination leave dangerous gaps that extremist groups readily exploit. Terrorism here is not imported chaos but homegrown disorder flourishing in administrative disarray.

The article dissects the internal rift within the Taliban, showing how ideological absolutism clashes with practical governance. Supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada rules through rigid decrees that demand obedience rather than institutional capacity, while the Haqqani faction running the Interior Ministry grapples with real security

challenges on the ground. This tug of war turns every security failure into a political weapon instead of a problem to fix. The attack in Kabul thus becomes not only a tragedy but proof of overlapping command structures and poor intelligence sharing. Even China's demand for protection of its citizens highlights the limits of foreign engagement when domestic governance remains fractured. The writer concludes that Afghanistan's violence will persist until institutions gain authority, coordination improves, and factional interests yield to public safety.

Overview:

The article argues that Afghanistan's insecurity stems from weak institutions and Taliban factional rivalries rather than foreign conspiracies. It shows how fragmented governance creates opportunities for extremist violence and stresses that stability depends on internal reform, not external blame.

NOTES:

The article highlights that Afghanistan's insecurity is rooted primarily in internal governance failure rather than foreign interference. The Kabul restaurant bombing claimed by Islamic State Khorasan Province is portrayed as a consequence of weak institutions, poor intelligence coordination, and rival power centres within the state. The writer stresses that quick accusations against Pakistan distract from the real problem, which is Afghanistan's fractured administrative structure since the Taliban returned to power in 2021. Authority remains divided between the clerical leadership under Hibatullah Akhundzada, which governs through rigid ideological decrees, and the Haqqani faction controlling the Interior Ministry, which handles day to day security realities. This internal tug of war turns security lapses into political tools instead of opportunities for reform. Overlapping command chains, lack of institutional autonomy, and inconsistent cooperation among security bodies create openings for extremist groups to operate even in Kabul. China's demand for protection of its citizens further exposes the Taliban's inability to guarantee safety despite controlling the capital.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- International Relations: State failure, internal conflict, non state actors
- Pakistan Affairs: Afghanistan's instability and regional security
- Current Affairs: Taliban governance, terrorism trends in South Asia
- Governance and Public Administration: Institutional weakness, policy coordination failures
- Security Studies: Counterterrorism, insurgency dynamics

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that when governments lack strong systems, violence increases. For example, if police and intelligence agencies do not share information, attackers move freely. In Afghanistan, different Taliban factions control different ministries, which leads to confusion over responsibility. This is like a school where teachers give conflicting instructions, causing disorder. Extremist groups then use this chaos to plan attacks. The Kabul bombing that killed seven people shows how even the capital remains unsafe due to poor coordination.

Facts and Figures:

- The Kabul blast killed seven people including one Chinese citizen
- The attack occurred on January 19, 2026
- The Taliban returned to power in 2021
- ISKP claimed responsibility for the assault
- Security control is divided among rival Taliban factions

To wrap up, the article delivers an uncomfortable truth that Afghanistan's wounds are largely self-inflicted. Blaming neighbours may ease political embarrassment, but it leaves the real disease untreated. Until institutions grow strong, authority becomes coherent, and factional politics gives way to public safety, violence will keep returning like a fever that no foreign medicine can cure. Stability, the writer reminds us, must be built from within or it will never hold.

GWADAR-CHABAHAR DYNAMICS: COMPETITION OR COOPERATION?

Author: Maria Mansab

Summary:

The article shows how geography invites cooperation while geopolitics enforces rivalry. Gwadar and Chabahar sit barely 140 kilometres apart, share access to similar hinterlands, and could naturally function as complementary gateways linking South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, and beyond. Yet strategic competition has pushed them onto divergent paths. Gwadar's rise under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor has given Beijing direct access to the Arabian Sea, reduced reliance on vulnerable chokepoints likely Malacca, and anchored China's broader Belt and Road ambitions. Massive investment in airports, expressways, industrial zones, and energy corridors has turned Gwadar into a strategic and economic asset, not only for China but also for Pakistan's outreach toward Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. The port's projected cargo capacity, job creation, and GDP growth signal its long term promise, while plans to link CPEC with Afghanistan, Iran, and Central Asia reflect Beijing's ambition to weave east west and north south corridors into a single trade lattice.

The article then shifts to Chabahar, Iran's eastern maritime gateway and a strategic prize for India. For New Delhi, Chabahar offers a route to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Russia that bypasses Pakistan entirely, aligning with its Connect Central Asia Policy and the International North South Transport Corridor. Despite delays caused by sanctions on Iran, India has deepened its role through long term contracts, infrastructure financing, and operational control of key terminals. Cargo volumes and humanitarian shipments underline Chabahar's growing relevance, even if its scale remains modest compared to Gwadar. However, the broader contest is shaped by great power rivalry. Washington views Chabahar through the lens of offshore balancing against China, granting India waivers to counter Beijing's influence, while Tehran hedges by moving closer to China amid sanctions pressure. The author concludes that while geography favours complementarity, geopolitics keeps cooperation out of reach, leaving both ports defined more by strategic rivalry than shared economic logic.

Overview:

The article analyses Gwadar and Chabahar as twin ports divided by great power politics. It explains how Chinese and Indian strategic interests, shaped by US China rivalry and sanctions on Iran, have turned potential cooperation into competition.

NOTES:

The article highlights port geopolitics in South Asia and West Asia. It explains CPEC and its strategic logic for China. It outlines India's use of Chabahar to bypass Pakistan. It links infrastructure projects with great power rivalry. It shows how sanctions shape regional connectivity. It illustrates offshore balancing by the United States. It connects ports with trade corridors and maritime security.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: geopolitics of ports, great power competition, and regional connectivity.

- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: covers CPEC and Gwadar's strategic value.
- ❖ Current Affairs: addresses Iran sanctions, Indo Pacific strategy, and Eurasian trade corridors.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that ports are not just commercial hubs but strategic tools. Gwadar helps China shorten trade routes and avoid risky sea lanes. Chabahar helps India reach Central Asia without crossing Pakistan. Although the ports are close, politics keeps them apart. For example, US support for India and sanctions on Iran shape how Chabahar operates.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Gwadar lies about 400 kilometres from the Strait of Hormuz.
- ❖ Nearly 20 percent of global oil passes through this route.
- ❖ CPEC investment stands at about 65 billion dollars.
- ❖ Gwadar may handle 400 million tons of cargo by 2030.
- ❖ Chabahar currently handles about 8.5 million tons annually.
- ❖ China Africa trade reached 296 billion dollars in 2024.

To sum up, Gwadar and Chabahar could have been bridges. Instead, they have become markers of rivalry. Until great powers ease their grip, economics will remain hostage to strategy. Geography opens doors, but geopolitics decides who may walk through them

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Hinterland means inland trade region; synonym interior; antonym coast.
- ❖ Chokepoint means narrow strategic passage; synonym bottleneck; antonym open route.
- ❖ Complementarity means mutual benefit; synonym synergy; antonym rivalry.
- ❖ Geopolitics means power shaped by geography; synonym strategic politics; antonym domestic focus.
- ❖ Autonomy means independent decision making; synonym sovereignty; antonym dependence.
- ❖ Lin-chpin means central support; synonym keystone; antonym accessory.
- ❖ Recalibrate means adjust strategy; synonym realign; antonym persist.
- ❖ Interdependence means mutual reliance; synonym reciprocity; antonym isolation.

HOW INDIA'S ACTIONS ON CHENAB THREATEN PAKISTAN'S SURVIVAL

Author: Durdana Najam

Summary:

The article shows water, once a bridge between two hostile neighbours, is being turned into a weapon that threatens Pakistan's very survival. The author shows how India's sudden manipulation of Chenab River flows has shattered the spirit of cooperation built under the Indus Waters Treaty. The abrupt release of tens of thousands of cusecs of water, followed by the likelihood of near dry conditions once dams are refilled, is portrayed not as routine dam management but as calculated political pressure. These unpredictable surges disrupt canal systems, damage crops, and throw Pakistan's irrigation planning into chaos. For Punjab, where wheat production depends

on steady water supply, such shocks ripple through food security and rural livelihoods. The article stresses that these actions amount to coercion in a region already burdened by political tension.

The article shares the historical backbone of the crisis. The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960, brokered by the World Bank, had long stood as a rare success in conflict management, surviving wars and decades of hostility. Yet India's recent suspension of treaty obligations after the 2025 Pahalgam incident marked an unprecedented rupture. Hydropower projects and opaque dam operations now bypass transparency rules once guaranteed by the treaty. The author explains that the conflict today goes beyond engineering disputes and has become a struggle over power and predictability. Climate change has further tightened the noose, as glacier melt and erratic rainfall already strain the Indus Basin. The erosion of the treaty also carries global implications, weakening trust in international agreements meant to manage shared resources. The article ends with a call for urgent mediation, regional water diplomacy, farmer protection, and renewed respect for treaties before scarcity turns into open conflict.

Overview:

The article argues that India's manipulation of Chenab River flows undermines the Indus Waters Treaty and places Pakistan's agriculture, food security, and stability at risk. It presents water coercion as both a regional danger and a global warning in an era of climate stress.

NOTES:

The article highlights how India's abrupt manipulation of Chenab River flows has transformed water from a shared resource into a strategic instrument of pressure against Pakistan. Sudden releases followed by near dry conditions have disrupted irrigation schedules, damaged crops, and destabilised agricultural planning, particularly in Punjab where wheat production hinges on predictable water supply. These actions cripple farmers' livelihoods, increase food insecurity, and deepen economic stress in rural communities. The author traces the roots of stability to the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960, a landmark agreement that endured wars and political hostility by ensuring transparency and cooperation. India's recent suspension of treaty obligations after the 2025 Pahalgam incident marked a historic break from this framework, opening the door to opaque dam operations and unchecked hydropower control. The conflict is no longer a technical dispute but a struggle over power, predictability, and survival. Climate change has intensified the danger through glacier melt and erratic rainfall, making treaty based coordination more vital than ever. The erosion of such a successful water agreement also threatens global confidence in resource sharing treaties, setting a risky precedent for other regions.

Relevant CSS Syllabus / Subjects:

- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: Water security and agriculture, India Pakistan relations, food security challenges
- ❖ International Relations: Transboundary resource conflicts, treaty compliance and diplomacy, regional stability in South Asia
- ❖ Current Affairs: Chenab River crisis, climate stress in the Indus Basin, South Asian geopolitical tensions
- ❖ Environmental Studies: Climate change impacts on river systems, water scarcity and basin management
- ❖ International Law: Indus Waters Treaty obligations, rights of lower riparian states, use of shared natural resources

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan depends heavily on rivers flowing from India for farming. When water arrives suddenly or stops without warning, crops suffer. For example, wheat fields in Punjab need steady irrigation during growing months. Flood like releases wash away soil, while dry spells stunt growth. Climate change already

makes rainfall uncertain, so river control becomes even more dangerous. Treaties like the Indus Waters Treaty were created to prevent such harm, but when one side ignores them, ordinary farmers pay the price.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ India released about 58,300 cusecs of water into the Chenab suddenly.
- ❖ Punjab produces most of Pakistan's wheat and relies on Chenab irrigation.
- ❖ The Indus Waters Treaty was signed in 1960 with World Bank mediation.
- ❖ The treaty survived wars in 1965, 1971, and the Kargil conflict.
- ❖ Food insecurity in Pakistan has already been rising in recent years.

To sum up, The article reminds us that when water turns into a bargaining chip, survival itself enters the negotiation. The weakening of the Indus Waters Treaty is not merely a diplomatic setback but a threat to millions of lives. In a climate stressed world, rivers will decide peace or conflict. If coercion replaces cooperation, South Asia may drift toward a future where scarcity speaks louder than treaties.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Coercive means using force or pressure; synonym oppressive; antonym voluntary.
- ❖ Unilateral means one sided action; synonym independent; antonym mutual.
- ❖ Erosion means gradual weakening; synonym deterioration; antonym strengthening.
- ❖ Precarious means dangerously unstable; synonym fragile; antonym secure.
- ❖ Resilience means ability to endure; synonym durability; antonym vulnerability.

