

FROM DOMINANCE TO DECLINE

THE FATE OF SUPERPOWERS

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CSS PLATFORM

CSS Platform –

FROM DOMINANCE TO DECLINE: THE FATE OF SUPERPOWERS

Author: Ashfaq Ahmad

Summary:

History shares a recurring pattern in global politics. Nations rise to unmatched dominance, yet decline remains inevitable. Superpowers emerge through economic strength, technological innovation, and stable governance. Wealth fuels military expansion and global influence. The United States rose through industrial growth and strategic reach, while China's ascent reflects economic dynamism and technological ambition. Power, however, carries seeds of decay within itself. Overexpansion drains resources, economic imbalance weakens foundations, and internal divisions erode unity. Paul Kennedy's concept of "imperial overstretch" explains how global ambitions often exceed economic capacity, leading to gradual deterioration rather than sudden collapse.

Decline also stems from miscalculation and stagnation. Superpowers often underestimate emerging rivals, allowing them to rise quietly. China's patient strategy and economic outreach exemplify this shift. Meanwhile, innovation determines survival in modern competition. A state that lags in technology risks irrelevance. The global order now tilts toward multipolarity, where influence disperses among several actors rather than one dominant force. The United States still holds primacy, yet faces mounting challenges from China and other powers. History moves like a pendulum, never fixed, always shifting. The fall of one power signals not an end, but a transition toward a new balance.

Overview:

The article examines the lifecycle of superpowers through historical and contemporary examples. It explains how economic strength, military reach and innovation create dominance, while overexpansion, internal decay and strategic misjudgment lead to decline. It highlights the rise of new powers and the shift toward a multipolar global system.

NOTES:

The article highlights that superpowers rise on economic strength, military capability and technological innovation, but their decline begins when ambitions exceed resources, a condition often described as imperial overstretch. It emphasizes that overexpansion, rising economic strain and internal instability such as political divisions weaken state foundations over time. Technological stagnation further accelerates decline as emerging powers capitalize on innovation and strategic patience to challenge existing dominance. The case of China reflects calculated economic diplomacy and long-term planning, while past examples like the Soviet Union show how excessive commitments lead to collapse. The shifting global order from unipolarity to multipolarity underscores that power is no longer concentrated in a single state but distributed among several actors. The article reinforces that decline is gradual, shaped by internal weaknesses and external competition, and that global leadership depends on sustained economic balance, innovation, and political cohesion.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: Balance of power, rise and fall of states
- Current Affairs: US-China rivalry, multipolar world order
- Political Science: State power, governance, political stability

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how powerful countries rise and fall over time. A country becomes strong through money, technology, and military power. For example, the United States expanded its influence through global bases and trade. China grew by focusing on industry and infrastructure projects like the Belt and Road Initiative. Problems

arise when a country spends too much on wars or ignores internal issues. The Soviet Union collapsed due to economic pressure and excessive commitments. Today, competition includes technology like artificial intelligence and cyber warfare. The world now has many strong countries rather than one dominant power. This shows that power keeps shifting and no nation remains supreme forever.

Facts and Figures:

- The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 due to economic and political strain
- China's Belt and Road Initiative spans Asia, Africa, and Europe
- The United States maintains military bases across multiple continents
- Modern competition includes artificial intelligence and cyber warfare
- The Cold War shaped global power through ideological rivalry
- US involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq consumed vast resources
- Global order is shifting toward a multipolar SYSTEM

To sum up, the article delivers a timeless lesson. Power is never permanent. Strength breeds ambition, but ambition invites strain. Superpowers rise with force, but fall through imbalance. The world does not stand still. It evolves with shifting alliances and emerging rivals. The future belongs to balance, not dominance. History whispers a clear truth that every empire must bow to change.

THE US-IRAN CONFLICT

Author: Quraitulain Qureshi

Summary:

The confrontation between the United States and Iran has turned into a dangerous geopolitical storm with no clear horizon. What began as a limited clash now threatens global stability. Military strikes, sanctions, cyber operations, and proxy wars have intensified the crisis. Iran's historical endurance shapes its response. Its people possess deep-rooted resilience and national pride. Any attempt to break this resolve through force appears futile. The conflict has already caused immense destruction. Infrastructure lies damaged, economies face strain, and civilians endure suffering. Neither side seems capable of securing a decisive victory. The war risks becoming a prolonged contest of endurance rather than a swift resolution.

The repercussions extend far beyond the battlefield. The global economy faces serious disruption due to instability in energy markets. The Strait of Hormuz remains a critical flashpoint. Even minor threats there trigger oil price surges. Developing nations suffer the most due to economic fragility. Gulf states find themselves caught in a delicate position. They balance alliances with the US while avoiding confrontation with Iran. Meanwhile, the United States faces financial burdens and domestic pressure. The article argues that diplomacy offers the only viable exit. History shows wars end through dialogue, not destruction. Without negotiation, the conflict may spiral into deeper chaos with far-reaching consequences.

Overview:

The article explores the escalating US-Iran conflict through political, economic, and historical lenses. It highlights Iran's resilience, the heavy costs borne by both sides, and the ripple effects on global markets. It stresses that military dominance cannot secure lasting peace. Diplomatic engagement emerges as the only rational path forward in a volatile international environment.

NOTES:

The conflict between the United States and Iran reveals the limits of military coercion in resolving deep-rooted geopolitical disputes, as both sides incur heavy strategic and economic costs without achieving decisive outcomes.

Iran's historical resilience and strong national identity shape its defiant posture, making prolonged resistance highly probable. The war combines conventional force with sanctions, cyber operations, and proxy engagements, which intensify instability across the region. The Strait of Hormuz emerges as a critical chokepoint, where even minor disruption threatens global energy security and triggers inflation worldwide, particularly affecting developing economies. Gulf states face a delicate diplomatic dilemma as they balance security ties with Washington while avoiding confrontation with Tehran. The humanitarian toll continues to rise as infrastructure collapses, economies weaken, and civilian populations suffer displacement and deprivation. The article suggests that global powers carry responsibility under international law to exercise restraint, yet strategic interests often override such obligations. It concludes that diplomacy, negotiation, and multilateral engagement remain the only viable pathways to de-escalation, as prolonged warfare risks deepening global economic fragility and political instability.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- International Relations: Conflict resolution, power politics, diplomacy
- Current Affairs: US-Iran conflict, Middle East crisis, global energy security

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains a major conflict between two powerful countries. The US uses military force and sanctions. Iran responds with resistance and determination. For example, Iran continues retaliation despite heavy losses. The Strait of Hormuz carries nearly one fifth of global oil. Any disruption raises fuel prices worldwide. This affects countries like Pakistan that depend on imports. War damages economies and harms civilians. Families lose homes and income. Markets become unstable and investors withdraw money. History shows that wars such as the Iran-Iraq conflict ended through talks, not force. The key lesson is that dialogue prevents destruction and builds lasting peace.

Facts and Figures:

- Around 20 percent of global oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz
- Iran has a civilizational history spanning over 2500 years
- The conflict involves missile strikes, cyber warfare, and proxy battles
- Global oil prices surge with any threat to the Gulf region
- Developing countries face inflation due to rising energy costs
- Gulf states host major US military bases
- Economic sanctions have severely affected Iran's economy

The long and the short of it, the author argues that war offers no clean victory. It breeds loss, chaos, and uncertainty. Iran's resolve cannot be crushed easily. The United States also pays a heavy price. The world stands on a fragile edge. Only diplomacy can pull it back. Dialogue is not weakness. It is wisdom in action. Without it, this conflict may drag humanity into deeper turmoil.

PATIENT: PAKISTAN — DIAGNOSIS: EDUCATION CRISIS

Author: Mashal Rubab

Summary:

Pakistan's education system stands as a patient in distress, plagued by deep-rooted structural failures and chronic neglect. The crisis manifests through millions of out-of-school children, weak literacy foundations, and a fragile institutional framework. Around one-third of school-age children remain excluded, a stark reflection of systemic inefficiency. Rural deprivation intensifies the issue, where children often trade classrooms for labor. Literacy rates hover at modest levels, with a glaring gender gap that sidelines female education. Financial neglect further cripples the system, as public spending remains far below global standards. Schools suffer from poor infrastructure,

untrained staff, and overcrowded environments. The system struggles to deliver even basic learning outcomes, exposing cracks not only in access but also in quality.

The crisis deepens through high dropout rates, gender disparity, and a fragmented education structure that fuels inequality. Students often abandon schooling due to poverty, distance, or poor standards. Parallel systems create unequal futures, where elite institutions produce global competitors, while public schools fail to meet basic needs. Root causes lie in poverty, governance failures, rapid population growth, and cultural barriers. Long-term consequences threaten national stability, economic growth, and social cohesion. However, the article asserts that recovery remains possible through decisive reforms. Increased funding, teacher training, curriculum change, and technological integration offer a path forward. Thus education emerges not merely as a sector but as the lifeline for national transformation.

Overview:

The article presents Pakistan's education crisis through a medical analogy, diagnosing systemic failures and prescribing reforms. It highlights access issues, quality concerns, gender disparity, and financial neglect. It also emphasizes structural causes and long-term national consequences while proposing practical solutions for recovery.

NOTES:

Pakistan's education system reveals a profound structural collapse shaped by exclusion, inequality, and sustained neglect. A large segment of children remains outside classrooms, particularly in rural areas where poverty drives them toward labor instead of learning. Literacy levels remain fragile, with female education suffering due to cultural barriers and safety concerns. Financial commitment stays critically low, which leads to weak infrastructure, overcrowded schools, and poorly trained teachers. The system struggles to deliver both access and quality, as many students fail to achieve basic literacy. Dropout rates rise sharply after primary education, as economic pressure, distance, and poor standards push students out. The crisis deepens further through a fragmented education structure that creates unequal opportunities, where elite institutions produce skilled individuals while public schools fail to meet basic needs. Root causes lie in poverty, governance failures, rapid population growth, and entrenched social norms. These weaknesses threaten long-term national development by reducing productivity and slowing economic progress. But recovery remains possible through decisive reforms such as increased funding, teacher training, curriculum modernization, and technological integration. Education stands as the backbone of national strength, and without urgent correction, the gap between promise and reality will only widen.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Education system, socio-economic challenges, policy reforms
- Current Affairs: Literacy crisis, human development, gender inequality
- International Relations: Human capital development and global competitiveness
- Sociology: Social stratification, inequality in education

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains Pakistan's education problem. Many children do not attend school due to poverty and lack of facilities. For example, in rural areas, children work instead of studying. Literacy remains low, especially among girls, due to social barriers and safety concerns. Government spending on education is less than 1% of GDP, which results in poor infrastructure and lack of resources. Many students leave school early due to financial pressure or long distances. For instance, a child may start school but leave by grade five to earn money. Different types of schools create inequality, where some students learn modern skills while others lack basic education. The key idea is that education shapes a country's future, and without reform, problems like poverty and unemployment will worsen.

Facts and Figures:

- 25.1 million children in Pakistan are out of school

- Around 35% of school-age children lack access to education
- Literacy rate ranges between 60% and 63%
- Female literacy stands near 52%
- Public spending on education is about 0.8% of GDP
- Nearly 90% of education budget goes to salaries
- Secondary school participation remains below 50% in many regions

To sum up, Pakistan's education system stands on fragile ground. Neglect has deepened wounds over decades. Yet the door to recovery remains open. Reform demands urgency, not just empty words. Investment must replace indifference. Education is not a choice but a necessity. A nation that ignores learning writes its own decline. The cure exists, but only decisive action can restore strength.

Difficult Words and Meanings:

- Ubiquitous – present everywhere; Synonym: pervasive; Antonym: rare
- Dilapidated – in poor condition due to neglect; Synonym: ruined; Antonym: maintained
- Absenteeism – frequent absence from duty; Synonym: nonattendance; Antonym: presence
- Erratic – irregular or unpredictable in behavior; Synonym: inconsistent; Antonym: stable
- Prognosis – forecast of future outcome, especially of a situation; Synonym: prediction; Antonym: uncertainty
- Precedence – priority in importance or order; Synonym: priority; Antonym: inferiority
- Discrepancy – lack of compatibility or similarity; Synonym: inconsistency; Antonym: conformity
- Amenities – useful or desirable facilities; Synonym: facilities; Antonym: deprivation
- Seminaries – institutions for religious education; Synonym: religious schools; Antonym: secular institutions
- Exacerbates – makes a problem worse; Synonym: aggravates; Antonym: alleviates
- Stymie – to hinder or block progress; Synonym: obstruct; Antonym: facilitate
- Diverge – to move or develop in different directions; Synonym: deviate; Antonym: converge
- Repercussions – indirect negative effects; Synonym: consequences; Antonym: benefits
- Necessitates – makes something necessary; Synonym: requires; Antonym: negates

FUTURE OF VNSAS

Author: Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Summary:

The article argues that violent non-state actors have emerged as a persistent force that erodes state authority and reshapes global order. After 9/11, these actors expanded their reach through violence, ideology and parallel governance structures. They challenge the state by controlling territory, collecting funds and even delivering justice. Their rise exposes weak governance and fragile institutions. Technology has amplified their reach, as digital platforms enable propaganda, recruitment and coordination across borders. Encrypted communication and cyber tools make surveillance difficult. These actors no longer depend on physical presence, as online networks sustain their operations. Their decentralised structure allows survival despite pressure, while urban embedding complicates counterterrorism efforts.

The article contends that globalisation, conflict and climate stress deepen their influence. Access to cheap drones, open-source intelligence and cryptocurrency strengthens their operational capacity. Fragmentation has led to localised agendas, yet global linkages persist. Leaderless resistance and lone wolf tactics hinder detection. Weak states provide fertile ground where these groups replace governance systems. They exploit disasters and civil wars to expand influence and recruit youth. Their hybrid nature blurs lines between terrorism and organised crime. The resurgence near Afghanistan reflects evolving tactics. Effective response requires a blend of force, governance reform and community engagement. These actors will not disappear, but their form will continue to evolve.

Overview:

The article explores the transformation of violent non-state actors in the modern era. It highlights their use of technology, decentralised structures and hybrid tactics. It explains how governance gaps, global rivalries and environmental crises fuel their growth. The writer concludes that long-term stability depends on institutional strength and adaptive strategies.

NOTES:

The article highlights the evolving character of violent non-state actors as a decentralised and adaptive force that steadily undermines state authority. These actors no longer rely on rigid hierarchies or territorial limits; instead, they operate through fluid networks that merge violence with governance functions. They seize territory, extract resources, and impose parallel justice systems. Their strength lies in fragmentation and flexibility, which allow survival under sustained pressure. Technology serves as a force multiplier, as encrypted platforms conceal communication while digital media drives propaganda and recruitment. Urban spaces offer concealment, and cyberspace extends reach beyond borders, which complicates detection and weakens conventional counterterrorism frameworks. Globalisation and instability further enhance their resilience, as cheap drones, open-source intelligence, and cryptocurrency expand operational capacity at minimal cost. Conflict zones and weak governance create fertile ground where these groups entrench themselves. They exploit disasters, civil wars, and social fractures to recruit and expand influence. Leaderless resistance and lone wolf tactics deepen complexity, as command chains become invisible. Their hybrid nature blurs the boundary between terrorism and organised crime, which confuses legal and strategic responses. The resurgence near Afghanistan signals that these actors evolve rather than disappear, and an effective response demands a calibrated mix of force, institutional reform, and societal engagement, as the threat continues to mutate with time.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations:
 - Non-state actors in global politics
 - Terrorism and counterterrorism strategies
 - Hybrid warfare and asymmetric conflict
- Pakistan Affairs:
 - Internal security challenges
 - Militancy in border regions
 - Governance and state capacity
- Current Affairs:
 - Post 9/11 security landscape
 - Role of technology in conflict
 - Regional instability and extremism
- Political Science:
 - State sovereignty and legitimacy
 - Role of institutions in governance
 - Conflict and security studies

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that militant groups today act like small states. For example, some groups collect taxes and run courts in areas they control. Technology plays a major role. A group can recruit members online without meeting them. Platforms like encrypted apps hide their communication. Drones provide cheap surveillance and attack options. One small drone can gather intelligence that once required large systems. Open tools such as maps help plan attacks. The Strait of Hormuz and nearby regions show how instability affects global trade. Around the Afghanistan border, militant groups have regained strength with new alliances. Climate disasters also create chaos where such groups grow. When floods or wars weaken governance, these actors step in and recruit vulnerable people.

