

- *Maldives, a State Failing*
- *The Rising Pakistan*
- *Climate Change Disastrous for Asia*
- *Hong Kong's Return to Motherland, 1997*
- *Modi's Visit: The View From Jerusalem*

# Rising Asia

October-December 2017 Issue 11



CPC 19th Congress will be a New Milestone



US Accuses Russia of Arming Taliban 'to Hide Its Own Defeat' in Afghanistan



His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco



# Remembering October – 2016

## A Historical Visit of Chinese President His Excellency Mr. Xi Jinping to Bangladesh





# Rising Asia

## A Quarterly Magazine of CEAF

Issue - 11  
October - December, 2017

*Striving for Asian Solidarity*

Centre for East Asia Foundation (CEAF)  
Bangladesh, Dhaka

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A Quarterly Magazine of CEAF

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## Editor's Note



Historical bondage between Bangladesh and China is an epic one since time immemorial. It is our great honour and privilege to avail the opportunity to remember the historical visit of Chinese president H. E. Mr. Xi Jinping to Bangladesh in October, 2016. As a goodwill gesture we had published a special issue of *Rising Asia* in October, 2016 during the Chinese president's visit. The visit has ushered in a new 'era of intensive cooperation' in trade, investment and other sectors of mutual interest and respect between China and Bangladesh. The visit has also paved the way in rebuilding a strong historical relationship and further created a strong bondage between the two friendly countries. The two countries, in a bid to revamp the relationship, have also announced that 2017 would be observed as the "Year of Exchange and Friendship". Emblematically over the past one year there have been a number of cultural, diplomatic and educational exchanges implemented between the two countries. There is an air of expectation that innovative coop-

eration between Bangladesh and China would play an impeccable role in China's relations with South Asia and ultimately benefit the two countries.

In the wake of an active genocide in Myanmar and the resulting influx of Rohingyas into Bangladesh, Dhaka should launch a vigorous diplomatic initiative to internationalize the crimes Myanmar is committing in Rakhine State and solicit support for a peaceful solution. This is a major humanitarian crisis, and reports indicate that the majority fleeing are women and children. We are encouraged that Bangladesh government has opened its borders to receive those who have felt they had no choice but to leave their homes.

We congratulate our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her pragmatic and visionary steps on Rohingya issues. The PM was speaking at the meeting of OIC Contact Group on Rohingya Muslim Minority at the UN Headquarters in New York on 19 September, 2017. She put forward number of proposals including full implementation of the recommendations made by the Kofi Annan-led Rakhaine Advisory Commission. The PM mentioning that the crisis has its roots in Myanmar and its solution has to be found there. She also said, "all forms of atrocities against the Rohingya Muslims must be stopped immediately and 'safe zones' may be created inside Myanmar to protect the innocent civilians especially the women, children and elderly."

We strongly urge the Myanmar government to take immediate steps to implement the recommendations of the Rakhine Advisory Commission which the Myanmar government established in 2016 under the pressure of international community. The commission, mostly comprised of Myanmar citizens, chaired by Kofi Annan, recommended providing citizenship to the Rohingyas, to allow them freedom of movement, to ensure communal representation, to facilitate UN assistance in ensuring safety and security of returning people. Unless, constructive effort to build lasting peace is taken, the situation will get worse which in turn may pose serious security threat to the neighboring countries.

The 19th National Congress of Communist Party of China (CPC) is expected to open on October 18, where the new leadership for the next five-year term will be elected. Our heartiest expectation for the successful completion of the CPC National Congress-2017 and we believe this Congress would be a milestone for China's peaceful development and world at large. We also strongly believe that it is the CPS's solemn promise to the people, and that promise must be kept, as it has been over the past decades.

Best Regards

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# ASEAN at 50: Paths Taken, Bridges Built, and the Road Ahead

H.E. Vicente Vivencio T. Bandillo



The Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN was founded on 8 August 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand when their foreign ministers signed a 750-word document, thenceforth known as the Bangkok Declaration, which encapsulated a shared vision for the region. By 1999, Brunei, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Myanmar

and Cambodia had joined, increasing ASEAN membership to a total of ten countries.