MONROE DOCTRINE AND METHODS OF RATIONALITY

Author: Farrukh Khan Pitafi

Summary:

The author in his article begins with Trump's invocation of the Monroe Doctrine, now rebranded as the "Donroe Doctrine", to justify US action against Venezuela. Rather than seeing Trump as impulsive or incoherent, this piece of writing frames his behaviour as adaptive strategy rooted in calculated risk. Citing the idea of Bayesian reasoning, it argues that Washington is constantly updating its moves based on shifting power realities rather than acting on emotional instinct. The Monroe Doctrine's original purpose of shielding the Western Hemisphere from outside influence has evolved into a modern assertion of US dominance, now formally embedded in the 2025 National Security Strategy. This strategy reasserts hemispheric control, prioritises economic power, pressures allies to share security burdens, sidelines climate commitments in favour of energy dominance, and identifies China as the main long term rival. Together, these elements mark a sharp break from America's earlier role as global manager of order.

Furthermore, the article reinterprets the arrest of Nicolás Maduro not as reckless regime change but as a controlled leadership reset designed to stabilise Venezuela's economy while keeping the state structure intact. Intelligence leaks suggesting behind the scenes negotiations support the idea of a palace coup rather than military occupation, followed by energy cooperation as the real prize. The same strategic logic, the author argues, applies to Trump's signalling over Greenland, where pressure replaces diplomacy to push closer alignment with US interests. In contrast, Washington's restraint in places like Iran, Yemen, and Somaliland reflects a selective, interest driven doctrine rather than blind militarism. The piece ends on a personal note of endorsement, portraying Trump as a disruptive yet effective power broker who uses unpredictability as leverage, revives American primacy, and deters rivals through calculated fear rather than endless wars.

Overview:

The article presents Trump's foreign policy not as chaos but as rational power politics grounded in the revived Monroe Doctrine and adaptive strategy. It argues that US actions reflect selective intervention to secure core interests rather than ideological crusades.

NOTES:

The article explains the evolution of the Monroe Doctrine into modern hemispheric dominance. It highlights the 2025 US National Security Strategy and its shift toward sovereignty, energy power, and selective engagement. This article also introduces rational decision making in foreign policy using Bayesian logic. It discusses regime change versus controlled leadership transitions. It shows balance of power politics replacing liberal interventionism. It links economic interests with geopolitical actions. It illustrates strategic unpredictability as a diplomatic tool.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

International Relations includes grand strategy, balance of power, US foreign policy doctrines, and interventionism.

Current Affairs covers US actions in Venezuela, shifting global order, and strategic competition with China.

Political Science addresses rational actor models, realism, and power politics.

International Law relates to sovereignty, intervention, and law enforcement versus regime change debates.

Pakistan Affairs connects to regional power calculations and great power influence in South Asia.

Notes for Beginners:

The article suggests that countries do not always act emotionally in foreign affairs. Instead, they calculate benefits and risks. For example, the US did not occupy Venezuela but removed its leader to influence economic recovery while avoiding long wars. The Monroe Doctrine originally blocked European control in the Americas, but today it supports American dominance. Energy resources, trade power, and strategic competition now shape decisions more than ideology.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ The Monroe Doctrine was introduced in 1823.
- ❖ The US National Security Strategy of 2025 formally revived hemispheric primacy.
- ❖ Venezuela is among the world's largest oil holding states.
- ❖ Greenland's population is roughly fifty seven thousand.
- ❖ China is officially identified as America's main long term competitor.

To sum up, the article argues that Trump is not tearing up global order in rage but rewriting it in cold calculation. Old doctrines return in new clothing, while fear replaces persuasion as a negotiating tool. Whether one admires or fears this approach, it signals a world drifting from rules toward raw interest. In such an arena, rationality no longer wears the face of restraint but the armour of dominance.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Assertiveness means forceful confidence; synonym boldness; antonym timidity.
- ❖ Corollary means secondary principle; synonym consequence; antonym contradiction.
- ❖ Unpredictability means lack of certainty; synonym volatility; antonym stability.
- ❖ Interventionism means involvement in others' affairs; synonym interference; antonym noninterference.

WHAT PAKISTAN CAN EXPECT IN 2026 AND BEYOND

Author: Shahid Javed Burki

Summary:

The author begins by exploring a world where power is once again drifting toward confrontation rather than cooperation. He notes how Pakistan now sits in a neighbourhood where ideology and religion increasingly shape governance, while only China remains firmly secular. Against this backdrop, the invasion of Venezuela and the arrest of Nicolás Maduro are treated not as isolated acts but as sparks in a wider return to force driven politics. Drawing on Clausewitz, the article explains war as an extension of state policy, a pattern that history has repeated whenever global balance breaks down. The collapse of nineteenth century peace gave way to two devastating world wars, whose horrors pushed humanity to build institutions meant to restrain conflict through dialogue and law.

The article suggests how those safeguards emerged and why they now appear endangered.

The United Nations, the IMF, and the World Bank were designed to prevent both military catastrophe and economic chaos. For eight decades, this structure kept rivalries within manageable bounds. Yet the author argues that Donald Trump's return to power has shaken these foundations. By questioning electoral legitimacy, weakening multilateralism, and resorting to unilateral force, Trump has revived a world closer to raw power than shared rules. The essay weaves in Aquinas' just war theory to show how modern conflicts increasingly drift away from moral restraint toward coercion. Applying this cycle to Pakistan, the writer warns that weaker states suffer most when strong powers impose their will. He recalls the recent India Pakistan clash that nearly spiralled into nuclear disaster before external intervention cooled tensions. For Pakistan, the coming era may demand vigilance in a world where institutions fade and brute strength regains the throne.