Facts and Figures:

- Post 9/11 era marked rise of global non-state actors
- Encrypted platforms like Telegram complicate surveillance
- Drones and jammers now accessible to small groups
- Militant resurgence reported near Afghanistan border regions
- Cryptocurrency enables cross border anonymous funding
- Urban warfare increases due to militant embedding in cities

To wrap up, The article shows a harsh truth that power no longer rests only with states. Violent non-state actors adapt faster than institutions. They exploit every crack in governance. Military force alone cannot uproot them. Durable stability demands reform, technology and public trust. The future battlefield will not be defined by armies alone. It will be shaped by networks, narratives and resilience.

THE MEARCH OF FOLLY

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article argues that the war launched under Donald Trump reflects a shifting and uncertain strategy that lacks a clear endgame. The stated objectives kept changing, which deepened confusion and exposed strategic inconsistency.

Despite heavy bombardment and leadership losses, Iran did not collapse. Instead, it consolidated power and installed new leadership, projecting defiance. Its response relied on asymmetric strikes against US bases, Israel, and Gulf infrastructure. By targeting oil facilities and threatening the Strait of Hormuz, Iran raised global economic costs and unsettled energy markets. The war, far from securing quick gains, triggered economic disruption and political backlash within the United States.

The article highlights the conflict fits the classical notion of policy failure as defined by Barbara W. Tuchman in her work *The March of Folly*. The war meets all criteria of folly. It proved counterproductive, ignored viable diplomatic alternatives, and emerged from collective decision-making rather than isolated impulse. Iran's regime endured, while global oil shocks harmed even American interests. Diplomatic channels, mediated by Oman, had nearly achieved a breakthrough, yet were abandoned. Thus, force replaced negotiation at a critical moment. The outcome regardless of its conclusion will reshape regional dynamics but is unlikely to favour Washington.

Overview:

The article examines the US-Israel war against Iran through the lens of strategic miscalculation. It highlights shifting objectives, Iranian resilience, and economic fallout. The writer frames the conflict as a classic case of policy failure rooted in poor judgment and disregard for diplomacy.

NOTES:

The article presents the war as a case of strategic drift, where shifting objectives exposed weak planning and absence of a clear endgame. Despite intense military pressure, Iran did not fracture; instead, it stabilised its leadership and sustained resistance through calibrated asymmetric strikes. Its ability to target energy infrastructure and threaten the Strait of Hormuz amplified global economic strain and disrupted oil markets. The conflict also triggered domestic backlash within the United States, where political divisions and public opposition constrained policy direction. The writer underscores that military force failed to secure decisive outcomes, while economic repercussions extended beyond the battlefield. By invoking Barbara W. Tuchman and her concept in *The March of Folly*, the argument frames the war as a policy failure that ignored viable diplomatic options. Negotiations had approached a breakthrough, yet were abandoned in favour of force, which proved counterproductive. The regime in Tehran endured, and the intended strategic gains remained elusive, as the conflict moved towards reshaping regional dynamics without delivering advantage to Washington.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations:
 - War and foreign policy decision making
 - Balance of power and strategic miscalculation
 - Conflict resolution and diplomacy
 - Energy geopolitics and economic security
- Pakistan Affairs:
 - Regional instability and its spillover effects
 - Pakistan's strategic environment
- Current Affairs:
 - US Iran Israel conflict
 - Global oil crisis and economic disruption
- Political Science:
 - Decision making in governance
 - Policy failure and state behaviour
 - Role of leadership and institutions

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that wars do not always achieve stated goals. For example, removing leadership does not ensure regime collapse. Iran replaced its top leader quickly, which shows institutional depth. Economic warfare also matters. Around one fifth of global oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz. Any disruption raises global prices. The war pushed oil markets into instability. Diplomatic talks had reached an advanced stage before conflict began. This shows that negotiation can sometimes achieve more than force. Public opinion in the United States also turned against the war, which reflects how domestic politics influence global decisions. History repeats similar lessons such as the Vietnam War, where prolonged conflict weakened stronger powers.

Facts and Figures:

- About 20 percent of global oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz
- Iran carried out strikes on Gulf energy infrastructure
- Diplomatic talks mediated by Oman were near breakthrough
- US public opinion polls showed majority opposition to war
- Iran maintained regime continuity despite leadership loss

To sum up, Power without clarity invites failure. The war stands as a reminder that force cannot replace foresight. History repeats its warnings, yet leaders often ignore them. True strength lies not in escalation but in restraint and wisdom.

DEBATING WAR AND POLICY

Author: Muhammad Amir Rana

Summary:

The article argues that Pakistan stands at a precarious juncture as the Gulf conflict, erupted by the US-Israel war on Iran, intersects with its ongoing challenges in Afghanistan and internal security pressures. Pakistan's leadership faces a delicate balancing act between supporting its Gulf allies, particularly Saudi Arabia, and maintaining stable relations with Iran. The escalating conflict tests Pakistan's strategic posture, economic resilience, and diplomatic bandwidth. The war has overshadowed domestic confrontations with Afghanistan, raising questions about the state's long-term approach, the Taliban's role in terrorism, and how Pakistan intends to secure its interests along the Durand Line, energy corridors, and trade routes. The parliamentary session convened to discuss these matters highlights the complexity of coordinating security, foreign policy, and internal governance in a region defined by overlapping crises.

The article further explores the multidimensional challenges Pakistan faces, including internal political sensitivities, sectarian pressures, and the risk of insurgent activity in Balochistan. Public sentiment in Pakistan is largely sympathetic to Iran, while the Islamic Revolutionary Guards maintain networks that exert pressure domestically. The fragile economy, dependence on Gulf oil, and strategic commitments constrain policy options. Meanwhile, India's recalibration in the region, particularly its reduced engagement with Iran and closer ties with Israel, adds another layer of strategic complexity. Pakistan must navigate this environment with caution, combining diplomacy, measured support for allies, and internal cohesion, while ensuring that abrupt policy shifts do not inflame tensions with Afghanistan or deepen domestic instability.

Overview:

The article examines how Pakistan is caught between the Gulf conflict and its own regional and internal security challenges. It highlights the difficulties of balancing strategic alliances with Iran and Saudi Arabia, the implications of Afghanistan policy shifts, and the influence of public sentiment and sectarian dynamics. The writer underlines that managing foreign entanglements, economic dependencies, and domestic cohesion requires careful planning, transparency, and parliamentary engagement.

NOTES:

Pakistan stands caught in a strategic crossfire where external war and internal strain collide. The Gulf conflict has placed immense pressure on policy choices, as the state must walk a fine line between Iran and Saudi Arabia without tipping the balance. The war has pushed Afghanistan's issue into the shadows, but still questions about Taliban policy, border security, and long-term objectives remain unresolved. Parliament has been drawn into the debate, which reflects the gravity of decisions that shape national security. At the same time, internal fault lines deepen the challenge. Sectarian sensitivities, public sympathy for Iran, and the presence of ideological networks create domestic pressure on the state. Balochistan adds another layer of risk, where insurgent elements may exploit regional instability and weak coordination across borders. Economic fragility further tightens the noose, as reliance on Gulf energy limits room for manoeuvre. India's shifting posture in the region complicates the equation, as new alignments reshape the strategic landscape. In such a climate, Pakistan must rely on calibrated diplomacy, cautious engagement and internal cohesion as any abrupt move could open multiple fronts at once.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations:
 - Regional conflicts and security dynamics
 - Geopolitical alliances and strategic diplomacy
 - Energy security and economic vulnerability
- Pakistan Affairs:
 - Internal security and sectarianism
 - Balochistan insurgency and governance challenges
 - Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and border management
- Current Affairs:
 - Iran-US-Israel conflict and regional implications
 - Gulf war spillover effects on Pakistan
 - Global energy markets and oil supply disruptions
- Political Science:
 - State capacity, crisis management, and governance
 - Role of parliament in security and foreign policy
 - Strategic decision-making under uncertainty

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows how conflicts in one region can affect neighbouring countries. Pakistan's dependence on Gulf oil makes it vulnerable to price shocks if supply routes are disrupted. Public opinion often favours Iran, influencing the government's policy options. Balochistan remains sensitive due to insurgency and strategic projects like Gwadar. Afghanistan's instability affects border security and counterterrorism efforts. India's reduced engagement with Iran demonstrates how nations adjust strategies during crises. Parliamentary debate is crucial for coherent policy.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan imports a significant portion of oil and gas from Gulf countries
- Balochistan hosts critical projects including Gwadar port
- US-Israel war on Iran escalated tensions across the Gulf
- Pakistan maintains defence agreements with Saudi Arabia
- Taliban support for terrorists continues to influence regional security

To sum up, The article works as a narrative on Pakistan's delicate position. External conflicts, internal politics, and economic fragility intertwine to create a high-stakes environment. Strategic patience, measured diplomacy, and

internal cohesion are essential. Impulsive decisions or abrupt policy shifts could spark crises on multiple fronts. In such volatile circumstances, foresight must guide actions more than rhetoric or temporary expediency.

A HEGEMON WEAKENS

Author: Arifa Noor

Summary:

The article argues that the contemporary global order stands at a turning point, where the gradual weakening of the United States as a hegemon signals the erosion of the system it once sustained. The post-World War II order did not decline in isolation; it weakened alongside the power that upheld it. Economic turbulence, rising populism, and shifting alliances echo the instability of the inter-war period, suggesting history may not repeat but often rhymes. The strain on American resources has forced a reconsideration of its global military commitments, evident in tensions with European allies over Ukraine and reluctance to shoulder the burden of collective security. This shift reflects not merely leadership style but a deeper structural retreat of a power that once defined global stability.

The article suggests that the Middle East now mirrors this transformation, where instability stems from the diminishing role of the same power that once enforced order. The legacy of interventions, particularly after 9/11 and the invasion of Iraq, altered regional balances and enabled new actors to rise. Present conflicts, especially involving Iran, may reshape the region once again, either through direct confrontation or incomplete withdrawal. At the same time, Israel's expanding dominance and evolving Gulf alliances signal a reconfiguration of power. Economic repercussions, shifting defence priorities, and strained partnerships reveal cracks within longstanding alliances. The weakening of American influence thus marks not just a geopolitical shift but the slow unravelling of an entire international framework.

Overview:

The article examines the decline of US hegemony and its impact on the global order established after World War II. It highlights how reduced American commitment to global security has triggered instability, especially in the Middle East and Europe. The writer argues that shifting alliances, emerging regional powers, and economic consequences indicate a transition toward a new world order.

NOTES:

The article explains that global order weakens alongside the hegemonic power that sustains it, with the United States now reassessing its global military and political commitments. It highlights growing friction between the US and European allies especially over defence responsibilities and the Ukraine conflict which reflects a broader retreat from global leadership. The Middle East emerges as a key example where past US interventions, particularly after 9/11 and the Iraq war, disrupted regional balance and allowed new powers like Iran to assert influence. Current instability in the region is linked to this gradual withdrawal, while renewed conflict may further reshape political dynamics. The article also points to the rise of Israel as a dominant regional force and the likelihood of new alliances forming in response. Economic consequences for Gulf states and dissatisfaction with US security guarantees indicate weakening partnerships. The central argument stresses that the decline of American power is simultaneously eroding alliances and transforming the international system.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Impact of Middle East instability on Pakistan
- International Relations: Decline of US hegemony and shifting global order
- Political Science: Hegemony and balance of power theory
- Current Affairs: Iran conflict and regional geopolitical shifts

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how global power shapes world stability. When a strong country like the United States reduces its role, instability increases. For example, after World War II, the US maintained peace through alliances and military presence. However, recent tensions with Europe over defence spending show that this role is now under question. Another example lies in the Middle East, where the US invasion of Iraq weakened regional balance and allowed Iran to grow stronger. Today, conflicts in the region reflect that earlier shift. Israel's increasing influence also shows how power can shift when a dominant actor steps back. These examples illustrate that global order depends on strong leadership, and when that leadership weakens, uncertainty spreads.

Facts and Figures:

- Post World War II order was shaped by US dominance
- US invasion of Iraq in 2003 altered Middle East power balance
- Growing US pressure on Europe to increase defence spending
- Withdrawal of US troops from parts of the Middle East
- Rising influence of regional powers like Iran and Israel

To sum up, The article is a warning about a world in transition. Power rarely fades without consequence. As one pillar weakens, the structure above it begins to crack. The decline of a hegemon does not leave a vacuum; it invites competition, uncertainty, and realignment. The future now hinges on how states adapt to this shifting ground. Wisdom demands foresight, for history shows that every fading order gives birth to another often through turbulence rather than design.

BOGEY OF A RELIGIOUS WAR

Author: Jawed Naqvi

Summary:

The article challenges the conventional narrative that frames the Iran-Israel conflict as a religious war. Jawed Naqvi asserts that these simplistic binaries, such as Shia-Sunni or Arab-Persian, obscure the deeper geopolitical and historical roots of the conflict. The article traces the origins to 20th-century colonialism and post-1990 unipolar imperialism, emphasizing Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories since 1948 and 1967 as a critical catalyst. Iran's objectives, portrayed as rational and secular, center on resisting occupation and protecting regional sovereignty rather than pursuing sectarian agendas. The narrative highlights the resilience of ordinary Iranians and Palestinians, demonstrating how civilian experiences reveal the human costs of war, contrasting with Israel's pursuit of territory under the guise of biblical entitlement and environmental necessity. The author also shows similarities with India's nationalist policies, illustrating how resource scarcity can escalate geopolitical tensions.

The article further situates the conflict within a broader international context, pointing to the United States' role in manipulating sectarian narratives to justify intervention and secure oil resources. Iran's alliances with leaders like Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro, and Hugo Chávez reflect a principled stance on independence and anti-imperialism, rather than religious expansionism. Naqvi emphasizes that Iran's post-revolutionary policies aimed to broaden political participation rather than proselytize, challenging Western perceptions. The article examines simplistic, religion-driven explanations and urges recognition of strategic, economic, and historical dimensions underpinning current hostilities. Overall, it calls for nuanced understanding over reductive talk that obscures the secular motivations driving conflict.

Overview:

The article deconstructs the false perception of a religious war between Iran and Israel. It explains the historical and geopolitical factors behind the conflict, highlighting colonial legacies, territorial ambitions, and resource control. Iran's secular motivations, civilian resilience, and international alliances counter the oversimplified religious

narrative promoted by media and political actors. The article warns against superficial interpretations and stresses the importance of recognizing the strategic and ethical dimensions of the ongoing conflict.