## Unity in Diversity:

Bound together by aspirations for sustained economic growth, social progress and cultural development, ASEAN member countries had to look inward and around to give a local habitation and a name, so to speak, to the dream of a peaceful and prosperous Southeast Asia. The journey has had its share of hurdles. It bears retelling that the region is among the most diverse in the world, with differences in terms of land area, population, religion, political systems, size of the economy, and per capita income among its countries. Unity was brought about by a common goal and collective will forged by ASEAN's founding fathers. Early on the fledgling organization realized that, diversity notwithstanding, peace and prosperity in the region could be promoted best through mutual respect founded on due regard for justice and the rule of law, and adherence to the principles enshrined in the United Nations charter.

With the rich and varied heritage of each member nation, ASEAN celebrated—and continues to celebrate—multiculturalism as a defining feature of the relationship among its members. Nuances of thought and behavior have come to be viewed through the prism of common values that place importance on hospitality, family and community. From this climate of amity has evolved a value system that promotes a shared sense of neighborliness and inclusiveness in the region, a distinct identity and fellow feeling that highlights the underlying respect reserved for the sovereign rights of the members (an attitude that is described as “The ASEAN Way”).

## Milestones:

ASEAN marks its 50th anniversary this year with commendable achievements in economic, social, educational, security, cultural and technical fields. These achievements, to be sure, were in no small way attained by working together with other regional and international organizations with similar initiatives and aspirations. Among the milestones of ASEAN leading up to its 50th anniversary was the first ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint in 2007 which dealt with the need for the region to develop into a competitive economic bloc marked with equitable economic development, among others. The ASEAN Charter, which entered into force in 2008, set the ASEAN Community in motion by providing legal and institutional framework for codifying ASEAN norms and values, setting clear targets and ensuring accountability and compliance among its members.

The accelerated establishment of an ASEAN Community, premised on a dynamic and vibrant regional economy, deeply committed political and security cooperation and strong socio-cultural linkages, serves as the driving force in charting the course of the evolving regional architecture. Indeed, with the inauguration of the ASEAN Economic Community or AEC in 2015, ASEAN is on track to achieve a cohesive, competitive and innovative people-centered economic bloc integrated into the global economy.

## ASEAN and its Environs: the ARF

In pursuance of its active role in the region, ASEAN provides a venue for governments to discuss issues in an inclusive and open environment among stakeholders on matters affecting ASEAN and its partners. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), generally viewed by governments and think-tanks as a model meeting place for ideas and discussions in Asia, fosters constructive discussions on political and security issues of common concern within the region. Established in 1994, the forum has become an anticipated annual event, especially in light of its contributions to confidence-building among its 27 country-participants, with Bangladesh being an active member.

The world is taking note of how ASEAN has stimulated multilateral dialogue and consultations featuring decision-making by consensus, non-interference, incremental progress and moving at a pace comfortable to all. Through ASEAN-initiated forums such as ASEAN Plus Three (with China, Japan



and South Korea), East Asia Summit (ASEAN Plus Three with Australia, India, New Zealand, Russia and the United States) and ARF (East Asia Summit countries plus Bangladesh, Canada, European Union, Democratic Socialist Republic of Korea, Papua New Guinea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Timor Leste), ASEAN makes known its commitment to peace not only within its borders, but also beyond it through friendly engagements with participants coming from different regions and blocs.

### **Visions and Re-Visions:**

The ASEAN Community Vision 2025 extends ASEAN's outlook beyond the various planned Communities. The Joint Communiqué of the 50th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting reaffirms the commitment to full and effective implementation of ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together, which spells out the future direction for a stable Community. The 50th Anniversary also sees the positive progress in the implementation of the different Communities' 2025 Blueprints, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC) and the Initiative for ASEAN Integration Work Plan III. These templates reinforce further the collective resolve expressed in earlier documents such as the ASEAN Vision 2020 and the Bali ConCORDs.

MPAC 2025 articulates the communal aim to achieve a fully integrated ASEAN. The challenge of translating this into reality lies in the five strategic areas of sustainable infrastructure, digital innovation, seamless logistics, regulatory excellence and people mobility. An integrated approach to development in these five areas will guarantee connectivity of member countries within the region and with the rest of the world, bring about rapid economic growth, narrow development gaps, promote deeper social and cultural understanding, and enhance the Community-building process.

### **Complementarities and Commitments:**

To help define complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ASEAN conducted the High-Level Brainstorming Dialogue Enhancing Complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in March 2017 in Thailand. The dialogue identified priority cross-cutting areas that could serve as catalysts in promoting resilience, poverty eradication, and sustainable management of natural resources.