Overview:

The article examines the possible breakdown of the post World War global order and the return of power based conflict, arguing that Pakistan must prepare for a more unstable international environment shaped by unilateralism and shifting alliances.

NOTES:

The article explains the historical cycle of war and peace through Clausewitz's theory. It highlights the creation of global institutions after World War II to prevent conflict and economic collapse. It discusses the weakening of multilateralism under new power politics. It introduces just war theory by Thomas Aquinas. It links modern conflicts to erosion of international norms. It assesses implications of great power dominance for weaker states. It connects regional instability with global disorder.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: global order, balance of power, war theory, and multilateral institutions.
- ❖ Current Affairs: US foreign policy, global instability, and regional conflicts.
- ❖ Political Science: address realism, power politics, and just war theory.
- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: regional security, India Pakistan tensions, and strategic vulnerability.

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that after major wars, countries try to build systems to prevent future conflict. For example, after World War II the UN was formed so nations could solve disputes peacefully. The IMF and World Bank were created to avoid economic crashes that could trigger wars. When powerful states ignore these rules, weaker

countries like Pakistan become more vulnerable. Recent clashes in South Asia show how quickly tensions can rise in a fragile world.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ The United Nations was founded in 1945.
- ❖ The IMF and World Bank emerged after World War II.
- ❖ The Monroe style power politics has reemerged in recent US actions.
- ❖ Two world wars occurred between 1914 to 1918 and 1939 to 1945.
- ❖ Recent India Pakistan conflict nearly escalated into nuclear confrontation.

To sum up, The article reminds us that peace is not permanent but maintained through fragile agreements and shared restraint. As great powers drift back toward muscle over mediation, smaller states stand in the storm's direct path. For Pakistan, the coming years may test both diplomacy and survival in a world where law weakens and power speaks louder than reason

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Speculative means based on guesswork; synonym conjectural; antonym certain.
- ❖ Unravelling means breaking apart; synonym disintegration; antonym consolidation.
- ❖ Catastrophic means disastrously destructive; synonym devastating; antonym minor.
- ❖ Institutional means related to formal structures; synonym organisational; antonym informal.
- ❖ Legitimacy means lawful authority; synonym validity; antonym illegitimacy.

TECHNOLOGY, POWER AND THE ILLUSION OF SOVEREIGNTY

Author: Dr Syed Akhtar Ali Shah

Summary:

The article shows how power has never truly obeyed law, only the limits imposed by strength, and how technology now stands as the modern engine of dominance. The author opens with the capture of Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro by American forces as a living proof that weakness still invites aggression in global politics. Through the timeless fable of the lion and the lamb, he shows how justification always follows power rather than guides it. Reason, morality, and legality appear only as convenient masks once outcomes are already decided. From diplomatic pressure to covert coups and open military strikes, the methods may vary, but the purpose remains the same: to bend defiance and preserve spheres of influence. What truly shifts across centuries is not ambition, but the tools through which control is exercised.

The article highlights this logic through history, from the Monroe Doctrine's claim over the Americas to European domination of the Middle East for oil and trade routes, and Britain's manipulation of Afghanistan during the Great Game. In each case, technological superiority shaped who ruled and who submitted. The author argues that in today's world, dominance no longer relies solely on invading armies but on drones, cyber warfare, financial systems, surveillance networks, artificial intelligence, and narrative control. He draws a striking parallel with the decline of the Mughal Empire, where loss of technological and institutional strength hollowed out sovereignty long before formal collapse. Modern negotiations such as those seen in the Doha process merely legitimise outcomes already determined by those who command intelligence, money, and military reach. Those who master technology write the rules of the world, while those who lag behind are left appealing to justice after control has already slipped away.

Overview:

The article argues that global politics continues to operate on the principle of might over right, with technology now acting as the chief instrument of power. Using historical examples and modern conflicts, it shows how sovereignty erodes when states fall behind in technological and institutional strength.

NOTES:

The article highlights realism and power politics in international relations. It explains technology as a core determinant of global dominance. It traces spheres of influence through the Monroe Doctrine and imperial strategies. It connects historical empires with modern geopolitical control. It shows how hybrid warfare replaces traditional wars. It discusses erosion of sovereignty through economic and digital tools. It underlines institutional weakness as a precursor to state decline.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: Realism, balance of power, spheres of influence, and hybrid warfare.
- ❖ Current Affairs: Venezuela crisis, cyber warfare, and technological dominance.
- ❖ Political Science: Address state power, imperialism, and control mechanisms.
- ❖ Strategic Studies: Focus on modern warfare technologies and security paradigms.

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that powerful countries dominate weaker ones through better technology. In the past, stronger armies with advanced weapons defeated others, such as European empires conquering colonies. Today control happens through drones, cyber attacks, financial sanctions, and surveillance. For example, a country can cripple another by cutting banking access or controlling airspace without sending soldiers. The Mughal Empire fell not because of one battle but because it failed to modernise its systems. This explains why technology now shapes who rules and who obeys.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ The Monroe Doctrine was declared in 1823 to assert US dominance in the Americas.
- ❖ The Great Game unfolded between Britain and Russia during the 18th and 19th centuries.
- ❖ Modern warfare now includes cyber operations, drone strikes, and financial sanctions.
- ❖ The Mughal decline accelerated in the 18th century due to military stagnation.
- ❖ Contemporary conflicts increasingly avoid formal war declarations.

In a nutshell, Power has always spoken first, while justice arrived too late to matter. Technology now sharpens that power into a silent blade that cuts through borders without armies. From empires of muskets to empires of algorithms, the lesson remains unchanged. Those who command the tools of their age shape history, while those who fall behind become its casualties.