NOTES:

The Iran-Israel conflict extends far beyond religion, rooted in historical occupation, colonial legacies, and post-1990 unipolar power dynamics, with Israel's seizure of Palestinian territories in 1948 and 1967 acting as a catalyst. Iran's objectives remain largely secular, centered on defending sovereignty and resisting domination rather than promoting sectarian agendas, while civilian hardships like those of Iranian mothers and Palestinian children, reveal the human cost of war. Israel's territorial ambitions mix biblical claims with environmental and strategic motives, and regional parallels, such as India-Pakistan water disputes, highlight how resource scarcity intensifies tensions. The United States manipulates sectarian narratives to justify intervention and secure oil whereas Iran's alliances with leaders like Mandela, Castro, and Chávez reflect principled anti-imperialism. Post-revolutionary Iran prioritized political participation over proselytization, challenging Western misconceptions, and the article underscores that understanding secular motivations, historical context, and strategic dimensions is essential to grasp the full complexity of the conflict.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations: Middle Eastern conflicts, US foreign policy, anti-imperialism.
- Pakistan Affairs: Regional security, resource disputes, geopolitical tensions.
- Current Affairs: Iran-Israel war, global energy security, US-Iran relations.

Notes for Beginners:

This article illustrates how conflicts often transcend religion and ethnicity. Iran and Israel's hostilities are shaped by historical occupation, geopolitical strategy, and resource control rather than purely religious motives. For example, Israel's pursuit of arable land parallels India's water disputes with Pakistan. Civilians like the Iranian mother or Palestinian children experience hardships that reveal the human dimension of war. Facts show Iran maintains alliances with Mandela, Castro, and Chávez to uphold anti-imperial principles. Understanding these secular and strategic motives is crucial for analyzing modern conflicts critically.

Facts and Figures:

- Israel occupied Palestinian territories in 1948 and 1967.
- Quds Day marks Iran's support for Palestinian liberation.
- Iran's alliances include Mandela (1992), Castro, and Chávez.
- US interventions often target oil resources and disrupt supply chains.
- Environmental scarcity, like river control, drives regional tensions.

To sum up, conflicts are often driven by history, resources, and political strategy. Recognizing secular motivations, civilian resilience, and global alliances offers a deeper understanding of the Iran-Israel confrontation. Simplistic binaries distort the reality, and nuanced analysis is essential to grasp the full spectrum of regional and international dynamics.

GRAVE NEW WORLD

Author: Tariq Khosa

Summary:

The article dissects the ongoing US-Israel war on Iran, portraying it as a reckless venture with devastating consequences for regional stability and global energy markets. It begins by highlighting the impulsive actions of the US and Israel in assassinating Iran's top leader, triggering a disciplined Iranian retaliation through missiles and drones targeting Israel, US bases, and critical energy infrastructure across Gulf states. The resulting paralysis of the

Strait of Hormuz, a crucial conduit for global oil and LNG supplies, has intensified market instability. The author pays attention to the disproportionate hubris of American leadership, likening it to barbarism, and criticizes the lack of strategic foresight and moral accountability, emphasizing that Iran's population and institutions are far from incapacitated. The article further examines the scenarios proposed by analysts, ranging from regime change or modification to mutual ceasefire or state collapse, each carrying severe implications for both regional power dynamics and civilian welfare.

Beyond military maneuvers, the article highlights the limitations of foreign-imposed solutions, stressing that Iran's deeply rooted political culture, historical continuity, and collective identity resist external imposition of democracy. The writings of Thomas Friedman and Reza Aslan are invoked to argue that sustainable solutions require diplomacy, humility and respect for Iran's civilizational heritage rather than brute force. The article also contextualizes the conflict within global capitalist power politics, asserting that contemporary geopolitics prioritizes weakening rival powers over historical or cultural considerations. It concludes that understanding the Iranian predicament demands recognition of both the human cost of conflict and the broader strategic, economic and civilizational stakes involved, rejecting simplistic narratives of moral righteousness or inevitable victory.

Overview:

The article provides a critical analysis of the US-Israel military aggression against Iran, emphasizing its reckless execution and far-reaching consequences. It highlights Iran's organized response, civilian resilience, and the vulnerability of global energy infrastructure. Analysts' scenarios are discussed, revealing the complexity of potential outcomes ranging from regime change to state collapse. The article also stresses the limitations of military solutions and the necessity for diplomacy, taking into account Iran's historical and civilizational continuity, ultimately calling for nuanced understanding over superficial judgments.

NOTES:

The US-Israel conflict with Iran is driven by strategic, economic and geopolitical motives rather than moral or humanitarian concerns. Iran's retaliatory capacity demonstrates its organized military capability and resilience. Control of the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf energy infrastructure is central to global oil security. Analysts predict scenarios including regime change, modification, ceasefire or state collapse, each with different implications for regional stability. US and Israeli objectives reflect a broader agenda of weakening rival powers. The limitations of foreign-imposed democracy highlight the significance of indigenous political culture and historical continuity. Civilian suffering underscores the human cost of protracted conflict.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: Middle Eastern conflicts, US foreign policy, global energy security.
- Pakistan Affairs: Regional security, strategic alliances, implications for Gulf stability.
- Current Affairs: Iran-US-Israel conflict, geopolitical risk management, energy markets.

Notes for Beginners:

The article illustrates that modern conflicts are rarely simple moral struggles. Iran's war with the US and Israel is shaped by power politics, control of energy resources, and regional dominance. For example, the paralysis of the Strait of Hormuz affects oil exports to Europe and Asia, demonstrating the global stakes. Analysts project multiple scenarios including regime change or state collapse, showing how unpredictable war outcomes can be. Civilians from Tehran to Gulf states experience disruptions that reveal the human dimension of geopolitics. Iran's historical identity shaped by millennia of culture, philosophy, and resistance underlines the difficulty of imposing external solutions.

Facts and Figures:

- Iran's population is approximately 90 million.
- The Strait of Hormuz handles about a fifth of global LNG exports, primarily from Qatar.

- Kharg Island accounts for nearly 90 percent of Iran's oil exports.
- Airports, hotels, data centers, and energy infrastructure in the Gulf have been targeted.
- US officials indicated the war could continue indefinitely.
- Thomas Friedman warns against destabilizing the entire Iranian landmass, roughly one-sixth the size of the US.

To sum up, The article emphasizes that conflicts involve intertwined strategic, economic, and historical dimensions. Recognizing Iran's civilizational resilience, civilian experiences, and geopolitical significance is essential to understand the current war fully. Military aggression without diplomacy risks prolonging human suffering and destabilizing global markets, highlighting the urgent need for informed, nuanced, and principled analysis.

STOPGAP OR LONG-TERM?

Author: Ahmed Bilal Mehboob

Summary:

The article examines Pakistan's governmental response to the sudden surge in global oil prices caused by the US-Israel conflict with Iran, highlighting both the immediacy and the limitations of the measures taken. Following Iran's missile and drone retaliation, global energy supply faced disruption, which directly impacted Pakistan's economy due to its reliance on imported fuel. The government reacted by raising petrol and diesel prices sharply and simultaneously announced an austerity plan targeting state expenditures and the privileges of senior officials. Measures such as grounding government vehicles, banning foreign trips, limiting fuel allowances, and replacing in-person meetings with online interactions were introduced to curb excessive spending. The article acknowledges that these steps provided temporary relief and somewhat mollified public anger, but it also critiques superficial measures like reduced work weeks, decreased court days, and symbolic salary cuts for ministers, pointing out that their practical benefits are limited and may even hinder administrative efficiency.

The author stresses that Pakistan's governance and bureaucratic culture remain misaligned with the economic reality and the nation's precarious financial situation. The article argues for long-term institutional austerity rather than short-term fixes, calling for the simplification of state protocols, elimination of lavish expenditures, and consistent monitoring of fuel and transport use by officials. The author suggests forming an independent austerity commission to enforce a disciplined and enduring approach, highlighting the importance of integrating economic prudence into the everyday functioning of all three branches of government. Ultimately, the article presents the austerity plan as a necessary but insufficient step, urging systemic reform and sustained restraint in governance to mitigate the effects of external shocks and internal inefficiencies.

Overview:

The article critically evaluates Pakistan's response to the sudden global energy crisis triggered by the US-Israel-Iran conflict. It highlights immediate governmental measures such as fuel price hikes and an austerity plan targeting lavish state expenditures. While the positive measures like limiting fuel allowances and grounding vehicles provided tangible savings, symbolic or counterproductive actions like reducing work weeks and cutting salaries had minimal impact. The author stresses that temporary measures cannot address the structural inefficiencies of governance, emphasizing the need for a long-term, disciplined, and culturally embedded austerity framework.

NOTES:

Pakistan's government acted swiftly in response to the surge in global oil prices caused by the US-Israel-Iran conflict, immediately raising petrol and diesel prices and announcing an austerity plan aimed at curbing lavish state spending. The plan included grounding 60 percent of government vehicles, banning foreign trips of officials, reducing fuel allowances, limiting protocol vehicles, replacing in-person meetings with online interactions and deferring the purchase of new vehicles. While these measures generated tangible savings, symbolic actions such as

salary cuts for ministers, reducing court days, shortening workweeks, and implementing work-from-home policies had limited or counterproductive effects and risked slowing administrative efficiency. Public backlash was intense due to perceived government opulence and continued privileges of top officials. The article emphasizes that such short-term measures are insufficient and long-term austerity embedded into governance, with strict monitoring of resources and simplification of protocols, is essential. The author suggests the formation of an independent austerity commission to ensure sustained fiscal discipline across all branches of government, arguing that systemic reform and a culture of frugality are important to align governance with Pakistan's economic reality, mitigate the impact of external shocks, and prevent unnecessary waste of public resources.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Governance, bureaucratic efficiency, public administration, economic policy, state accountability.
- Current Affairs: Energy crises, international conflicts affecting domestic economies, austerity measures.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that sudden external shocks, like global oil crises, directly affect Pakistan's economy due to dependency on imports. The government raised fuel prices to match global rates, but public resentment emerged because officials continued enjoying privileges. Real savings came from limiting vehicle use, foreign trips and fuel allowances, while symbolic measures like salary cuts had little effect. For example, grounding government vehicles saved fuel and expenditure immediately. The article stresses that austerity cannot be a temporary reaction; rather, it should be embedded into the system with strict monitoring and reform of bureaucratic culture. The goal is to align governance with the country's financial reality and prevent unnecessary wastage.

Facts and Figures:

- Fuel prices increased by Rs55 per litre on March 6, 2026.
- Government vehicles reduced by 60 percent to save fuel.
- Fuel allowances for federal ministers cut by 50 percent.
- Shortened workweek to four days and half staff working from home implemented.
- Provincial assemblies and judiciary introduced parallel austerity measures.

To wrap up, the article highlights the tension between governance culture and economic necessity. It shows that temporary austerity cannot substitute for systemic reform. True efficiency requires enduring discipline, accountability, and simplification of official protocols. By curbing extravagance and embedding frugality into daily governance, Pakistan can better withstand economic shocks and align administrative practices with national interests, ensuring both fiscal prudence and public trust.

PAKISTAN'S DILEMMA

Author: Zahid Hussain

Summary:

The article examines Pakistan's precarious position amid the escalating US-Israel conflict with Iran and its implications for the wider Gulf region. The conflict has drawn in Gulf Cooperation Council countries, including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain due to their security pacts with the United States and shared strategic interests. Iran's missile and drone retaliation, along with the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted global oil supplies, causing massive financial losses estimated between \$700 million and \$1.2 billion daily. Gulf airlines, tourism, and investments have suffered heavily and the reliance on expensive interceptors to neutralize Iranian attacks has further strained these countries. The article highlights how the US is pressing Gulf nations to actively participate, while Saudi Arabia and its allies attempt to avoid direct engagement. Pakistan, bound by a

defence pact with Saudi Arabia and hosting troops in the kingdom, faces a diplomatic tightrope. Islamabad has tried to maintain balance, condemning both the US-Israeli aggression and missile attacks on Gulf countries, while pledging assistance if Saudi sovereignty is threatened. The deployment of additional US Marines and discussions of potential ground operations in Iran further heighten regional risks, leaving Pakistan in a vulnerable strategic and political position.

The author emphasizes the delicate balancing act Pakistan must perform, considering its border with Iran, the presence of troops in Saudi Arabia, and historical ties to the Gulf. While Islamabad has engaged diplomatically, including high-level meetings with Saudi leadership, the fluidity of the situation means its neutrality could be challenged if Saudi Arabia is drawn into a direct confrontation. The conflict highlights the entanglement of regional powers, the economic consequences of military escalation, and the fragile position of states caught between alliances. Pakistan's careful navigation of the crisis highlights the broader tension between fulfilling defence obligations, safeguarding national interests, and avoiding entrapment in a war not of its making. The article stresses that these developments have profound implications for regional stability, economic security, and diplomatic strategy, urging cautious, calculated decision-making by Pakistani authorities.

Overview:

The article critically assesses Pakistan's diplomatic stance amid the US-Israel-Iran conflict. It outlines the economic and security repercussions for Gulf countries, Iran's retaliatory measures, and the pressure on Pakistan due to defence commitments with Saudi Arabia. It emphasizes Islamabad's attempt to balance criticism of US-Israeli aggression with condemnation of missile attacks on Gulf states. The article highlights the risks of regional escalation, potential US ground operations in Iran, and the economic disruption caused by blocked oil exports, underscoring Pakistan's delicate position and the strategic challenges of neutrality.

NOTES:

Pakistan finds itself in an extremely delicate position amid the US-Israel conflict with Iran as the ongoing hostilities have drawn in Gulf Cooperation Council countries due to their strategic and defence ties with the United States. Iran's missile and drone strikes, coupled with the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, have disrupted global oil shipments, causing losses estimated between \$700 million and \$1.2 billion daily, while Gulf airlines, tourism, and investments face heavy setbacks. The Gulf states are reluctant participants, constrained by US alliances and economic interests, and they rely on costly interceptors to defend against Iranian attacks. Pakistan, bound by a defence pact with Saudi Arabia and with troops stationed in the kingdom, attempts a tightrope diplomatic balancing act, condemning both the US-Israeli aggression and missile strikes on Gulf countries while pledging conditional support if Saudi sovereignty is threatened. High-level engagements, including meetings with Saudi leadership, reflect Islamabad's effort to navigate this complex scenario, but the deployment of additional US Marines and discussions of potential ground operations in Iran intensify regional risks. Pakistan's border with Iran, historical ties to the Gulf, and existing obligations underscore its vulnerability, demonstrating how smaller states can be entangled in broader conflicts, with economic, political, and strategic consequences demanding cautious and calculated decision-making.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy, defence relations, strategic alliances, regional security, international diplomacy.
- Current Affairs: Middle East conflicts, energy security, US-Iran relations, geopolitical tensions, GCC dynamics.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan is caught in a complex regional crisis due to its ties with Saudi Arabia and proximity to Iran. Iran's attacks and oil blockades threaten Gulf economies and global energy supplies. Pakistan has

troops stationed in Saudi Arabia, meaning any direct conflict involving Saudi Arabia could compel Islamabad to act. Diplomatically, Pakistan maintains a careful balance, condemning aggression from both sides while pledging assistance if Gulf security is threatened. For example, Islamabad's Prime Minister recently visited Saudi Arabia to discuss the situation. This demonstrates the interplay between defence obligations, economic concerns, and diplomatic prudence.