With Community Vision 2025, ASEAN will travel the road ahead by pursuing its economic goals through inclusive de-

velopment strategies such as the unimpeded migration of skilled workers and professionals within its borders. Proud of its noteworthy historical moments, fully aware of its rich cultural heritage and empowered by a common regional identity, ASEAN sees itself as composed of interlinked societies that form part of the global neighborhood yet hew closely to their respective national identities, committed to providing all its citizens with equitable access to human development opportunities regardless of gender, race, religion, language, or social and cultural background.

ASEAN also reiterates its commitment, enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ Treaty) and the ASEAN Charter, to keep Southeast Asia free of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction. The SEANWFZ Treaty will be extended from 2018-2022, and ASEAN will continue to engage the Nuclear Weapon States and intensify ongoing efforts of all Parties to resolve all outstanding issues in accordance with ASEAN's firm determination to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

### **The Next 50 Years, and Beyond:**

In fine, ASEAN looks forward to a peaceful and stable Southeast Asia where the causes for conflict have been eliminated through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law and sustained effort at maintaining national and regional resilience. ASEAN takes itself seriously as a force for peace, justice and moderation in Asia-Pacific and the world, while preserving its core values—which include respect for each member's sovereignty, following the ASEAN Way. Certainly, enthusiasm for an expanded relationship with its dialogue partners and other regional organizations based on mutual respect will underline ASEAN's future plans, statements and actions.

As ASEAN concludes its golden jubilee, it continues to be mindful of its aspirations as an outward-looking Community and of its evolving role in the international arena. Just as it looks back to 50 years ago, it also looks forward to the next 50 years, and beyond. In a world where stability depends on tact and diplomacy, ASEAN will not only remain relevant, but will become even more so in the years to come. ASEAN now has a better grasp of its founding fathers' vision of a Southeast Asia living in peace, stability and prosperity in a caring Community that considers the well-being not only of the region, but also of all regions in the world.

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**His Excellency Vicente Vivencio T. Bandillo** is the Ambassador of Philippines to Bangladesh.



# The Rising Pakistan

H.E. Rafiuzzaman Siddiqui



Pakistan is a vibrant country with 207 million dynamic people. Its total GDP is over US \$350 billion with US \$1800 per capita income. Over 8.7 million Pakistani nationals are residing abroad in different countries of the world. They remit handsome amount of foreign remittances to Pakistan

which helps significantly in recouping the balance of payment account.

Pakistan is blessed with surfeit of natural resources such as mighty mountains, roaring rivers, sleeping glaciers, expansive deserts, cooing seas, dense forests, natural gas and huge untapped mineral resources. The most important strength of Pakistan is its resilient, dynamic and hardworking people who play significant role in human resource development.

Pakistan has seen smooth democratic transition in May, 2013, when one political government completed its stint and shifted power to another. More recently, the political transition has been smoother and was in line with the democratic traditions. It indicates strengthening of roots of democratic norms in Pakistan. Similarly, the judiciary is independent and working in a very proactive manner. Civil Society in Pakistan is politically astute and well educated. It wields great influence in redressal of numerous problems that they confront in day to day life. Fiercely independent media serves as a watchdog in Pakistan and keeps the government of the day under check.

The menace of terrorism has largely been throttled through the emphatic response of the state. The improved security situation in the country is vindicated by the fact that 2016 was the most peaceful year for Pakistan since 2007. The improved security situation bespeaks of the success of successive military operations. The incessant operations have greatly diminished the negative international perception of insecurity that was the key challenge to the development of tourism in the country. Pakistan has paid gargantuan price to contain the ogre of terrorism and extremism. Launching of operations Zarb-e-Azab and Raddul Fasaad have helped eliminate terrorism and restoring peace and

stability in the country

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is buzzword in Pakistan as well as the region. China, which is Pakistan's all-weather, time-tested friend, signed several agreements in the infrastructure and energy sectors. CPEC is going to play pivotal role in the future economic development and is, therefore, termed as a "game changer". Total value of the CPEC projects is over US \$62 billion. It will not only benefit China and Pakistan, but will have positive impact on the region and beyond as well. The enhancement of geographical linkages having improved road, rail and air transportation system with frequent and free exchanges of growth and people to people contact, enhancing understanding through academic, cultural and regional knowledge and culture, activity of higher volume of flow of trade and businesses, producing and moving energy to have more optimal businesses and enhancement of co-operation by win-win model will result in well-connected, integrated region of shared destiny, harmony and development.