TRUMP'S IRAN PAUSE AND THE NEW MIDDLE EAST REALITY

Author: Kamran Yousaf

Summary:

The article begins with President Trump's provocative message to Iranian protesters, a phrase that sounded like a prelude to military intervention and sent shockwaves across the region. For days, speculation of an American strike dominated headlines. Yet the anticipated attack never materialised. Reports later revealed that Trump paused military plans after consultations with Israeli leadership. This restraint appeared surprising given Israel's long standing hostility toward Tehran. However, intelligence assessments concluded that Iran's political system,

though pressured by unrest, remained far from collapse. External force, rather than toppling the regime, would likely strengthen its narrative of foreign aggression and tighten domestic control.

The article explains how regional calculations have dramatically shifted. Israel understood that any strike would invite swift retaliation, as seen during the recent twelve day confrontation when Iranian missiles breached Israeli defences despite advanced systems. Gulf states also opposed escalation, fearing regional chaos and direct attacks on American bases. Unlike the past, Arab capitals no longer quietly favour regime change in Iran. The Saudi Iranian rapprochement and Israel's expanding military assertiveness have reshaped priorities. Many regional actors now view Iran's continued presence as a strategic counterbalance to unchecked Israeli dominance. For Trump, the cost of war outweighed potential benefits, leading to a tactical pause rather than a policy reversal. Pressure on Tehran will continue through sanctions, cyber measures and covert tools, but direct military intervention now appears too dangerous in a tightly interconnected region.

Overview:

The article argues that despite hostile rhetoric, strategic realities have forced the US and its regional allies to avoid military confrontation with Iran, reflecting a new balance of power shaped by deterrence, regional diplomacy and fear of escalation.

NOTES:

The article underlines that recent events around Iran reflect a shift from impulsive military responses to calculated strategic restraint in the Middle East. It highlights how President Trump's suggestive message to Iranian protesters initially fuelled expectations of an American strike, yet behind the scenes careful reassessment took place. Israeli intelligence concluded that Iran's system remained resilient despite public unrest and that external force would strengthen rather than weaken the regime. The article stresses Iran's proven retaliatory capacity, demonstrated through missile and drone attacks that penetrated Israeli defences, making any war scenario extremely costly. It also points to a major regional transformation where Gulf states actively discouraged escalation, fearing widespread instability and direct attacks on US installations. The Saudi Iranian rapprochement and Israel's expanding military reach have altered Arab strategic thinking, with Iran now seen by many as a balancing force rather than solely a threat. Ultimately, the article shows that Trump's pause resulted from risk calculations, not goodwill, and that while pressure on Tehran will persist through non military tools, direct confrontation has become a perilous option in a tightly interlinked regional security environment.

Relevant CSS Syllabus or Subjects:

- ❖ International Relations: Middle East power politics, deterrence and balance of power, alliance realignments
- ❖ Current Affairs: US Iran relations, gulf diplomacy shifts, regional security developments
- ❖ Political Science: Realism in foreign policy decision making, National interest and cost benefit analysis
- ❖ International Security: Conflict prevention, regional stability mechanisms, crisis management strategies

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that war decisions depend on risks, not just anger. For example, when Iran previously fired missiles at Israel, some still caused damage despite defence systems. Gulf countries feared that any US attack would spread fighting across the region and hit American bases. Saudi Arabia now prefers calm ties with Iran rather than chaos. This proves that diplomacy and fear of retaliation can stop wars even when tensions are high.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ The Iran Israel confrontation lasted about twelve days.
- ❖ Iran launched hundreds of missiles and drones during that clash.

- ❖ Several projectiles bypassed Israel's multi layer defence system.
- ❖ Gulf states such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman opposed military action.
- ❖ Iran warned of strikes on US bases if attacked.

To sum up, this article reveals a Middle East where caution has replaced reckless confrontation. Power now rests not only in weapons but in the certainty of retaliation and regional entanglement. Trump's pause signals that even superpowers must respect shifting realities. In today's fragile balance, war is no longer a quick option but a storm that could consume everyone in its path.

CSS PLATFORM

The Nations

EXPANSIONIST USA?

Author: Atle Hetland

Summary:

The article reflects America's return to expansionist instincts, where power once again speaks louder than law. The author begins by showing how the year barely opened before Washington shifted the world's attention with its forceful seizure of Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro and his family. What was framed as a crackdown on drugs and terrorism unfolded as a full military operation that struck civilian and state targets alike. The message, the writer suggests, was not justice but dominance. Trump's threats toward Colombia, his stern warnings to Mexico, and his constant pressure across Latin America revive an old imperial mindset wrapped in new slogans. Behind the rhetoric of peace and order lies a familiar pursuit of influence and resources, especially Venezuela's vast oil reserves, which quietly anchor American interest.

The article then widens its lens to connect Trump's conduct with deeper historical patterns. His revival of the Monroe Doctrine echoes a belief that the Americas fall under US oversight, a notion rooted in colonial era power politics. The author reminds readers that strong states have long imposed their will, from European empires to Cold War superpowers. Drawing on scholarly research, he notes that the United States attempted dozens of regime change operations during the twentieth century, often outside international law. The latest intervention in Venezuela fits that troubling tradition, lacking UN approval and violating sovereignty norms. While some nations protest, real consequences remain unlikely. The article closes with a warning that when one power assumes the role of global policeman, international order erodes, conflicts linger from Ukraine to Gaza, and smaller nations pay the heaviest price.

Overview:

The article argues that recent US actions in Venezuela reflect a revival of imperial behavior rooted in the Monroe Doctrine and past regime change practices, undermining international law and threatening global stability.

NOTES:

The article emphasises that the United States has once again adopted an expansionist posture, using military force in Venezuela under the guise of law enforcement while pursuing strategic and economic interests, particularly control over vast oil resources. It highlights how the arrest of President Nicolás Maduro was not an isolated security action but part of a broader pattern of coercive diplomacy directed across Latin America, including threats toward Colombia and pressure on Mexico. The revival of the Monroe Doctrine reflects a renewed belief in American dominance over the Western Hemisphere, rooted in colonial era thinking that grants stronger states greater rights than weaker ones. The author connects present policies with a long history of US regime change operations, many conducted without international authorisation and often devastating for civilian populations. The article underlines the erosion of international law through unilateral interventions lacking UN approval and notes the muted global response that enables such behaviour to continue unchecked. It warns that when a single power assumes the role of global enforcer, sovereignty weakens, long standing conflicts persist, and the international system drifts toward instability where smaller nations bear the greatest cost.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: Imperialism, regime change, sovereignty, and great power politics.
- ❖ Current Affairs: US interventions in Latin America and global conflicts.