Facts and Figures:

- Iran's missile and drone attacks threaten Gulf infrastructure and shipping.
- Strait of Hormuz blockade affects a fifth of global crude oil exports.
- Estimated daily oil revenue losses for Gulf countries range from \$700 million to \$1.2 billion.
- Air defence systems intercepting Iranian attacks cost up to \$2 billion and are in limited supply.
- US has deployed 2,500 additional Marines, adding to the 50,000 already in the region.

To sum up, The article highlights Pakistan's challenging position amid escalating regional conflict, showing the tension between defence obligations, strategic interests, and economic repercussions. It stresses that careful diplomacy, measured engagement, and constant evaluation of security commitments are important for safeguarding national interests. Pakistan's situation exemplifies the delicate balance smaller states must maintain when larger powers clash, emphasizing prudence, foresight, and cautious decision-making in preserving both regional stability and domestic security.

LESSONS FROM THE WAR

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article emphasizes how nationalism remains the most potent force for countries under aggression, giving Iran a strategic advantage despite being militarily outmatched. The US entered the conflict with shifting objectives, miscalculations, and no clear assessment of potential consequences, underestimating Iran's capacity for asymmetrical retaliation and the economic repercussions of disrupting oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz. The Gulf states faced heavy costs as Iran targeted their oil facilities, sending energy markets into turmoil and exposing the limits of Washington's security assurances. The war demonstrates that sheer firepower cannot substitute for strategy, clarity of purpose, or coalition-building, and that over-reliance on allies without securing genuine commitment can backfire. The conflict further exposes the vulnerabilities of smaller states caught between major powers, emphasizing the unpredictable consequences of unilateral military actions and the perils of coercive diplomacy.

The article argues that the US-Iran confrontation provides lessons in military strategy, international relations, and economic prudence. It shows how misjudging nationalist resolve can transform tactical victories into strategic setbacks, while escalating force without an endgame leads to diminishing returns. The reluctance of allies to engage militarily underlines the risks of unilateralism and the economic fallout from blocked oil exports highlights the interdependence of regional and global markets. For policymakers and observers, the conflict shows the necessity of careful planning, measured diplomacy, and recognition of asymmetric capabilities. The article ultimately portrays a world where power alone cannot dictate outcomes, illustrating the complex interplay between strategy, national will and international alliances.

Overview:

The article critically examines the US-Iran war, focusing on the lessons of nationalism, strategic miscalculations, and the limitations of superior military power. It outlines the economic and political consequences for Gulf states, the unexpected retaliatory capacity of Iran, and the failure of the US to secure a committed coalition. The article

highlights the risks of unilateral escalation, the dangers of disregarding the will of smaller states, and the broader implications for global energy security.

NOTES:

The article highlights that nationalism acts as the decisive force in modern warfare, often neutralizing the advantage of superior military technology. It shows how the United States entered the conflict with flawed assumptions, shifting objectives, and no coherent strategy, which allowed Iran to exploit asymmetrical tactics and impose unexpected costs. The disruption of oil routes especially through the Strait of Hormuz exposed the fragility of global energy systems and inflicted severe economic damage on Gulf states. The narrative stresses that excessive reliance on military might without clear political goals leads to strategic failure, while escalation without an endgame results in diminishing returns. It also points out the failure of coalition-building, as allies showed reluctance to participate, revealing the limits of coercive diplomacy. The article further emphasizes that smaller states, when driven by national resolve and strategic depth, can resist stronger adversaries, thereby challenging traditional notions of power and victory in international conflicts.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- International Relations: Conflict management, US-Iran relations, Gulf security dynamics, coalition-building.
- Current Affairs: Middle East wars, global energy security, strategic miscalculations in international conflicts.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the US went to war with Iran without clear plans or consideration of consequences. Iran struck back using tactics that disrupted Gulf oil exports, causing global economic turbulence. Gulf states faced the brunt of these attacks despite reliance on US security, showing that alliances are not always dependable. For example, the Strait of Hormuz blockade threatened energy flows worldwide. This piece of writing shows how nationalism and strategic thinking can outweigh military superiority. US attempts at escalation failed because they ignored local resolve and lacked coalition support.

Facts and Figures:

- Around one-fifth of global crude oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz
- Oil prices surged sharply due to disruptions in supply routes
- Gulf economies suffered heavy financial losses in energy, aviation, and investment sectors
- Iran targeted oil facilities and infrastructure in Gulf states
- The United States failed to secure full military support from its allies
- Escalation of conflict increased risks of global economic instability and recession

To sum up, the article emphasizes that power alone cannot secure victory in modern conflicts. Nationalism, strategy, and careful diplomacy are decisive factors. Misjudging an opponent's resolve, disregarding allies' willingness and failing to assess economic repercussions can turn military strength into strategic vulnerability. Policymakers must recognize the complexity of international conflicts, the interdependence of regional and global systems, and the need for prudence in military and diplomatic engagements. The US-Iran confrontation illustrates that foresight, planning and measured action remain the pillars of effective statecraft.

IRAN'S ESCALATION DOMINANCE

Author: Abbas Nasir

Summary:

The article examines the evolving dynamics of the US-Israel war on Iran, portraying a conflict shaped as much by military strikes as by competing narratives and disinformation. It highlights Iran's swift and calculated retaliation, particularly its strikes on shared gas infrastructure such as South Pars and North Dome, which serve a substantial portion of global energy demand. The author points to conflicting claims by the United States and Israel, exposing a fog of strategic ambiguity and political maneuvering. Gulf states now stand on a razor's edge, as continued Iranian strikes could force them into direct confrontation, a scenario that would widen the war and destabilize the region further. The possibility of Saudi Arabia invoking defence commitments raises serious concerns for Pakistan, whose strategic vulnerabilities could deepen in such a scenario. The article suggests that Israel may benefit from regional fragmentation, as internal conflict among Muslim states could divert attention from its actions in Palestine.

Moreover, the article argues that Iran has demonstrated escalation dominance through resilience, decentralised command, and sustained retaliatory capability despite targeted strikes on its leadership and infrastructure. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has sent shockwaves through global markets, driving up energy prices and threatening food security due to rising fertiliser costs. The article questions the United States' long-term strategy, especially its capacity to sustain a ground conflict against a prepared adversary. It also reflects on domestic political consequences in Washington, where an unpopular war and economic fallout may carry electoral repercussions. The author concludes that the conflict reveals deeper structural realities, where strategic patience, geographical leverage, and economic disruption can outweigh conventional military superiority.

Overview:

The article analyses Iran's strategic advantage in the ongoing conflict, emphasizing its ability to retaliate effectively and control escalation. It highlights the role of energy infrastructure, the Strait of Hormuz and regional alliances in shaping the conflict's trajectory. The article also explores the risks of wider regional involvement and the geopolitical consequences for countries like Pakistan.

NOTES:

The article highlights that Iran has achieved escalation dominance through swift retaliation, strategic depth, and decentralised command, which ensured continuity despite leadership losses. It shows how energy infrastructure has emerged as a primary battleground with strikes on major gas fields disrupting global supply and exposing the vulnerability of interconnected markets. The article explores the fog of disinformation, where conflicting claims by major actors obscure reality and shape global perception. It emphasizes that the Strait of Hormuz remains a decisive chokepoint as its closure has triggered sharp rises in energy prices and threatens wider economic instability. The article further notes that Gulf states stand under mounting pressure to enter the conflict, a move that could expand the war and intensify regional chaos. Pakistan's position appears increasingly fragile due to its defence ties with Saudi Arabia, which may compel involvement if the conflict widens. The article also stresses that US military superiority faces clear limits against a resilient adversary that relies on geography, planning, and sustained retaliation. It questions Washington's long-term strategy, especially its willingness to absorb losses in a potential ground confrontation, while also pointing to domestic political pressures that may influence future decisions.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- International Relations: Middle East conflicts, strategic deterrence, energy geopolitics, alliance politics
- Current Affairs: Iran-Israel war, global energy crisis, regional security dynamics, US foreign policy
- Pakistan Affairs: Foreign policy challenges, defence commitments, regional strategic environment

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Iran has managed to respond effectively despite facing stronger military forces. It struck key energy sites which disrupted global supply and raised prices. For example, the closure of the Strait of Hormuz limited oil flow, which increased fuel costs worldwide. The article shows that wars are not decided by weapons alone. Strategy, geography, and planning also matter. Iran used decentralised command, so even after leadership losses, it continued operations. The United States faces difficulty because a ground invasion would bring heavy losses. Countries like Pakistan may get affected due to alliances with Gulf states.

Facts and Figures:

- Iran targeted South Pars and North Dome gas fields
- These fields supply about 20 percent of global gas demand
- They meet nearly 80 percent of Asia's gas needs
- The Strait of Hormuz remains largely closed to traffic
- Gas prices surged by 20 to 25 percent in a single day
- The US plans deployment of around 2500 Marines
- Around 50000 US troops are already stationed in the Gulf
- Kharg Island handles about 90 percent of Iran's oil exports

To sum up, the article reminds that modern conflicts are shaped by strategy, endurance, and economic leverage rather than brute force alone. Iran's calculated responses reveal how a state can control escalation without matching its adversary in conventional strength. The crisis also exposes the fragility of global energy systems and the risks of regional alliances. It calls for prudence, foresight, and a deeper understanding of geopolitical realities as missteps in such conflicts can ignite consequences far beyond the battlefield.

TRUMP'S RECKLESS GAMBIT

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article is a detailed analysis of Donald Trump's decision to launch a war against Iran, a move that has set the Middle East ablaze rather than bending it to American will. The author argues that this was no calculated masterstroke but a reckless gamble rooted in the illusion that regimes can be toppled through air strikes alone. Instead of collapsing, Iran hit back with force and precision, dragging the entire region into chaos and exposing Gulf states to devastating retaliation. The war echoes past American misadventures in Iraq and Afghanistan, where the dream of reshaping the region ended in ruin. Diplomatic engagements with Tehran, once close to bearing fruit, were reduced to a smokescreen as Washington pressed ahead with military preparations. In doing so, the US not only shattered trust in negotiations but also revealed a troubling pattern of acting first and justifying later.

The article traces how Iran flipped the script by widening the conflict and raising its costs. Through targeted strikes on energy infrastructure in Gulf countries, Iran struck at the very heart of their economic lifelines. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz sent shockwaves across global markets, pushing oil and gas prices upward and fuelling economic anxiety worldwide. The author shows how this escalation has slipped beyond Washington's control, with allies now urging de escalation to avoid deeper catastrophe. At the same time, the US and Israel intensified their offensive, even exploring ground operations through proxy groups, a move that signals desperation rather than strength. Trump's call for regime change and his demand to shape Iran's political future reveal an overreach that defies international norms. The crisis now spiralling carries consequences that stretch far beyond the battlefield and may redraw the geopolitical map of the region.

Overview:

The article examines the US Israel war against Iran as a reckless strategic move that has destabilised the Middle East and triggered global economic and political consequences. It highlights the failure of regime change ambitions, the erosion of diplomatic trust, and the far reaching impact of the conflict on energy markets and regional stability.

NOTES:

The article exposes a flawed war strategy built on illusion rather than insight. It argues that the US misjudged both Iran's resolve and the limits of air power, assuming a swift collapse that never came. Diplomatic engagement was reduced to a façade, which eroded trust and signalled bad faith in negotiations. Iran responded with calculated force, widened the conflict and imposed heavy costs by targeting critical energy infrastructure across the Gulf. This retaliation not only challenged military assumptions but also disrupted global energy flows, with the Strait of Hormuz emerging as a choke point. The war revealed shifting and inconsistent justifications from Washington, alongside a clear inclination towards regime change. It also highlighted the rise of asymmetric warfare where low cost tactics counter high tech systems effectively. As the conflict deepened, allies grew uneasy and pushed for de escalation, while the US and Israel escalated further through intensified strikes and proxy strategies. The crisis now stands as a case of strategic overreach where military action has slipped beyond control and triggered far reaching geopolitical and economic consequences.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics or Subjects:

- International Relations: Focusing on US Middle East policy
- Current Affairs: Covering global conflicts and energy crises
- Political Science: Examining power politics and interventionism
- Economics: Dealing with global energy markets and inflation shocks

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how war affects not only countries involved but the whole world. For example Iran targeted oil facilities in Gulf states, which disrupted energy supply. When oil supply falls, prices rise globally, making fuel expensive for everyone. The Strait of Hormuz is a key route where a large share of global oil passes. When it shuts down, markets panic. Gas prices in Europe rose by more than fifty percent due to the conflict. This shows how one regional war can shake the global economy. Another example is diplomacy. When countries break promises during negotiations, trust disappears, making future peace talks harder.

Facts and Figures:

- Gas prices in Europe increased by over fifty percent
- The Strait of Hormuz witnessed disruption in oil flow
- Gulf energy facilities, including major refineries and LNG plants, were targeted
- Iran used low cost drones to counter expensive defence systems
- Global markets reacted with volatility due to energy shocks

To sum up, The article shows that power without prudence leads to chaos, not control. The war has exposed the limits of military might and the cost of strategic arrogance. In trying to redraw the map, Washington may have only deepened the fault lines. Wars that begin with overconfidence often end in uncertainty and the price is paid far beyond the battlefield.

TALK OR ESCALATE?

Author: Maleeha Lodhi

Summary:

The article analyses the ongoing tensions between the United States, Iran, and Israel, highlighting the contradictory signals from Washington, where President Trump simultaneously threatens military escalation and proposes peace talks. Pakistan alongside Turkiye and Egypt has emerged as a key intermediary, offering to host negotiations aimed at de-escalating the conflict. Despite these efforts, Tehran remains cautious, rejecting US demands as excessive while presenting its own five-point plan emphasizing sovereignty, cessation of aggression, and war reparations. The conflict has already altered the Middle Eastern strategic equation, with both sides taking maximalist positions, leaving trust fragile and diplomacy uncertain. The article evaluates three potential scenarios: decisive US-Israeli victory, protracted conflict with continued instability, or a negotiated settlement ensuring limited stability, with the latter being the most challenging but only realistic path toward regional stability.

The article highlights the broader implications for the global economy, particularly disruptions in oil markets due to control over the Strait of Hormuz, and cautions that the Middle East's geopolitical order will not revert to the pre-war status. Trump's chaotic diplomacy, the possibility of using negotiations as a smokescreen for military advances, and Israel's potential spoiler role complicate prospects for peace. The article stresses that only careful negotiation, mutual concessions, and control of aggressive actors can prevent prolonged instability, while past experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan illustrate the consequences of unilateral military solutions. Ultimately, the region faces an altered strategic reality where trust, credible mediation, and careful management of maximalist ambitions determine the trajectory of conflict and stability.

Overview:

The article provides a detailed account of the Iran-US-Israel crisis, mapping military threats, negotiation efforts, and regional mediation initiatives. It explores the strategic and economic consequences of the conflict, including oil market disruption and regional instability, while evaluating potential outcomes based on trust, diplomacy, and the capacity for restraint.