Load shedding of power had been the bane in recent past. But, the present government has undertaken several energy projects to overcome the energy crisis. These projects include hydel, thermal and wind power energy projects. The shortfall of energy is dwindling and Pakistan will be self-sufficient in energy sector very soon.

The Central Asia-South Asia power project, commonly known as CASA-1000, is a US \$1.16 billion project currently under construction that will allow for the export of surplus hydro-electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan and Afghanistan. This ground-breaking project kicked off in May, 2016, in Tajikistan. At the completion of the CASA-1000, Pakistan will receive 1,300 megawatts of electricity which would help in reduction of power shortage and bring economic development and prosperity in the country.

Pakistan is a country with huge potential for tourism. Pakistan is home to one of the oldest civilizations in the world, dating back to 6500 BC. Mehrgarh, an ancient culture flourished in Balochistan in 6500 B.C. Later, Indus civilization, Mohenjo-Daro and Harrapa flourished in Sindh dating back to 2500 B.C. Its people lived in well-planned cities, with an advance life style, contemporaneous with



the civilizations of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Minoan Crete, and Norte Chico. At its height, the Indus civilization spanned much of Pakistan and North India, extending westwards to the Iranian border, south to Gujarat in India. It is regarded as the cradle of civilization in this region.

Taxila is another archaeological treasure of the ancient Gandhara Kingdom located in Pakistan. It is a city of the Gandharan civilization, sometimes known as one of its capitals. Taxila was a hub of Buddhism, a center of learning, an urban metropolis and a meeting point of various cultures.

The great Mughal history presents yet another illustrious era of art, music, architecture and gardens which speaks volume of their skill and taste. Their remnants of the splendor are scattered all over the country. Lahore, known as the cultural hub of Pakistan, hosts some of the most impressive Mughal and Victorian architecture. The elegance of Wazir Khan Mosque and a glass-workin Sheesh Mahal at Lahore Fort are the magnificent examples of intricate art-work.

Pakistan manufactures the finest sports goods, including some world class brands. The footballs used in the World Cup-2014 were manufactured in Sialkot. It is also known throughout the world for its surgical instruments. The hand-woven carpets and rugs are acclaimed and appreciated world over.

People in Pakistan are extremely fond of sports playing both modern and traditional sports and games. Pakistan has the honor to have won World Championship in cricket, hockey, squash and snooker a number of times. Apart from such international sports many indigenous games and sports are highly popular and mark the individuality and fun-loving nature of Pakistanis. Pakistani music is a beautiful blend of tradition and individual colors. It draws inspiration from the rich contribution of the 13th century poet and musician Ameer Khusro who composed the earliest “raghas”. Even the pop music is a fusion of classical and modern tunes.

Pakistan is known for high rising mountains. This include five out of the total fourteen above 8000 meters high peaks on earth, namely the second highest rock pyramid – the K2 (8611-M), the killer mountain Nanga Parbat (8125-M), the Hidden Peak Gasherbrum-I (8068-M), the Broad Peak (8051-M), and the Gasherbrum-II (8035-M).

In short, Pakistan holds tremendous potential of growth with unmatched strategic location in the world. Pakistan is a developing country and it is one of the eleven countries that have a potential to be among the world's large economies in the 21st century.

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**His Excellency Rafiuzzaman Siddiqui** is the High Commissioner of Pakistan to Bangladesh.

## Re-election of President Rouhani

*Iran will continue constructive engagement and rejecting extremism*

**H.E. Dr. Abbas Vaezi**



Having over 7500 years of rich history of culture and civilization and also over 3000 years of governance, Iran witnessed one of the greatest revolutions in 20th century. After a long time of efforts for freedom and self-determination, 38 years ago Iranians led a glorious revolution to victory.

After their victorious Islamic revolution under the leadership of Imam Khomeini, absolute majority, 98.2 percent, of the Iranians voted positively for the “Islamic Republic” in a referendum held on April 1, 1979.

Thereafter we have held one election each year on average, all of which have witnessed large turnout of the people. We never stopped holding elections even during the 8-year imposed war by neighboring Iraq.

In line with our Constitution, Iranians with different political affiliations inside and outside the country take part in a type of election which should be regarded as a role model for many countries. While Iranians determine their fate through ballot boxes, most state governments in our region still are unfamiliar with elections. At best, their so-called elections are unprofessional or at infant stage.

Iran strongly believes that democracy, engagement, and economic expansion are what give a country real power. Since the founding of the Islamic republic, democracy has progressed significantly within our society.