- ❖ Political Science: Address realism and power dominance.
- ❖ International Law: UN authority, state sovereignty, and legality of intervention.
- ❖ History: links colonialism and Cold War interventions.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that powerful countries sometimes remove leaders they dislike. For example, the US sent troops to arrest Venezuela's president instead of using courts or diplomacy. In the past, many Latin American governments were overthrown during the Cold War to protect US interests. International law says only the UN can approve such actions, yet strong states often ignore this rule. This makes weaker countries vulnerable.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Venezuela holds the world's largest proven oil reserves.
- ❖ The Monroe Doctrine was introduced in 1823.
- ❖ The US attempted about seventy regime change operations between 1947 and 1989.
- ❖ Recent US action in Venezuela occurred without UN Security Council approval.

To wrap up, The article reflects that history rarely retires its old habits. When empires feel threatened, they reach for force dressed as justice. The revival of expansionist politics may offer short term control but leaves long shadows of resentment and instability. If international law bends before power, the world risks sliding back into an age where might alone defines right.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Expansionist means seeking territorial or political growth; synonym aggressive; antonym restrained.
- ❖ Intervention means forced involvement; synonym interference; antonym noninvolvement.
- ❖ Sovereignty means supreme authority of a state; synonym independence; antonym subjugation.
- ❖ Unilateral means one sided action; synonym independent; antonym collective.
- ❖ Immunity means legal protection; synonym exemption; antonym liability.

OIL, & ONLY OIL

Author: Faisal Ahmad

Summary:

The article shares American foreign policy, where lofty speeches about democracy cloak a relentless chase for oil. The writer opens with Henry Kissinger's famous words to frame the United States as a power that treats the globe like a chessboard, with crude oil as its most prized piece. He explains how Washington's fixation on petroleum is not merely about energy needs but about sustaining the petrodollar system, under which global oil trade flows through the US dollar. This arrangement forces countries to hold massive dollar reserves, allowing America to live beyond its means and finance huge deficits without collapse. Therefore, control over oil becomes control over the world's financial bloodstream. From the early twentieth century onward, this obsession hardened into policy, particularly after the Second World War, when the US sealed an oil-for-security pact with Saudi Arabia, binding military protection to guaranteed energy access.

The article then walks through a trail of interventions that followed the scent of crude. The CIA-backed overthrow of Iran's elected leader in 1953 after oil nationalisation is presented as a turning point where sovereignty bowed before petroleum interests. The Carter Doctrine formalised military protection of Gulf oil, which later surfaced in the Gulf War to block Saddam Hussein from dominating a fifth of global reserves. The 2003 invasion of Iraq, sold to the world as a hunt for weapons of mass destruction, ultimately opened Iraqi oil to

Western corporations. Even after America became a net exporter through shale production, the hunger for control did not fade, since global prices and geopolitical leverage still hinge on foreign reserves. This logic now points toward Venezuela, home to the world's largest proven oil reserves. Sanctions, isolation, and now direct military action are portrayed not as moral crusades but as the latest chapter in a century-old strategy to ensure no rival regime can challenge dollar supremacy or Western energy security. In essence, every explosion in Caracas echoes the same message heard in Tehran and Baghdad: it was never about people, and never about principles, but about oil alone.

Overview:

The article argues that US foreign policy across decades has been driven primarily by the desire to control global oil resources and preserve the petrodollar system. It presents Venezuela as the newest target in a long history of energy-driven interventions disguised as security or democracy missions.

NOTES:

The article highlights oil as a central driver of US geopolitics. It explains the petrodollar system as a source of American financial dominance. It shows how military interventions often follow energy interests. It traces historical examples from Iran to Iraq and the Gulf War. It connects sanctions and regime pressure with resource control. It demonstrates how economic power and military force reinforce each other. It underlines Venezuela's strategic importance due to massive oil reserves.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ International Relations: Geopolitics of energy, US foreign policy, and great power interests.
- ❖ Current Affairs: Middle East conflicts, Venezuela crisis, and global oil politics.
- ❖ Economics: links to the petrodollar system and global financial dominance.
- ❖ Political science: Imperial behaviour and power projection.

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that oil is not just fuel but power. When countries sell oil in dollars, the US benefits because everyone must keep dollars. For example, after Saudi Arabia agreed to trade oil in dollars, America gained huge financial strength. When Iran tried to control its own oil in 1953, its leader was removed. Iraq was invaded in 2003 and its oil sector was opened to foreign companies. Venezuela now faces pressure because it holds the world's largest oil reserves. These cases show how energy resources shape wars and diplomacy.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Venezuela has the largest proven oil reserves in the world.
- ❖ About 20 percent of global oil was at stake during the 1991 Gulf War.
- ❖ The petrodollar system has operated since the 1970s.
- ❖ The US backed Iran coup occurred in 1953.
- ❖ The Iraq invasion took place in 2003 and reshaped its oil industry.

To wrap up, The article reveals a pattern where every road of intervention leads back to oil wells and dollar dominance. Empires may change their language, yet their hunger remains the same. From deserts of Iraq to fields of Venezuela, power has chased petroleum like a shadow chasing light. Until energy stops dictating geopolitics, wars will keep wearing the mask of virtue while feeding on black gold beneath the soil.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Hegemony means dominant influence; synonym supremacy; antonym equality.
- ❖ Petrodollar means oil trade in US dollars; synonym dollar based energy trade; antonym diversified currency trade.