NOTES:

The article examines the contradictory signals from the US, where military threats coexist with peace overtures, and highlights Pakistan's central role in facilitating dialogue alongside Turkiye and Egypt. Iran remains cautious, rejecting excessive US demands and putting forward a five-point plan centered on sovereignty, cessation of attacks, and war reparations. Both sides maintain maximalist positions, complicating trust and diplomacy. The article outlines three scenarios: decisive military victory, protracted conflict, and a negotiated settlement, with the last being the only path to stability. It emphasizes that negotiations are fragile due to past betrayals, Trump's unpredictability, and Israel's potential interference. The strategic and economic impact, particularly on global oil markets via the Strait of Hormuz, underscores the wider repercussions beyond the battlefield. The piece stresses that careful mediation, mutual concessions, and restraint are crucial to prevent prolonged instability in the Middle East.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations: Middle East conflict, US-Iran-Israel relations, mediation, regional security
- Current Affairs: Global energy markets, oil supply disruptions, geopolitical instability
- Political Science: Leadership strategies, negotiation dynamics, maximalist policies

Notes for Beginners:

The article shows that the Iran-US-Israel conflict is a mix of threats and negotiations, with Pakistan playing a key mediator role. Iran has rejected harsh US demands, proposing its own plan for ending hostilities. There are three

possible outcomes: total US-Israeli victory, long-running conflict, or a negotiated settlement. The last is the only way to stabilize the region, but it is difficult because trust is low and Israel could interfere. The conflict affects the global economy, especially oil markets, and demonstrates how diplomacy, military pressure, and negotiation interact in modern international relations.

Facts and Figures:

- Thousands of US marines and paratroopers deployed to Persian Gulf
- Iran proposed a five-point plan for ending the conflict
- US sent a 15-point peace plan through Pakistan demanding Iranian concessions
- Global oil market described as facing “largest supply disruption in history” by International Energy Agency
- Past US negotiations with Iran (April 2025 and earlier) used as smokescreens for attacks
- Strait of Hormuz remains a critical chokepoint affecting global energy security

In essence, the article warns that the Middle East’s strategic and economic landscape has been permanently altered. Success in preventing prolonged instability hinges on credible diplomacy, mutual concessions, and restraint, as unilateral military solutions and trust deficits threaten both regional and global stability.

The Express Tribune –

AFGHANS, TERRORISTS - AND THE BORDER

Author: Imtiaz Gul

Summary:

The article argues the difficult equation between Pakistan and Afghanistan, where mistrust refuses to loosen its grip. At the heart of this friction lies the Durand Line, a fault line that Afghans across political shades continue to contest. From monarchs to militants, this narrative has served as a convenient rallying cry whenever logic falls short. Despite their religious posture, the Taliban echo the same refrain which reveals that ethnic nationalism quietly runs beneath ideological claims. This unresolved border question remains a stubborn knot, one that blocks any meaningful thaw in relations. Pakistan, inheriting this boundary in 1947, finds itself locked in a dispute that resurfaces time and again, often dressed in different ineffective words but rooted in the same historical grievance.

Alongside this political deadlock stands a far more immediate concern: security. Afghanistan has become a sanctuary for multiple militant outfits, including TTP and ISKP, despite repeated international warnings. Even China has voiced unease, as Taliban authorities appear reluctant to act decisively against such groups. The article draws on past foresight to argue that the Taliban's blend of religious ideology and ethnic nationalism could turn against Pakistan. Events on the ground already hint at this shift, with rising hostility and cross-border tensions. Closing borders may buy time, but it cannot douse the fire. The author concludes that only calibrated diplomacy, backed by firm conditions, can steer relations away from perpetual strain and toward cautious stability.

Overview:

The article analyzes Pakistan-Afghanistan relations through the twin lenses of the Durand Line dispute and cross-border militancy. It highlights how historical grievances and present security threats intertwine, creating a complex challenge that demands strategic diplomacy rather than reactive measures.

NOTES:

The Durand Line dispute remains the core driver of mistrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan, as successive Afghan regimes use it as a unifying narrative, while the Taliban continue to reject its legitimacy despite diplomatic engagement. Alongside this historical fault line, the presence of militant groups such as TTP and ISKP in Afghanistan poses a direct and persistent security threat to Pakistan, with these groups also exploiting territorial narratives to justify their demands. International actors including China, Russia, and the United Nations have raised concerns, but the Taliban show clear reluctance in taking verifiable action against such networks. The situation reflects a deeper convergence of ethnic nationalism and religious ideology within Taliban policy behavior, which complicates regional stability. Border closures and reactive measures offer only temporary relief and fail to address underlying tensions, as cross-border hostility continues to simmer. The article underlines that without strategic diplomacy, firm conditions, and sustained engagement, the cycle of mistrust, security threats, and political deadlock will persist.

CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- International Relations:
 - Border disputes and conflict resolution
 - Regional security dynamics
- Pakistan Affairs:
 - Pakistan-Afghanistan relations
 - Internal security and terrorism

- Current Affairs:
 - Cross-border militancy
 - Taliban governance and regional implications

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why Pakistan and Afghanistan struggle to maintain stable relations. One major issue is the Durand Line, which Afghanistan does not fully accept. This creates tension at the border. Another problem is terrorism. Groups like TTP operate from Afghan territory and carry out attacks in Pakistan. For example, when Pakistan demands action, the Afghan side often delays or avoids strong measures. This increases mistrust. The article shows that closing borders cannot solve such deep issues. Instead, both countries must address root causes through dialogue and firm policies.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan inherited a 2560 km border with Afghanistan in 1947
- Borders have remained closed since October 2025 due to security concerns
- Multiple militant groups operate from Afghan territory
- International actors including China and Russia have raised security concerns
- Durand Line remains the most persistent geopolitical dispute between the two states

In a nutshell, history casts a long shadow, and unresolved disputes refuse to fade. Security threats add fuel to an already volatile equation. Pakistan stands at a delicate crossroads, where every move must balance caution with clarity. Diplomacy must rise above impulse, or the cycle of mistrust will keep turning. Peace will not emerge by chance; it must be carved out with strategy, patience, and resolve.

PAKISTAN'S STRATEGIC MOMENT IN A CHANGING WORLD ORDER

Author: Dr Shazia Anwer Cheema

Summary:

The article presents a moment where global disorder quietly opens doors for those who can read between the lines. The ongoing conflict has shaken the very foundations of trade and alliances, yet Pakistan stands oddly steady amid the storm. Unlike many states pulled into rigid alignments, Pakistan has managed to stay afloat without surrendering its autonomy. This space did not appear overnight. It is the outcome of consistent, restrained diplomacy rooted in realism rather than theatrics. While major powers lock horns, Pakistan finds itself with room to manoeuvre, free from coercive alignments or forced loyalties. In a world where rules are rewritten overnight, this strategic breathing space emerges as an asset few possess.

The article moves beyond observation and points toward opportunity. Disruptions in the Middle East have redirected global trade currents, and Pakistan has stepped in with calculated moves. Ports like Gwadar, Karachi, and Port Qasim now hold the potential to handle significant cargo flows, while Karachi Airport edges toward becoming a transit hub. Opportunity, if mishandled, slips through the cracks. Pakistan must expand its diplomatic horizon beyond familiar circles, engage Central Asia and Eastern Europe and recalibrate its external posture. The world is shifting from rigid blocs to fluid alignments, and Pakistan's restraint now offers leverage. The real test lies not in spotting the moment, but in seizing it with discipline and foresight.

Overview:

The article evaluates Pakistan's strategic position in a changing global order, highlighting how consistent diplomacy has created space for economic and geopolitical opportunities amid global conflict. It stresses the need for calculated engagement and diversification of foreign relations to convert this moment into long term advantage.

NOTES:

Pakistan has sustained a careful neutrality amid global conflict, which has preserved its autonomy and created space for independent policy choices. This position stems from consistent and restrained diplomacy rooted in realism rather than reactive alignment. Ongoing conflict has disrupted established trade routes and weakened rigid alliances, which has opened a window for Pakistan to step in as an alternative hub for cargo and transit flows. Strategic assets such as Gwadar, Karachi Port, and Port Qasim now carry renewed importance, while Karachi Airport is gradually emerging as a regional transit point. The global system is shifting from fixed blocs to flexible and transactional alignments, which demands a recalibration of Pakistan's external engagements. Overreliance on traditional partners has limited outreach, therefore expansion toward Central Asia and Eastern Europe is essential for broader economic and strategic gains. Diplomatic engagement must remain clear, measured, and interest driven, as rhetorical optimism without execution can squander opportunity.

CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- International Relations:
 - Changing world order and multipolarity
 - Foreign policy and diplomacy
- Pakistan Affairs:
 - Pakistan's foreign policy
 - Economic and strategic significance of ports
- Current Affairs:
 - Global trade disruptions
 - Impact of Middle East conflict on regional economies

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how global conflicts can create opportunities for some countries. For example, when trade routes in the Middle East become risky, other countries can offer alternative routes. Pakistan is trying to do this by using its ports and airports to attract international trade. This can increase economic activity and create jobs. It also shows that staying neutral in conflicts can help a country avoid pressure and gain flexibility. If Pakistan builds strong relations with more regions like Central Asia, it can improve trade and security. Smart decisions during global crises can turn problems into opportunities.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan has not been forced into alliances despite regional conflicts
- Gwadar, Karachi Port, and Port Qasim are key strategic assets
- Karachi Airport is emerging as a regional transit hub
- Global trade routes are shifting due to Middle East instability
- Pakistan's diplomacy has allowed it strategic flexibility in global politics

To sum up, the world stumbles through uncertainty, but still Pakistan finds a narrow path forward. Strategy must replace complacency, and action must follow intent. If handled with precision, this moment can redefine Pakistan's place in the world. If wasted, it will vanish like many before it.

HORMUZ — ALTERNATIVES AND PEACE

Author: Inam Ul Haque

Summary:

The article examines the escalating tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz and the limits of military strategies pursued by the US-Israel coalition against Iran. It argues that the coalition's original objectives including Iran's de-

nuclearisation, regime change and military surrender, are unattainable without a risky ground offensive. The immediate goal has shifted to ensuring the free passage of oil tankers through Hormuz and restoring confidence among Gulf Arab states in US security guarantees. Iran, leveraging its 2,250 km southern coastline, the Iranian Navy and asymmetric strategies like drones, missile systems, and mobile anti-ship defenses, maintains significant control over this strategic chokepoint. Closure of the Strait threatens 20% of global oil trade and critical supplies for Europe and Asia, but Iran's dependence on the waterway for its own energy needs imposes natural limits on prolonged obstruction. Pakistan through careful diplomacy seeks to mediate between the US and Iran, highlighting the importance of dialogue over military escalation.

The article also explores alternatives to Hormuz, including pipelines in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, and Turkey, which offer limited capacities compared to the Strait. Iran's asymmetric advantages, public perception gains and constrained vulnerabilities emphasize the complexity of enforcing military objectives without provoking further regional or global instability. The article highlights that long-drawn conflicts favor intangible strengths like resolve and legitimacy, rather than sheer military superiority. With the US facing diplomatic, political, and economic costs, the article suggests that strategic negotiation, tempered by Islamic hikmat and pragmatism, offers a more sustainable path than an unsustainable war of choice. The situation illustrates that even powerful actors must weigh constraints and local dynamics carefully to avoid spirals of unintended consequences.

Overview:

The article critically analyzes the strategic and geopolitical dynamics of the Strait of Hormuz, highlighting Iran's control and asymmetric capabilities. It emphasizes the limitations of US-Israel military objectives and the costs of a prolonged conflict. Diplomatic efforts, mediation, and alternatives to the Strait are discussed, underlining the need for restraint and negotiation. The article discusses that tangible military superiority alone cannot resolve such complex conflicts, and that local realities, vulnerabilities, and international perceptions shape outcomes decisively.

NOTES:

The article examines the escalating tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz and the limitations of the US-Israel coalition's military strategies against Iran. It highlights that the coalition's initial objectives including de-nuclearisation, regime change, and military surrender, are unattainable without a risky ground offensive. The immediate priority has shifted to ensuring the free passage of oil tankers and restoring confidence in Gulf Arab states regarding US security guarantees. Iran leverages its 2,250 km southern coastline, the Iranian Navy, and asymmetric strategies, including drones, missile systems, and mobile anti-ship defenses, to maintain control over this strategic chokepoint. Closure of the Strait threatens 20% of global oil trade and critical supplies for Europe and Asia, though Iran's own dependence on the waterway imposes limits on prolonged obstruction. The article explores alternatives such as pipelines in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, UAE, and Turkey, which are insufficient to replace the Strait's capacity, and emphasizes that long-drawn conflicts favor intangible strengths like resolve, legitimacy, and public perception over mere military superiority. Pakistan's careful diplomatic mediation is highlighted as a stabilizing factor, while the US faces mounting political, economic, and diplomatic costs from an unsustainable war of choice. Ultimately, the article stresses that strategic negotiation, tempered by pragmatism and awareness of local constraints, provides a more sustainable path than continued military escalation, illustrating that even the most powerful actors must carefully weigh risks, vulnerabilities, and local realities to avoid spiraling into unintended consequences.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- International Relations: Strategic chokepoints, asymmetric warfare, regional diplomacy
- Current Affairs: Middle East tensions, energy security, global trade disruptions
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's mediation efforts, implications for national energy security

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that the Strait of Hormuz is a critical route for global energy supplies, through which Iran exerts significant influence. Iran's use of drones, missiles, naval defenses, and asymmetric strategies prevents easy military enforcement by the US and Israel. Alternatives like pipelines exist, but their capacities are insufficient to replace the Strait. Pakistan's diplomatic mediation could help reduce tensions. The situation demonstrates that military superiority alone cannot secure objectives when local dynamics, public perception, and economic dependencies are at play. Even powerful nations must consider vulnerabilities and negotiate strategically to prevent costly conflicts.

Facts and Figures:

- The Strait of Hormuz is 167 km long and varies in width between 34 km and 97 km.
- It handles roughly 20% of global oil trade, around 20–21 million barrels daily.
- Over 85% of this crude oil goes to Asian markets like China, Japan, India, and South Korea.
- Alternative pipelines: IPSA 1.65 mb/d, Petrolina 5.9 mb/d, Habshan-Fujairah 2 mb/d, Iraq-Turkey 1.6 mb/d, Goreh-Jask 1 mb/d.
- Iran maintains 12 days of domestic strategic fuel reserves and over 50 days of floating storage.

To sum up, the article highlights the delicate balance between military objectives, strategic leverage, and economic realities. Iran's asymmetric capabilities, vulnerabilities, and public perception gains reveal the limits of military coercion. Sustainable resolution demands negotiation, mediation, and pragmatic strategies that respect regional dynamics. The Strait of Hormuz exemplifies how global energy security and international diplomacy are intertwined, emphasizing that prudence, foresight, and restraint remain indispensable in avoiding spirals of conflict with far-reaching consequences.

TRUMP'S STRATEGIC TRAP

Author: M Zeb Khan

Summary:

The article analyzes how decisive action in international conflicts often masks deeper strategic pitfalls, using the US-Iran confrontation as a case study. At first glance, overwhelming military pressure may appear effective, but history demonstrates that such moves often spiral into uncontrollable escalation. Iran's asymmetric capabilities including drones, missile systems and regional alliances have expanded the theatre of conflict, making conventional superiority less decisive. Leaders of superpowers face immense pressure from domestic politics, allies and adversaries, creating a cycle where retreat is politically costly and escalation inevitable. The Middle East crisis illustrates how overconfidence, ideological narratives, and domestic political agendas can blind decision-makers to local dynamics, heightening the risk of prolonged regional confrontation and severe economic repercussions.

The article warns that wars in the modern Middle East rarely follow linear trajectories. Even carefully calculated pressure can backfire when multiple actors with divergent interests intervene. Regional actors like Israel driven by internal political instability may use external confrontation to consolidate power, inadvertently fueling broader conflict. The resulting energy shocks, trade disruptions, and geopolitical uncertainty reverberate globally, affecting developed and developing economies alike. Strategic restraint, diplomatic engagement, and recognition of local complexities are paramount. Leaders must resist hubris, acknowledging that traps in international politics are often self-inflicted. The article underscores the timeless lesson that force without foresight invites unintended consequences and destabilizes the broader international order.