In May 2017, Iran's 12th presidential election saw President Hassan Rouhani reelected for another four years in office. He won a resounding reelection victory with 23,549,616 votes or 57 percent of the total ballots. His main rival Seyyed Ebrahim Raeisi, secured 15,786,449 votes or 38.5 percent of the ballots.

Overall turnout in the election was registered at over 73 percent. While statistics in some old democracies in the

West show turnout is much lower, the massive participation in Iran election showed public trust in the Islamic republic establishment. Therefore support for the policies and decisions of the next government would be high.

Mr. Rouhani's first administration has made all-out efforts to put the country on the right track of economic recovery and secure the defense achievements and nuclear rights of our nation. His landslide victory in the election indicated hope and confidence on the path of economic reforms and constructive engagement that he adopted during his first term in office.

In the recent election Iranians sent an essential message to the world through the ballot boxes. This message of peace and friendship is expected to be correctly heard: Iran is interested in expanding ties with world but won't ignore national interests.

Iran committed to its economic self-reliance strategy, at the same time it is open to economic relations. Stronger economic engagement with the rest of the world is vital for my country to achieve the goals set for its 6th five-year development plan (2017-2022).

Iranians are increasingly advancing in all areas and in spite of all disloyalties, criticisms and pressures, remain to be superior. Now that the massive participation in the May 19 presidential election has promoted the international status of Iran, the world bows its head before the great people of Iran and addresses the nation with honor and dignity.

Islamic Republic of Iran is playing a responsible role on the path of freedom, justice, and peace and in this direction is ready to cooperate for addressing the shared challenges above all helping settle conflicts in the region, fighting terrorism and restoring stability and security to the region.

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*His Excellency Dr. Abbas Vaezi is Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Bangladesh.*





# The Sino-US cold war is acquiring alarming heat

Muhammad Azizul Haque



Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the US, its arch rival during the Cold War years, has been the only super-power in the world, with its capability to project power to any corner of the globe.

However, with the change in the economic fortune of the major countries of the world,

the geopolitics and the global balance of power have changed too. The US feels seriously alarmed as its supremacy in the world is under a formidable threat from rising China.

China's becoming the second largest economy of the world is seen as challenging the US's preeminence. With its astounding economic achievements, China has been swiftly supplanting the US as the larger investor and trading partner of many countries across the world. Despite a deceleration in its economic growth in recent years, China is likely to surpass the US in an all round way by 2049, the centenary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Against the backdrop of its current economic strength and growing politico-military influence, China is increasingly asserting itself in the international arena and taking initiatives of global reach, like the Belt and Road Initiative.

Threatened by the US's hostile actions, China is further strengthening its military and maritime power, to protect itself and its interests in the seas and oceans, especially in the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. One of its objectives is to secure and maintain a safe passage to and from the Middle East on whose oil China's dependence is huge. All this is alarming the US and adding heat to the ongoing cold war between the two major powers.

The Sino-US rivalry is not only economic. It is equally a competition for geopolitical supremacy. For the US, it is a struggle to retain its economic, political and military supremacy as the number one power in the world; and for the rising and increasingly more assertive China, it is to ascend to the position of the number one power in the world.

In a recent documentary, *The Coming War on China*, Australian-origin British award-winning journalist and filmmaker John Pilger has revealed how "the US has surrounded China with 400 military bases, which one strategist has viewed as "an almost perfect noose". Pilger has also tried to demonstrate how the build-up to war is "taking place right on Beijing's doorstep", meaning places in the neighbouring countries like Japan, South Korea, and numerous other locations, equipped with missiles, naval battle groups, nuclear bombers, drones, etc. "US naval warships patrol just outside Chinese waters.". He is of the view that the kind of mistrust that now exists between the two nuclear-armed countries makes war by misapprehension or by miscalculation or accident a real possibility.

Many people in China are reportedly worried about what the US would do to maintain its supremacy in the world. "We don't want to be your enemy [the West's]. But if we are constantly described as such, we have to prepare," observed a strategist in China.

August 1st, 2017 was the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The event marked a new phase in China's biggest military overhaul in 50 years. The country, reportedly, raised its nuclear weapons posture "from low alert to high alert".

In April this year, China launched its first domestically built aircraft-carrier, and then in June its first 10,000-tonne destroyer—comparable in size to the American destroyers in the region. Last month (July 2017) China set up its first overseas military base in Djibouti. China's naval build-up will enhance its capability to seize and hold the disputed territory which it claims as its own in the East and South China seas. In the case of a conflict, America might get involved; and Russia might join in as China's ally.