GOVERNANCE CRISIS

Author: Muhammad Imranul Haq

Summary:

The article exposes Pakistan's deepening governance failure, where mismanagement within state owned enterprises has turned public resources into a bottomless pit of losses. The writer opens with alarming figures from the Cabinet Committee on Public Enterprises, revealing that SOEs recorded losses of Rs 123 billion in 2024–25 compared with Rs 30.6 billion a year earlier, a surge of nearly 300 per cent. Even more disturbing is that within just the first half of 2025, losses had already touched Rs 343 billion, signalling a financial haemorrhage that threatens long term economic stability. These numbers are not portrayed as mere accounting errors but as symptoms of institutional decay driven by political interference, corruption, and absence of strategic leadership.

Then the article names major offenders, including the National Highway Authority, power distribution companies, Pakistan Railways, and Pakistan Steel Mills, whose cumulative losses have crossed trillions of rupees. The writer stresses that the burden of this failure is routinely shifted onto ordinary citizens through higher fuel prices, rising utility bills, fresh taxes, and withdrawal of subsidies. Privatisation is criticised as a convenient escape route rather than genuine reform, often benefiting elite groups while public hardship deepens. The central argument suggests that institutions are not inherently flawed, but intentions, leadership quality, and accountability mechanisms are. Without transparent governance, merit based appointments, and real reform, Pakistan will continue to drain its economy while citizens foot the bill.

Overview:

The article examines the financial collapse of Pakistan's state owned enterprises as a crisis of governance rather than economics alone. It argues that political interference, lack of accountability, and avoidance of institutional reform have turned public institutions into massive financial liabilities whose costs are passed directly to citizens.

NOTES:

Weak governance drives financial failure of public institutions. Political interference undermines institutional efficiency. SOE losses create fiscal pressure on the national budget. Public bears cost through inflation, taxes, and subsidy cuts. Privatisation without reform often worsens inequality. Accountability and merit based leadership are essential for recovery. Institutional reform is more effective than asset sell offs.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Public sector performance, fiscal challenges, governance crisis
- Public Administration: Institutional reform, accountability, administrative efficiency
- Economics: State enterprises, budget deficits, fiscal burden
- Current Affairs: Energy pricing, privatisation debates, economic instability
- Governance and Policy Studies: Corruption, political interference, reform strategies

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that when governments run institutions poorly, public money is wasted. For example, if a railway system keeps losing billions yet no managers are replaced, losses continue. To cover this gap, governments raise electricity prices or impose new taxes, which affect daily life. In many countries, state companies earn profits because they hire professionals and enforce strict accountability. In Pakistan's case, political appointments and corruption weaken performance, turning helpful services into financial drains.

Facts and Figures:

- SOE losses rose from Rs 30.6 billion in 2023–24 to Rs 123 billion in 2024–25
- Losses touched Rs 343 billion in the first half of 2025 alone
- National Highway Authority recorded Rs 153 billion deficit
- Pakistan Railways lost Rs 26.5 billion
- Pakistan Steel Mills lost Rs 15.6 billion
- Total losses of major institutions crossed nearly Rs 5.9 trillion

To sum up, The article makes clear that Pakistan’s crisis is not about lack of resources but absence of responsibility. Until governance replaces gimmicks, reform replaces rhetoric, and accountability replaces excuses, public institutions will keep sinking and the people will keep paying. In this story of deficits, the real loss is not money alone, but trust in the state itself.

AFGHANISTAN: A GATHERING GLOBAL STORM

Author: Aamir Zulfiqar Khan

Summary:

The article warns that Afghanistan’s instability is no longer a local wound but a gathering global storm whose tremors already shake the region. The writer begins with the 1988 Geneva Peace Accords, which ended the Soviet invasion yet ignored Afghanistan’s internal realities. With Afghan Mujahidin excluded, the state soon collapsed after Soviet support vanished, giving rise to warlords, factional violence, and eventually the rule of the Taliban in 1996. What followed was not peace but the transformation of Afghanistan into a sanctuary for militant networks, where weak borders and absent governance allowed terrorism to evolve from scattered local groups into organised international forces. The biggest beneficiary became Al-Qaeda, which professionalised training, unified ideology, and used digital propaganda to shift conflict from a local struggle into a global ideological war. The author further shows that how this militant model inspired later terror structures, including the rise of ISIS whose territorial control replicated the Taliban blueprint across conflict zones. After 9/11, the United States invaded Afghanistan, expecting swift victory. Instead, a 21-year war consumed trillions of dollars and left the country devastated. History repeated itself after 2021 as instability deepened once more. Pakistan emerged in the line of fire as groups such as Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan and Islamic State Khorasan Province strengthened inside Afghanistan. The author cites a surge of terrorism in Pakistan, cross-border attacks affecting Chinese nationals, and rising refugee flows. He argues that Afghanistan has become a terrorism incubator whose fallout threatens the world unless the international community replaces empty condemnation with calibrated engagement and firm pressure on the de facto rulers to dismantle militant safe havens.

Overview:

The article explains how flawed peace settlements, weak governance, and militant sanctuaries turned Afghanistan into a global terrorism hub. It warns that renewed instability now fuels regional violence, refugee crises, and international security threats, urging sustained diplomatic engagement instead of neglect.

NOTES:

The article underlines that Afghanistan’s recurring instability stems from peace processes that ended wars without building durable political order. The 1988 Geneva Peace Accords removed Soviet forces but excluded key Afghan actors, which quickly led to state collapse, warlord rule, and the rise of militant governance. Weak institutions, porous borders, and absence of legal control transformed Afghanistan into a sanctuary for extremist

networks, allowing terrorism to evolve from local insurgencies into coordinated international movements. Groups professionalised training, unified ideology, and leveraged technology to globalise violence, turning a domestic conflict into a worldwide security threat. The post-9/11 intervention removed one regime but failed to establish lasting governance, producing two decades of war that devastated the country and revived militant ecosystems once foreign forces withdrew. As power fragmented again, terrorist organisations expanded safe havens, directly destabilising neighbouring states, particularly Pakistan, through cross-border attacks and rising violence. Refugee flows intensified regional strain, while global rivalries risked turning Afghanistan into a proxy battleground once more.