Overview:

The article examines the tendency of powerful nations to underestimate adversaries and overestimate control in complex regional conflicts. It highlights Iran's asymmetric capabilities, the political pressures driving escalation,

and the broader global repercussions of energy and trade instability. The article advocates strategic restraint, diplomacy, and careful assessment of local dynamics to prevent self-inflicted entanglement in protracted conflicts.

NOTES:

The article highlights how decisive military action can quickly turn into a strategic trap, as demonstrated by the US-Iran confrontation. Initial confidence and overwhelming pressure often mask the complexities of escalation, especially when adversaries like Iran deploy asymmetric strategies such as drones, missiles, and regional networks, which diminish the advantage of conventional superiority. Leaders of superpowers face intense pressure from domestic politics, allies, and adversaries, creating a cycle where stepping back becomes politically costly and escalation almost inevitable. Overconfidence, ideological narratives, and appeals to historical destiny can cloud judgment, leading decision-makers to underestimate local dynamics and adversary resilience. Regional actors including Israel may exploit external conflicts to consolidate political power, further intensifying tensions. The crisis has immediate economic implications, as disruptions to energy flows, trade routes, and regional stability ripple through global markets. The article underscores that strategic restraint, careful calculation, and diplomacy are essential, and that the traps in international politics are often self-inflicted, with force without foresight producing unintended and far-reaching consequences.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- International Relations: Conflict resolution, superpower diplomacy, Middle East politics, energy security
- Current Affairs: Regional instability, trade disruptions, global economic repercussions
- Pakistan Affairs: Implications of Middle East conflicts on Pakistan's energy and economic stability

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that even the most powerful nations can fall into strategic traps in complex regions. For example, the US assumed Iran would retreat under pressure, but Iran expanded the conflict using drones and missiles. Leaders are pressured by domestic politics and allies, making it hard to step back. Energy prices and trade routes are affected, hitting global economies. Pakistan dependent on stable oil supplies is indirectly affected by these disruptions. Strategic restraint, careful planning, and diplomacy prevent escalation and unintended consequences.

Facts and Figures:

- Iran controls critical chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz affecting global oil flows.
- Energy disruptions from the Middle East have immediate global impact on developed and developing nations.
- Historical conflicts such as Vietnam and Iraq show escalation often occurs unintentionally.
- Regional powers may exploit external conflicts to consolidate internal political power.

To sum up, The article looks like a story about the perils of overconfidence and the limits of military dominance. It highlights the need for humility, careful calculation and respect for local dynamics in international politics. Strategic foresight, diplomacy and restraint are indispensable to avoid spirals of conflict with far-reaching economic and geopolitical consequences.

US WAR ON IRAN AND ITS LARGER CONSEQUENCES

Author: Shahid Javed Burki

Summary:

The article examines the United States led war on Iran and its far reaching consequences, particularly for regional stability and Pakistan's internal dynamics. The conflict has unfolded with remarkable intensity, as thousands of strikes targeted Iranian military and civilian infrastructure without a clearly defined long term strategy. The author

questions the rationale behind the war, suggesting that it reflects Israeli security concerns more than a direct American threat perception. Historical hostility between the two states adds depth to the confrontation, but the absence of a coherent political objective exposes a strategic vacuum. The war has not remained confined to Iran as it has already triggered unrest in Pakistan, where a large Shia population reacted strongly to the attacks. Violent protests and casualties reveal how external conflicts can ignite internal fault lines, placing additional pressure on state stability.

The article further highlights the broader geopolitical and economic repercussions of the war. Despite military superiority, the United States faces uncertainty regarding outcomes, while European actors remain cautious and divided over their role. The leadership transition in Iran, following the death of its supreme leader, introduces another layer of unpredictability, as regime continuity or instability could reshape regional power dynamics. Meanwhile Iran has demonstrated its capacity to retaliate through asymmetric means, most notably by blocking the Strait of Hormuz, disrupting global energy flows and raised oil prices. This action underscores the vulnerability of global markets to regional conflicts. The author concludes that the war risks spiraling into prolonged instability, where unintended consequences may outweigh strategic gains, leaving both the region and the wider world exposed to economic and political turbulence.

Overview:

The article analyzes the US Iran conflict as a poorly defined military engagement with serious regional and global consequences. It highlights strategic ambiguity, internal repercussions for Pakistan, and the broader economic and geopolitical risks arising from escalation.

NOTES:

The US-led war on Iran lacks a clear strategic objective and reflects Israeli security concerns more than a direct American threat, targeting both military and civilian infrastructure while triggering unrest in Pakistan due to sectarian sensitivities. Historical hostility between the nations shapes the current conflict, and European powers remain cautious and divided over engagement. Leadership change in Iran following the death of the supreme leader adds uncertainty to regional stability, but Iran has shown the ability to retaliate through asymmetric strategies, such as blocking the Strait of Hormuz which disrupted global energy markets and caused price spikes. The conflict underscores the vulnerability of global supply chains, the risk of long-term instability and unintended consequences that extend beyond borders. Modern warfare demonstrates that military power alone does not guarantee control, as both internal and external dynamics create volatility, fragmentation and political dilemmas, emphasizing the need for strategic clarity, careful diplomacy and awareness of cascading repercussions for regional and global stability.

Relevant CSS syllabus subjects and topics:

- International Relations:
 - Conflict and war dynamics
 - Middle East politics
- Pakistan Affairs:
 - Internal security challenges
 - Sectarian dynamics in Pakistan
- Current Affairs:
 - US Iran conflict
 - Global energy crisis

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how war between powerful countries can affect many others. For example, when the United States attacked Iran, protests started in Pakistan due to religious connections. This shows how external conflict creates internal tension. Iran responded by blocking the Strait of Hormuz, which is a key route for oil. When oil

supply decreases, prices rise globally. This increases transport costs and inflation. The article also shows that strong military action does not guarantee success. Without clear goals, war creates more problems than solutions. The main idea is that modern conflicts spread their impact beyond borders and affect economies and societies worldwide.

Facts and Figures:

- Over 5,000 targets were struck within days of the war
- Thousands of casualties reported in protests within Pakistan
- Strait of Hormuz handles a major share of global oil supply
- Oil prices increased sharply after disruption of the route
- Iran leadership changed after death of supreme leader

In essence, power has been exercised, but purpose remains blurred. The war exposes how modern conflicts ripple across borders, unsettling societies and economies alike. Pakistan stands vulnerable, not as a participant but as a neighbour. The lesson is that war without clarity invites chaos, and chaos rarely respects boundaries.

HALF THE NATION, ALL THE POTENTIAL: WHY WE MUST INVEST IN WOMEN

Author: Mehak Anwar

Summary:

The article argues that Pakistan continues to treat women's development as charity rather than strategy – a mistake that quietly erodes national progress. It asserts that education and healthcare for women are not acts of compassion but pillars of economic strength. Despite forming nearly half the population, women face entrenched barriers in access to schooling, medical care and employment. The literacy divide remains stark, with female literacy trailing far behind male rates. Millions of girls remain out of school, especially in rural regions, which signals not only social inequality but a profound economic loss. Each uneducated girl represents a missed opportunity for national advancement, a silenced contributor to growth.

The discussion extends beyond education to health and economic participation, where the consequences deepen. Maternal mortality remains high, reflecting weak healthcare access and awareness. Limited public investment worsens these gaps, as education spending remains low and infrastructure inadequate. Female labour force participation lingers at a fraction of male involvement, with many women confined to informal or unpaid work. This exclusion drains productivity and stifles innovation. The article concludes that the real cost lies not in investing in women, but in failing to do so. Nations that empower women reap stability and growth, while those that neglect them anchor themselves in stagnation.

Overview:

The article examines the structural exclusion of women in Pakistan and its impact on national development. It highlights gaps in education, healthcare, and workforce participation, arguing that investment in women is essential for economic growth, social stability, and long term progress.

NOTES:

Women form nearly half of Pakistan's population, but their potential remains largely unrealised due to entrenched barriers in education, healthcare, and employment. Female literacy trails far behind male rates, while millions of girls remain out of school especially in rural areas which signals both social disparity and economic loss. Low public investment in education and weak infrastructure deepen these gaps. Maternal mortality highlights limited healthcare access and awareness, which further constrains human development. Female participation in the labour force remains minimal, with many women confined to informal or unpaid roles which suppresses productivity and slows economic growth. Gender inequality thus emerges not just as a social issue but as a structural economic

constraint. The article underscores that investment in women's education and health strengthens families, enhances workforce capacity and drives long term national development, while neglect perpetuates stagnation and weakens the country's growth trajectory.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics and subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs:
 - Status of women in Pakistan
 - Education and health challenges
 - Socio-economic inequalities and development constraints
- Economics:
 - Human capital formation
 - Labour force participation
 - Impact of education and health on economic growth
- Gender Studies:
 - Gender inequality and patriarchy
 - Women's access to education and healthcare
 - Economic empowerment of women

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that women in Pakistan face many barriers in education and health. For example, many girls cannot attend school due to social or financial limits. This reduces their chances to work and earn later. If a woman is educated, she can take better care of her children and family. For instance, educated mothers ensure vaccination and proper nutrition. When women work, they add to the economy. If they remain excluded, the country loses growth opportunities. The main idea is clear. Supporting women improves families, society, and the economy at the same time.

Facts and Figures:

- Female literacy rate stands around 52 to 53 percent
- Male literacy rate reaches about 68 percent
- Over 22 million children remain out of school
- Maternal mortality stands near 155 per 100,000 births
- Education spending remains around 1.5 to 2 percent of GDP
- Female labour force participation stands near 22 percent

To put it simply, the article strips away the illusion of progress and exposes a deeper neglect. A nation cannot rise while half its strength remains constrained. Investment in women is not generosity, it is necessity. Growth demands inclusion, not exclusion. If Pakistan chooses to act, the rewards will echo across generations. If it delays, the cost will compound in silence.

REVITALISING AGRICULTURE: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

Author: Dr Abdul Rauf Iqbal

Summary:

The article presents Pakistan's agricultural sector as a paradox of scale and stagnation where significance does not translate into productivity. Agriculture sustains a large share of GDP and employment, yet crop growth trails behind population expansion, widening the demand supply gap. Key crops reveal a troubling imbalance. Cotton declines in both area and output due to poor inputs and low profitability. Wheat remains stagnant despite rising demand, exposing policy and productivity failures. In contrast maize and sugarcane expand steadily, driven by market

incentives rather than strategic planning. This uneven pattern strains food security and undermines the textile backbone of the economy.

The analysis attributes this structural weakness to persistent yield gaps rooted in flawed inputs and weak institutional support. Certified seeds meet only a fraction of demand, while outdated varieties dominate cultivation. Ineffective pesticides fail against major pests and rising fertiliser costs erode farm viability. Although state interventions have increased credit, subsidies, and regulatory oversight, outcomes remain uneven due to weak enforcement and misaligned incentives. The article argues for a decisive shift towards a productivity centered model where finance, technology and policy converge to enhance yield per unit of land and water. Without coherence in execution, reforms risk fading into rhetoric, leaving the sector trapped in cyclical underperformance.

Overview:

The article is a critically evaluated piece, showing Pakistan's agricultural crisis through the lens of productivity, highlighting structural inefficiencies, crop imbalances and policy gaps. It stresses the urgency of aligning incentives, improving inputs and adopting modern practices to ensure food security and sustainable economic growth.

NOTES:

Pakistan's agriculture remains vital but underperforming, as its growth lags behind population expansion which widens the demand supply gap and intensifies food insecurity. Major crops reveal structural imbalance where cotton declines due to poor seed quality, pest attacks, and low profitability, while wheat stagnates despite rising demand. It shows policy failure and weak productivity. In contrast maize and sugarcane expand due to market incentives, not strategic planning, which increases pressure on scarce water resources. Persistent yield gaps stem from outdated seeds, limited access to modern technology, ineffective pesticides, and rising fertiliser costs that reduce farm efficiency. Certified seed availability remains insufficient, while most farmers rely on old varieties which further depress output. Although the state has introduced reforms such as credit expansion, subsidies and regulatory measures, weak enforcement and misaligned incentives undermine their effectiveness. The core issue lies in poor execution which prevents productivity gains per unit of land and water. Without shifting towards a productivity driven framework supported by strong coordination and accountability, the sector will continue to face stagnation, threatening food security, industrial stability, and rural livelihoods.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- Pakistan Affairs: Agriculture sector challenges, food security, rural economy
- Economics: Productivity, supply demand gap, agricultural economics, resource allocation

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains why agriculture in Pakistan struggles despite its importance. Farmers face poor quality seeds and costly fertilisers. For example, cotton production falls because pests damage crops and inputs fail. Wheat does not increase even when demand rises, which forces imports. On the other hand, crops like maize grow because farmers find them more profitable. This creates imbalance in food production. If water intensive crops expand, water resources decline. Better seeds, modern tools, and proper policies can increase production without expanding land. Without these changes, agriculture will remain weak.

Facts and Figures:

- Agriculture contributes about 23.5 percent to GDP
- Around 37 percent of labour force depends on agriculture
- Crop subsector growth rate remains around 1.7 percent
- Population growth rate stands near 2.55 percent
- Cotton production declined by about 28 percent from 2016 to 2025
- Certified seeds meet only about 35.6 percent of demand
- Agricultural credit increased to Rs2,580 billion by 2025

To wrap up, agriculture stands tall in numbers but falters in performance. Policies exist, but execution limps. The real battle lies in enforcing them with precision. Productivity must replace complacency. If alignment emerges, the sector can revive. If not, the gap will widen and the cost will not remain confined to farms.

INSTABILITY IN HORMUZ AND OUR ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Author: Aneela Shahzad

Summary:

The article examines how rising geopolitical tensions around the Strait of Hormuz expose Pakistan's deep economic vulnerabilities due to its heavy reliance on imported energy. This narrow corridor, which carries nearly one-fifth of global oil supply, acts as a lifeline for energy-dependent economies. Even minor disruptions trigger sharp price spikes and market volatility. Pakistan remains particularly exposed, as domestic production falls far short of demand, forcing the country to import the bulk of its crude oil and liquefied natural gas through this route. Any instability directly inflates the import bill, strains foreign exchange reserves, and widens the current account deficit. The surge in global oil prices translates into a weaker currency and rising inflation, placing additional pressure on an already fragile economy.

The article further highlights that the consequences extend beyond fiscal strain into the broader economic fabric. Rising fuel costs push up transportation and production expenses, which then drive inflation and deepen the cost-of-living crisis. A disruption in supply would prove even more damaging, as limited strategic reserves can sustain the country for less than a month, risking power shortages and industrial slowdown. This structural fragility underscores the urgent need for reform. The author advocates diversification of energy imports, expansion of strategic reserves and a decisive shift towards renewable energy sources such as solar and wind particularly in resource-rich regions. Improved energy efficiency and long-term planning emerge as essential tools to reduce dependence on a single chokepoint and to build economic resilience in an increasingly volatile global environment.

Overview:

The article analyzes Pakistan's economic vulnerability to disruptions in global energy supply, particularly through the Strait of Hormuz. It highlights the link between geopolitical tensions, energy dependence, and macroeconomic instability, while proposing structural reforms to strengthen long-term energy security.

NOTES:

Pakistan's economic stability stands tightly bound to the fate of the Strait of Hormuz, as the country relies heavily on imported oil and LNG that pass through this narrow corridor. Any geopolitical tension in the region triggers immediate oil price spikes, which inflate the import bill, drain foreign exchange reserves, and widen the current account deficit. This pressure weakens the rupee and fuels inflation which raises the cost of transport, electricity and essential goods, deepening the cost-of-living crisis. The situation grows more precarious due to limited domestic production and modest strategic reserves that can sustain demand for less than a month, exposing the country to risks of power shortages and industrial slowdown in case of supply disruption. The economy also faces a dollar demand surge for oil payments, which further depreciates the currency and creates a vicious cycle of inflation and instability. These structural weaknesses highlight the urgent need for diversification of energy sources, expansion of reserves and investment in renewable energy, alongside improved efficiency to reduce reliance on a single chokepoint and strengthen long-term economic resilience.

Relevant CSS syllabus subjects and Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Energy crisis, economic challenges, resource management.
- Economics: Balance of payments, inflation, exchange rate depreciation, energy economics.
- Current Affairs: Middle East tensions, global oil markets, energy security.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Pakistan depends on imported oil for daily needs. Most of this oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz. If conflict disrupts this route, oil prices rise quickly. For example, when global oil prices increase, transport costs rise, which then increases the price of food and goods. Pakistan also pays for oil in dollars, so higher prices increase demand for dollars and weaken the rupee. If supply stops, power shortages may occur because reserves are limited. The solution lies in using renewable energy like solar and wind and reducing reliance on imports.

Facts and Figures:

- The Strait of Hormuz carries about 20 percent of global oil supply.
- Pakistan produces around 81,000 barrels of oil daily but consumes about 480,000 barrels.
- Around 70 to 80 percent of Pakistan's oil imports pass through this route.
- Strategic reserves can meet demand for only 25 to 28 days.
- Oil prices crossed 80 dollars per barrel during recent tensions.

To sum up, the article exposes a harsh economic reality that dependence on a single energy corridor is a strategic liability. Pakistan stands at the mercy of external shocks that it cannot control. A resilient future rests on diversification, efficiency and investment in renewable energy. Without structural change, each crisis will return with greater force, tightening the grip of economic vulnerability.

UNRECOGNISED ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS OF CONFLICT

Author: Syed Mohammad Ali

Summary:

The article argues that the true cost of war extends far beyond human casualties and economic disruption, as it inflicts deep and lasting environmental damage that often escapes attention. From the nuclear devastation in Japan to chemical warfare in Vietnam, conflicts have repeatedly scarred ecosystems, poisoned water sources, and destroyed biodiversity. Even limited conflicts leave behind contaminated soil, burned crops and devastated forests. Many wars are sparked by competition over natural resources, which increases the likelihood of recurring violence. Large-scale conflicts such as the Gulf War demonstrate how environmental destruction can reach catastrophic levels, with oil fires releasing massive pollutants into the atmosphere and degrading land and water systems. Similarly prolonged wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria have led to deforestation, toxic emissions and ecological collapse, weakening natural carbon sinks and accelerating climate change.

The article further highlights that modern warfare spreads hazardous substances such as heavy metals, depleted uranium, and industrial toxins, which create long-term health and environmental risks. Conflicts also disrupt agriculture due to landmines and unexploded ordnance, while post-war debris clearance adds further greenhouse emissions. The ongoing conflict involving Iran has similarly begun to generate pollution with both immediate and long-term consequences. Beyond active warfare, military infrastructure itself contributes significantly to global emissions, with estimates suggesting that military activity accounts for 5.5 percent of worldwide greenhouse gases. This ecological toll rivals major industrial sectors and remains largely unaccounted for in climate frameworks. The article concludes that ignoring environmental destruction in conflict zones undermines global efforts to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable development, warning that war not only kills people but also inflicts ecocide on an already fragile planet.

Overview:

The article examines the overlooked environmental consequences of war, emphasizing how conflicts degrade ecosystems, intensify climate change and produce long-term ecological damage. It highlights both direct destruction

from warfare and indirect impacts from military operations, urging greater recognition of environmental costs in global policy and security planning.

NOTES:

War inflicts damage far beyond visible destruction as it quietly dismantles ecosystems and destabilises environmental balance. Conflicts poison water sources, degrade soil quality, and wipe out forests, which weakens biodiversity and accelerates climate change. Resource competition often fuels wars, which increases the likelihood of recurring violence, as seen in regions where land and water disputes persist. Large-scale conflicts such as the Gulf War released massive pollutants into the atmosphere, while prolonged wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria contaminated ecosystems and reduced natural carbon sinks. Modern warfare introduces toxic substances like heavy metals and depleted uranium which create lasting health risks and environmental hazards. Landmines and unexploded ordnance render agricultural land unusable, while debris clearance after war adds further greenhouse emissions. Military infrastructure itself remains a major contributor to global emissions, accounting for a significant share of greenhouse gases even in peacetime. These realities show that war not only claims lives but also leaves behind an enduring ecological crisis that undermines sustainability and human survival.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- Environmental Science: Climate change, biodiversity loss, environmental degradation, pollution.
- Current Affairs: Environmental impact of modern conflicts, global climate challenges.
- International Relations: War and its non-traditional security impacts, environmental security.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that war damages not only people but also the environment. Bombing and destruction poison water, destroy forests and harm animals. For example, during the Gulf War, burning oil fields polluted air and land. In recent conflicts, chemicals and explosives contaminate soil and water, making farming difficult. Landmines stop people from using land safely. Military activities also produce large amounts of pollution even in peaceful times. This adds to climate change. The key idea is that war harms nature in ways that last for decades, affecting both the environment and human health.

Facts and Figures:

- Military activity contributes about 5.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.
- Over 100 million tonnes of carbon dioxide were released during early years of the Russia-Ukraine war.
- Oil fires during the Gulf War released millions of tonnes of pollutants.
- Conflicts destroy forests, reducing natural carbon absorption capacity.
- Toxic substances from warfare create long-term health risks for civilians.

To sum up, The article shares a neglected dimension of warfare, where environmental destruction reveals silently but relentlessly. It warns that ignoring ecological damage will erode global efforts to combat climate change and protect biodiversity. War leaves behind scars that outlast ceasefires, poisoning land, air and water for generations. Sustainable peace demands not only political resolution but also environmental accountability, for without safeguarding nature, humanity risks undermining its own future.

PAKISTAN: BULWARK AGAINST AFGHAN TERROR SPILLOVER

Author: Durdana Najam

Summary:

The article argues that Afghanistan has once again emerged as a sanctuary for transnational militancy, despite decades of global warnings and interventions. It examines the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2818, which should have signaled urgency, but risks fading into irrelevance like earlier resolutions. The

persistence of militant groups such as Al-Qaeda, ISIL-K, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, East Turkestan Islamic Movement and Balochistan Liberation Army reflects a deeper structural issue within Afghanistan. The author contends that Pakistan's cross-border strikes are not acts of aggression but compelled responses to sustained attacks originating from Afghan territory. Diplomatic engagement has yielded little, leaving Islamabad with shrinking options. The Afghan Taliban regime, instead of dismantling militant networks, appears unable or unwilling to curb their expansion, while narratives of civilian harm are often used to deflect attention from entrenched militancy.

The article further shows the crisis within Afghanistan's political economy, where conflict has evolved into a self-sustaining system driven by illicit trade, patronage and strategic utility of armed groups. This entrenched war economy resists reform and perpetuates instability. Emerging geopolitical alignments, including alleged external linkages with anti-Pakistan groups, intensify the threat landscape. Therefore, Pakistan's actions are framed as part of a broader global counterterrorism effort rather than isolated measures. The author warns that international ambivalence and selective counterterrorism approaches risk repeating past failures. Without coordinated global action, Afghanistan's militant ecosystem may expand beyond regional confines, unleashing consequences that transcend borders and destabilize global security once again.

Overview:

The article evaluates Afghanistan's role as a hub of transnational militancy and presents Pakistan as a frontline state confronting spillover threats. It highlights the structural roots of terrorism, analyzes international inaction, and emphasizes the need for coordinated global counterterrorism strategies to prevent regional and global destabilization.

NOTES:

The article argues that Afghanistan has once again become a hub of transnational militancy, where groups operate with relative freedom despite global warnings and measures such as those by the United Nations Security Council, reflecting a persistent failure to address the root problem. Pakistan's cross-border strikes are presented as a necessary response to repeated attacks from Afghan territory after diplomatic efforts proved ineffective, rather than acts of aggression. The Afghan Taliban regime appears unable or unwilling to dismantle these networks, while narratives of civilian harm often divert attention from entrenched militancy. At a deeper level, the crisis is sustained by a war economy built on illicit trade, patronage and the strategic use of armed groups, which resists reform and perpetuates instability. Emerging geopolitical linkages further intensify the threat, placing Pakistan at the frontline of a broader global security challenge, while international inaction and selective counterterrorism risk allowing militant networks to expand beyond the region, repeating past failures with far-reaching consequences.

Relevant CSS syllabus or subjects and topics:

- International Relations: Terrorism, regional security, state sovereignty, global counterterrorism frameworks.
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan-Afghanistan relations, border security, internal security challenges.
- Current Affairs: Afghanistan crisis, militant networks, UN role in conflict resolution.

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Afghanistan has become a safe place for militant groups again. These groups carry out attacks across borders, especially in Pakistan. Pakistan tried diplomacy first, but repeated attacks forced military action. For example, cross-border strikes target militant bases rather than civilians. The problem runs deeper than security. Afghanistan's economy depends partly on conflict, illegal trade and armed groups. This creates a cycle where peace becomes difficult. When the world ignores this issue, the danger spreads. Similar conditions in the past led to global attacks. Pakistan's role is crucial because it faces immediate threats, while other countries remain distant observers. The key idea is simple. Terrorism cannot be contained if safe havens remain intact.

Facts and Figures:

- United Nations Security Council Resolution 2818 highlights ongoing threats from Afghan territory.
- Militant groups operate freely across Afghan regions without effective control.
- Pakistan has faced repeated cross-border attacks originating from Afghanistan.
- The war economy in Afghanistan relies on illicit trade and external funding.
- Past failures in the 1990s led to global terrorist incidents with far-reaching consequences.

To sum up, The article warns that history may repeat itself if complacency prevails. Afghanistan's militant networks pose not a regional nuisance but a global threat. Pakistan stands exposed at the front line, but the burden cannot rest on one state alone. Durable peace demands collective resolve, not selective concern. If the world turns a blind eye once more, the consequences will not knock politely. They will crash through borders with force.

CSS PLATFORM

Al Jazeera –

THE ‘FOURTH SUCCESSOR’: IRAN’S PLAN FOR A LONG WAR WITH THE US AND ISRAEL

Author: Shady Ibrahim

Summary:

The article argues that Iran has not prepared for a swift clash but for a drawn out confrontation shaped by endurance and institutional resilience. Its doctrine, known as mosaic defence, rests on decentralisation, redundancy and continuity under extreme pressure. Even if leadership falls or communication breaks, the system continues to function through layered command structures. Military power is dispersed across the IRGC, Basij, regular army and local units, each capable of independent action. This design rejects the idea of decisive victory through a single strike. Instead, it turns survival into strategy. Iran assumes that superior US and Israeli firepower cannot be matched symmetrically, so it seeks to outlast rather than overpower. War, in this view, becomes a test of patience rather than strength.

The author further explains that this doctrine extends beyond battlefield tactics into economic and strategic calculations. Low cost weapons such as drones impose high defensive costs on opponents, creating a war of attrition that drains resources over time. Maritime disruption in chokepoints like the Strait of Hormuz expands pressure beyond borders. The concept of the “fourth successor” ensures continuity of leadership even after targeted assassinations, preventing systemic collapse. Iran’s thinking draws from prolonged war theory, where time erodes the advantage of stronger powers. The aim is not immediate dominance but gradual exhaustion of the adversary. Thus, the strategy transforms vulnerability into leverage, making time itself a weapon in modern conflict.

Overview:

The article examines Iran’s long war doctrine built on decentralised defence, institutional survival and strategic endurance. It highlights how military, economic and ideological elements combine to resist superior force. The writer presents mosaic defence as a calculated response to US and Israeli doctrines of rapid dominance and leadership decapitation.

NOTES:

The article argues that Iran has engineered a war doctrine that resists collapse under extreme pressure through decentralised command, layered authority, and institutional continuity. Military power is dispersed across multiple forces, which ensures operations continue even after leadership losses or communication breakdowns. This structure denies the enemy a quick victory and shifts the contest toward endurance. The strategy also leverages economic asymmetry, where low cost drones impose far higher defensive expenses on opponents, gradually draining their capacity. Maritime pressure in chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz widens the battlefield and amplifies global impact. The concept of the “fourth successor” guarantees leadership replacement at multiple levels, which prevents paralysis after targeted strikes. War, in this framework, becomes a test of patience and resilience, where time itself serves as a strategic weapon rather than sheer military strength.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- International Relations: Asymmetric warfare and hybrid conflict, Deterrence and strategic stability, Prolonged war theory and non conventional strategy, Geopolitics of the Middle East, Maritime security and chokepoints
- Political Science: State resilience and governance under conflict, Role of ideology in strategic policy, Power structures and decentralisation

- Pakistan Affairs: Regional security dynamics, Impact of Middle East conflicts on Pakistan
- Current Affairs: US Iran Israel conflict, Energy security and global trade routes

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that modern wars are not always short or decisive. A weaker country can survive by stretching the conflict. For example, Iran uses many small units instead of one central command. If one part is destroyed, others continue. This prevents sudden collapse. Cheap drones also play a key role. One drone may cost thousands, but stopping it costs far more. This creates economic pressure on stronger opponents. The Strait of Hormuz carries about 20 percent of global oil. Any disruption here affects the entire world economy. Iran also supports allied groups in different countries. This spreads the battlefield and makes war more complex. Such strategies show that survival can become a form of victory.

Facts and Figures:

- Iran has 31 provincial command structures under decentralised defence
- The Strait of Hormuz handles nearly 20 percent of global oil trade
- Low cost drones cost thousands while interception costs far higher
- Doctrine influenced by conflicts in Afghanistan 2001 and Iraq 2003
- Concept of up to four successors for each key leadership position
- Eight year Iran Iraq war shaped endurance based strategy

To sum up, the article shows that dominance on paper does not ensure victory in practice. Iran's doctrine turns weakness into strategy and pressure into opportunity. The battlefield now extends beyond territory into time, economy and psychology. In such wars, survival itself becomes triumph.

WHAT'S NEXT IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT?

Author: Waqar Hassan

Summary:

The article examines the evolving conflict between the United States, Israel, and Iran, presenting it as a turning point that may reshape the Middle East's geopolitical order. What began as a limited confrontation has expanded into a wider strategic contest, marked by cost imposition rather than decisive victory. Iran's approach targets energy routes and regional vulnerabilities, which exposes the fragility of global supply chains. The conflict no longer remains confined, as it stretches across multiple regions, from the Persian Gulf to the Levant, which complicates control and heightens uncertainty. The Strait of Hormuz stands at the centre of this crisis where even minor disruptions threaten global energy security. The cautious posture of the United States has raised doubts among its allies, which signals a gradual shift toward a multipolar regional order.