CSS Syllabus Subjects and Related Topics:

- International Relations: Post-war state failure, proxy conflicts, global terrorism
- Pakistan Affairs: Border security, militancy spillover, refugee pressures
- Current Affairs: Afghanistan crisis, regional security risks
- Security Studies: Terror networks, insurgency evolution

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows how chaos creates space for violence. When governments collapse, armed groups fill the vacuum. For example, after Soviet withdrawal, Afghanistan lost central authority and warlords took over. Later, militant camps trained fighters from many countries. This led to global attacks like 9/11. In recent years, Pakistan suffered over 1,700 terror incidents in 2025 alone. Millions of Afghan refugees also crossed borders as security worsened, including over one million expelled from Iran in 2025 due to instability fears. These examples prove how one failing state can destabilise entire regions.

Facts and Figures:

- Geneva Peace Accords signed in 1988
- US war in Afghanistan lasted 21 years
- Cost exceeded \$2.3 trillion to the US alone
- Pakistan faced over 1,700 attacks in 2025
- Nearly 4,000 deaths occurred in one year
- Iran expelled about 1.1 million Afghans in 2025
- Multiple terror groups now operate from Afghan soil

To sum up, Afghanistan's tragedy is no longer sealed within its mountains; it now spills across borders and continents. History has shown that abandoned crises never stay local for long. Without collective action, firm diplomacy, and real pressure on militant networks, the world risks replaying past disasters on a wider scale.

THE WATER WAR

Author: Ayaz Ahmed

Summary:

The article warns that water has become India's quietest albeit most potent weapon against Pakistan. After failing to diplomatically isolate Pakistan on terrorism charges, the Indian government under the BJP appears willing to weaponise rivers by threatening to undo the Indus Waters Treaty. The article recalls Prime Minister Modi's 2016 meeting with water experts, which signalled intent to squeeze Pakistan's lifeline. Such a move, the writer argues, violates both the treaty's legal safeguards and international law. Pakistan's vulnerability as a lower riparian state traces back to the colonial boundary of 1947, which handed India control over crucial headwaters. From the short lived Inter Dominion Accord to the eventual World Bank brokered treaty, water has remained central to Indo Pakistan tensions, yet the treaty endured wars and crises for decades.

The article then exposes how India has exploited treaty loopholes to build hydropower projects on western rivers, reducing flows into Pakistan despite repeated objections. Projects like Salal, Kishanganga and Wullar are cited as undermining agricultural stability by shrinking river volumes, especially in the Chenab. The writer warns that future storage could allow India to starve Pakistan's farms or unleash floods during monsoons. Such brinkmanship risks escalation between two nuclear states and may rebound against India itself. Flood threats in Kashmir, Chinese leverage over the Brahmaputra and India's credibility with other neighbours all loom large. With climate change melting glaciers and rainfall patterns shifting, Pakistan's water stress deepens. The article ends with a call for domestic urgency, urging Pakistan to invest in dams before drought and deluge become permanent features.

Overview:

The article examines water as a strategic instrument in India Pakistan relations. It traces historical roots of the dispute and highlights treaty violations. It argues that unilateral actions on rivers threaten regional stability and Pakistan's survival.

NOTES:

The article highlights how water has emerged as a strategic pressure point in India Pakistan relations, with India increasingly signalling its willingness to use control over rivers as leverage. It traces Pakistan's structural vulnerability to the 1947 partition, which left it as a lower riparian state dependent on upstream flows from India. The Indus Waters Treaty is presented as a rare example of sustained cooperation that survived wars and crises, yet is now under strain due to Indian threats of unilateral suspension and reinterpretation. The article underlines that such actions violate both treaty provisions and international law. It also looks at India's construction of hydropower and storage projects on western rivers which, though justified by India under treaty clauses, have reduced water flows into Pakistan especially in the Chenab. This reduction threatens agriculture, energy security, and economic stability. The article warns that future storage could enable deliberate shortages or flood manipulation, raising the risk of escalation between two nuclear states. It further notes that India's strategy may backfire by creating flooding risks in Kashmir, inviting Chinese countermeasures on the Brahmaputra, and eroding India's credibility with other neighbours. Climate change, glacier melt, and erratic rainfall are shown to intensify Pakistan's water stress, making internal water management and dam construction an urgent national priority.

CSS Syllabus Related Topics:

- ❖ Pakistan Affairs: includes water security and India Pakistan relations.
- ❖ International Relations: covers river treaties and conflict escalation.
- ❖ Current Affairs: addresses climate stress and regional disputes.
- ❖ Environmental Studies: links glaciers and water scarcity.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan depends on rivers flowing from India. If water is reduced, crops fail and power shortages rise. For example, reduced Chenab flow hurt farmers in Punjab. The treaty protects Pakistan but needs enforcement. Climate change worsens the danger as glaciers shrink.

Facts and Figures:

- ❖ Indus Waters Treaty signed in 1960 under World Bank auspices.
- ❖ Chenab flow dropped from about 10,000 to 6,000 cusecs at times
- ❖ Salal project capacity stands at 690 megawatts.
- ❖ Kishanganga project generates about 330 megawatts.

In a nutshell, Water disputes no longer sit at the margins of politics. They define survival. If rivers are choked and storage remains absent, Pakistan faces a future of thirst and turmoil. Diplomacy matters, yet preparation at home will decide resilience.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- ❖ Abrogate means cancel formally; synonym revoke; antonym uphold.
- ❖ Riparian means river related; synonym riverside; antonym inland.
- ❖ Covertly means secretly; synonym furtively; antonym openly.
- ❖ Flagrant means openly offensive; synonym blatant; antonym subtle.
- ❖ Stalemate means deadlock; synonym impasse; antonym breakthrough.
- ❖ Prodigious means remarkable; synonym extraordinary; antonym ordinary.
- ❖ Detriment means harm; synonym damage; antonym benefit.
- ❖ Unilateral means one sided; synonym independent; antonym mutual.

CSS PLATFORM NEXUS

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