The article outlines several possible trajectories, each carrying profound implications. Gulf states may seek autonomy or deepen reliance on Washington, while Iran's survival could strengthen its regional influence. A regime collapse may instead trigger chaos and fragmentation. Israel's strategic recalibration also remains uncertain, as outcomes may force defensive adjustments. Even a perceived victory by the United States and Israel could widen the conflict, drawing in other regional actors and transforming it into a broader strategic contest. The consequences extend far beyond the region because rising fuel prices, inflation, and supply disruptions threaten global stability. The article concludes that unchecked escalation may erode international norms, while diplomacy remains the only viable path to prevent prolonged instability and secure a balanced regional order.

Overview:

The article analyzes the Middle East conflict as a transformative geopolitical moment. It highlights shifting power dynamics, strategic uncertainties and the global economic consequences of prolonged instability, while emphasizing the urgent need for diplomatic resolution.

NOTES:

Modern warfare in the Middle East now rests on cost imposition rather than outright victory where states aim to exhaust rivals through economic and strategic pressure. The conflict has expanded beyond a single battlefield, stretching across regions and creating multiple pressure points that heighten uncertainty. The Strait of Hormuz remains a vital energy corridor, where even minor disruption can shake global markets. The United States faces a credibility challenge, as its warns stance raises doubts among allies and signals a gradual shift toward a multipolar order. Iran employs strategies that target vulnerabilities in energy and trade which amplifies regional instability. Several outcomes remain possible, including regime survival, collapse, or wider escalation involving other regional actors. This conflict may draw additional powers into the arena which risks transforming a regional war into a broader strategic contest. The global economy stands exposed to inflation, energy shocks and supply chain disruption which extend the impact far beyond the region. Diplomacy emerges as the only rational path, as continued escalation threatens prolonged instability and erosion of international order.

Relevant CSS syllabus topics and subjects:

- International Relations:
 - Middle East politics and geopolitics
 - Balance of power and multipolarity
 - War, conflict, and strategic studies

- Current Affairs:
 - Middle East conflict
 - Global energy security and economic impact

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how the Middle East conflict is not limited to one area. It spreads across regions and affects global stability. For example, if the Strait of Hormuz is blocked, oil supply reduces and prices rise worldwide. This increases transport costs and raises food prices. Countries that depend on oil imports face economic pressure. The conflict also shows that strong countries cannot always control outcomes. Smaller strategies like targeting trade routes can create large impact. War today affects not only countries involved but the entire world economy.

Facts and Figures:

- Around 20 percent of global oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz
- Conflict has spread from the Persian Gulf to the Levant region
- Energy disruptions lead to immediate global price increases
- Regional alliances are shifting toward multipolar arrangements
- Economic shocks include inflation and supply chain instability

To sum up, Power no longer rests on strength alone, but on strategy and endurance. The Middle East stands at critical point, where each decision may redraw the future. Diplomacy gives a narrow chance from chaos. If ignored, the conflict may spiral into a prolonged crisis that spares no region.

PAKISTAN'S QUIET GAMBIT IN A VOLATILE US-IRAN CRISIS

Author: Owais Tohid

Summary:

The article analyzes Pakistan's delicate diplomatic positioning amid escalating US-Iran tensions and ongoing regional instability. It highlights how Islamabad leverages its unique geopolitical standing as a nuclear-armed state with historical ties to Iran, strategic partnerships with the United States, and close relations with Gulf states to act as a mediator in backchannel efforts to prevent further escalation. Pakistan facilitates indirect communication between the adversaries, potentially hosting high-level negotiations, while maintaining a careful balance between its regional obligations and international commitments. The article emphasizes that both the US and Iran maintain maximalist positions designed for domestic and international audiences, with the US seeking curbs on Iran's nuclear and missile programs, limitation of proxy activities, and protection of Gulf energy infrastructure, while Iran demands sanctions relief, compensation for losses, and guarantees against future attacks.

The article further underlines the fragility of peace in the region where military actions such as Israel's operations in southern Lebanon and Iran's strikes, intensify risks and complicate diplomacy. Both sides face internal pressures, from inflation and public discontent in Iran to domestic scrutiny in the US ahead of elections, influencing their cautious approach. Gulf states remain critical stakeholders due to their dependence on the Strait of Hormuz and energy stability. Pakistan's measured role exemplifies how careful navigation of competing interests, historical ties, and strategic relationships can open avenues for dialogue, but progress remains tenuous. The narrative demonstrates that even powerful states must exercise prudence, considering both tangible and intangible factors like legitimacy, public perception, and domestic constraints to avoid spiraling into a broader regional conflagration.

Overview:

The article explores Pakistan's intermediary role in the US-Iran crisis, emphasizing its strategic leverage derived from historical, military, and economic ties with all key stakeholders. It outlines the challenges of mediating between adversaries holding maximalist positions and the indirect, backchannel nature of ongoing negotiations. Diplomatic efforts including potential hosting of talks in Islamabad or alternative venues like Turkiye, reflect Pakistan's cautious but proactive stance. The article highlights the interplay between military pressures, domestic political considerations, and regional energy security, illustrating that successful conflict management requires negotiation, strategic patience, and awareness of local dynamics.

NOTES:

Pakistan occupies a unique geopolitical position that allows it to act as a key mediator in the escalating US-Iran crisis, balancing historical ties with Iran, strategic partnerships with the United States, and close relations with Gulf states. Leveraging this position, Islamabad facilitates backchannel communication between adversaries, with the possibility of hosting high-level negotiations while maintaining a delicate equilibrium between regional obligations and international commitments. The US maintains maximalist demands, seeking to curb Iran's nuclear and missile programs, restrict regional proxy activities, and safeguard Gulf energy infrastructure, whereas Iran presses for sanctions relief, compensation, and guarantees against future attacks, signaling resilience despite domestic economic and social pressures. Military escalations, including Israel's operations in southern Lebanon and Iran's retaliatory strikes, further complicate diplomacy and heighten risks, while Gulf states remain critical stakeholders due to their dependence on the Strait of Hormuz for energy security. Pakistan's measured role highlights the importance of strategic patience, prudence, and negotiation in navigating competing interests, domestic constraints,

and regional vulnerabilities, demonstrating that even powerful states must carefully balance tangible and intangible factors like legitimacy, public perception, and the risk of a broader conflagration to prevent escalation.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Subjects and Topics:

- International Relations: Conflict mediation, regional diplomacy, nuclear deterrence, US-Iran relations
- Current Affairs: Middle East tensions, energy security, global diplomacy, backchannel negotiations
- Pakistan Affairs: Pakistan's diplomatic positioning, strategic balancing, regional influence

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains how Pakistan mediates between the US and Iran, using its unique geographic, historical, and strategic relationships. It shows that peace efforts are conducted indirectly through backchannel communication, rather than open negotiations. Both the US and Iran have strong demands, but domestic pressures limit their flexibility. Gulf states are impacted by energy security issues especially regarding the Strait of Hormuz. The article teaches that balancing interests, understanding vulnerabilities, and negotiating strategically are key in preventing conflicts, even for powerful nations.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan shares a border with Iran and facilitates its consular services in the US.
- Pakistan maintains strategic military relations with the US dating back to the Soviet-Afghan war.
- Gulf states including Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar are critical partners in regional energy security.
- Strait of Hormuz remains vital for global oil flow, with tensions affecting markets and regional stability.
- High-level officials potentially involved include US Vice President JD Vance, envoy Steve Witkoff, and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

To sum up, The article argues that Pakistan's unique positioning enables it to act as a stabilizing force in a highly volatile US-Iran confrontation. It highlights the delicate interplay between military might, domestic pressures and strategic diplomacy, demonstrating that careful, balanced and patient negotiation is essential. The narrative reinforces the idea that resolving complex conflicts demands understanding local dynamics, managing multiple stakeholders, and maintaining legitimacy to avoid escalation with global ramifications.

MINING THE FUTURE

Author: Faisal Ahmad

Summary:

The article argues that the global shift toward green energy and high-tech industry has ushered in a new economic era, where critical minerals have replaced oil as the backbone of future growth. It contends that Pakistan, long trapped in a cycle of debt, textiles and agriculture, now stands on the edge of transformation due to its vast untapped reserves of copper, lithium, rare earth elements, and gold. Regions such as Balochistan and northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa hold immense geological wealth, with projects like Reko Diq representing a potential economic lifeline. The author warns that mere extraction will not suffice, as nations that export raw materials often remain stuck in dependency. True progress lies in building domestic processing industries that can convert these resources into high-value products, thereby generating employment, strengthening industrial capacity, and reducing reliance on imports.

The article further highlights the complex challenges that shadow this opportunity. Mineral-rich regions suffer from instability and underdevelopment, creating a paradox where economic salvation lies in fragile territories. The author stresses that inclusive development, local participation, and equitable benefit-sharing can transform these regions and weaken the roots of militancy. At the same time, foreign investment remains essential, yet it must be balanced with national sovereignty through transparent policies and strong regulatory frameworks. Platforms like the Special Investment Facilitation Council can streamline this process while ensuring environmental and social safeguards. The article concludes that Pakistan stands at a decisive crossroads, where strategic vision and disciplined execution can convert geological fortune into economic resilience, or else the opportunity may slip away like many before it.

Overview:

The article explores the rising global importance of critical minerals and positions Pakistan as a potential key player in this transformation. It examines the country's untapped mineral wealth, the need for value addition, and the structural challenges that hinder progress. The narrative emphasizes industrial development, regional stability, and policy coherence as essential components for harnessing this sector. It frames mineral development not merely as an economic option but as a strategic necessity for long-term stability.

NOTES:

The article argues that Pakistan possesses immense untapped reserves of critical minerals such as copper, lithium, and rare earth elements, which have gained global importance due to the shift toward renewable energy and high-tech industries, yet warns that simple extraction will keep the country trapped in low-value dependency; instead, true transformation lies in building domestic processing and manufacturing capacity to create jobs, reduce imports, and secure sustained growth. At the same time, mineral-rich regions like Balochistan face instability and underdevelopment, which creates a paradox where economic salvation lies in fragile territories, thus requiring inclusive policies that involve local communities and address grievances to curb militancy. The author further stresses that while foreign investment is necessary for capital-intensive projects, it must be managed through transparent frameworks and strong institutions such as the Special Investment Facilitation Council to protect national sovereignty and ensure fair benefits. Ultimately, the piece presents Pakistan at a decisive crossroads, where strategic vision, policy consistency, and disciplined execution can convert geological wealth into lasting economic strength, or else the opportunity will fade like many before it.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics and Subjects:

- International Relations: Resource geopolitics, great power competition, economic sovereignty

- Economics: Industrialisation, resource management, value addition, foreign investment
- Pakistan Affairs: Regional development, Balochistan issues, economic policy

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that modern industries need special minerals for products like electric vehicles and solar panels. For example, an electric car needs far more minerals than a traditional car. Pakistan has large deposits of these resources, especially in areas like Balochistan. If Pakistan only sells raw minerals, it will earn little. But if it builds factories to process them, it can create jobs and earn more money. Countries like China have followed this path. The article also shows that local development can reduce unrest, as people gain economic opportunities instead of turning toward conflict.

Facts and Figures:

- Pakistan's mineral reserves are valued in trillions of dollars
- Reko Diq is one of the largest undeveloped copper and gold deposits
- Electric vehicles require six times more minerals than conventional cars
- Renewable energy infrastructure demands large quantities of copper and rare elements
- Mineral-rich regions overlap with underdeveloped and unstable areas

To sum up, The article argues that natural wealth alone does not guarantee prosperity, as vision and execution determine outcomes. The mineral sector gives a rare chance to break free from chronic economic fragility and build a self-reliant industrial base, but the path demands discipline, transparency, and strategic foresight. If it pursued wisely, this opportunity can redefine the nation's trajectory and secure lasting economic strength.

EXISTENTIAL THREAT

Author: Ahsan Munir

Summary:

The article works as a warning, suggesting that Pakistan stands on the edge of absolute water scarcity, as per capita water availability has collapsed from over 5,000 cubic metres at independence to below 1,000 today. This decline reflects unchecked population growth, rapid urban expansion, climate stress on glaciers and monsoon cycles, and chronic mismanagement of water resources. The country's weak storage capacity, limited to barely 30 days, exposes a fragile system when compared with far stronger reserves in other states. Agriculture consumes the bulk of water, yet yields remain disproportionately low in economic terms, which exposes inefficiency at the core of resource use. Heavy reliance on the Indus River system further deepens vulnerability, especially when a significant portion of water originates beyond national borders.

The crisis intensifies with geopolitical tensions, particularly India's unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty obligations, which threatens food security, economic stability, and regional peace. Legal recourse has yielded limited compliance, while upstream hydro projects continue to expand. Against this backdrop, the article argues that water scarcity is no longer a distant concern but an existential threat. It calls for urgent structural reforms, including agricultural modernisation, expansion of reservoirs, urban rainwater harvesting, industrial conservation, and regulatory scrutiny of high-consumption sectors. The author concludes that without swift and coordinated action, Pakistan risks ecological decline and economic distress, as water remains the lifeblood of both society and state.

Overview:

The article explores Pakistan's deepening water crisis through structural, environmental, and geopolitical lenses. It highlights declining availability, weak storage, agricultural inefficiency, and transboundary tensions as key drivers.

The narrative stresses that policy inertia has aggravated the situation, while external pressures have raised the stakes further. Practical solutions are proposed, which focus on conservation, infrastructure, and governance reforms to avert a looming disaster.

NOTES:

Pakistan faces a deepening water crisis driven by rapid population growth, unchecked urban expansion, climate pressures, and persistent mismanagement, which together have reduced per capita water availability to critical levels and exposed the country's fragile storage capacity of barely 30 days. Agriculture consumes the overwhelming share of water, but it delivers limited economic return, which reflects structural inefficiency and poor resource allocation. Heavy dependence on the Indus River system, with most water originating beyond national borders, increases vulnerability and places national security at risk. The situation has worsened due to India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty obligations and its continued upstream hydro projects, which threaten downstream flows and intensify uncertainty. Weak governance, policy inertia, and lack of enforcement have further aggravated the crisis. The article highlights urgent measures such as modernising irrigation systems, constructing reservoirs, promoting rainwater harvesting, recycling water, regulating industrial usage, and scrutinising high-consumption sectors, arguing that only coordinated and immediate action can prevent ecological decline and economic disruption.

Relevant CSS Syllabus Topics:

- Pakistan Affairs: Water crisis, Indus basin issues, resource management
- International Relations: Transboundary water conflicts, treaty obligations, regional tensions
- Current Affairs: Climate change, food security, environmental sustainability
- Environmental Science: Water conservation, irrigation systems, ecological balance

Notes for Beginners:

The article explains that Pakistan is running out of water at an alarming pace. For example, people today receive far less water than earlier generations. Most water goes to farming, but inefficient methods waste large amounts. If better irrigation such as drip systems is used, water loss can be reduced. Rainwater harvesting offers another solution, especially in cities where rainfall often goes unused. The dispute over river water with India shows how external factors can worsen domestic shortages. Countries like the United States store water for years, while Pakistan stores only for a month, which makes it vulnerable during crises.

Facts and Figures:

- Per capita water availability dropped from over 5,000 to below 1,000 cubic metres
- Pakistan stores only about 30 days of water
- Over 80 percent of water is used by four major crops
- 95.8 percent of water depends on the Indus River system
- Over 75 percent of water originates outside national borders

To wrap up, The article suggests that water scarcity has shifted from concern to crisis. It argues that survival now depends on decisive policy action and collective discipline. Nature has issued its warning, yet the response remains slow. If reforms are pursued with clarity and resolve, the tide may still turn.

CSS PLATFORM NEXUS

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