It is being alleged that the Chinese military air traffic are increasingly intruding into Japan's airspace and Chinese surface ships into their territorial sea space; and that Japan is augmenting aerial intercepts. This is raising the risk of an accident or misapprehension between the two militaries. Such an incident, deliberate or unintentional, would be fraught with potential to swiftly escalate and draw US forces in the region into the conflict.

China changed the PLA's command-and-control system in



*Best of friends at a Sino-US disaster relief exercise in Chengdu, Sichuan... but the US and Chinese are military rivals now in the Pacific*

2015. Five more outward-looking “theatre commands” were created to assert China’s authority in the oceans. The country is simultaneously expanding a “new-type combat forces”, particularly mobile ones. The number of aviation units has been doubled to 14. And reportedly, the marines are being increased from 12,000 in 2015 to 40,000. The prime objective of all these changes is to create a more mobile PLA capable of projecting force abroad, not just defending the mainland.

China’s continued tests and bettering its capabilities in the seas and oceans, overlapping territorial claims in the East and South China seas, North Korea’s continued testing of ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads, and an increasingly powerful Chinese military seeking to secure its disputed islands in the East and South China seas through a combination of air and sea power, have heightened the tensions in the region and caused heat to rise in the Sino-US cold war.

Other major powers in the region are polarising around the two rivals. India is siding with the US while Pakistan with China. Japan and South Korea as well as some South-east Asian countries like Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia and Indonesia having territorial disputes with China in the East or South China seas are polarising around the US. Russia and North Korea are also siding with China, although Russia might depolarise later, for it would be also

apprehensive of a very strong and militarily mighty China on its doorstep.

The US seems to deem its perceived threat from China so huge and alarming that it appears desperate in its bid to contain China. In view of the enormous bilateral trade and economic interdependence between China and the US, and the possibility of an incalculable damage and destruction that a war could inflict on both of them; the two countries are not expected to cross the boundaries of the cold war for an open military confrontation. However, the ongoing cold war between them is acquiring heat. The unpredictable US president, Mr. Trump, seems capable of adding more heat to it.

The thinly-veiled massive preparation of the two major rivals of today’s world for a possible military confrontation has intensified so much that we are now witnessing an obvious heating up of the continuing cold war between them. And if one of the two sides goes berserk and triggers an open confrontation, or a ‘hot war’, the consequence could be unimaginable. Such a war might eventually slide into a world war –the World War III –which would have the potential to decimate humanity and annihilate our contemporary civilisation.

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**Muhammad Azizul Haque** is a former Ambassador and Secretary of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.



## Bangladesh joins China's 'One Belt, One Road' initiative: meeting challenges, building the future

Nusrat Zahan



President in three decades.

President Xi's visit to Bangladesh was marked by local media as the start of a "new era of friendship." As China is one of the biggest development partners of Bangladesh, it was expected that the bilateral partnership would grow in all areas of cooperation.

China's economic growth has made it a strong economic force in driving global trade. As its trading partner, Bangladesh expects from China, principally, increasing amounts of Chinese direct investment, better access for Bangladeshi products in China's market and China's continuing support in developing the infrastructure of the country.

Currently, China has been providing project loans and development assistance and wishes to increase investment in the information and communication technology industry, river management, industrial zones, land reclamation and maritime cooperation. As part of the Bangkok Agreement, China provides Bangladesh duty free access to a list of Bangladeshi products. It is expected that bilateral trade between China and Bangladesh may exceed US\$30 billion by 2021.

China wishes to build mega infrastructure projects within the Belt and Road areas to increase trade and service, offering substantial prospects for Bangladesh. This initiative meets Bangladesh's need for wider connectivity within the region. While Asia is currently experiencing increasing economic development centering on China, if the OBOR is

fully implemented, Asia will become the center of gravity for the world economy.

Bangladesh has already expressed interest in actively participating in the OBOR and, as a part of the initiative, the BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar) corridor is now in its final stage. As both Bangladesh and China believe in regional cooperation and have common interest in the corridor, this offers additional impetus. China has been increasingly developing its cooperation with South Asian nations. In this context, Bangladesh should pay more attention to its Look East policy to activate the connectivity further and thus increase bilateral trade. While Chinese investors have interests in Bangladesh's garment industry due to the availability of cheap labor, the Chittagong and Mongla ports are also of great interests for China to develop connectivity for its Southern gateway.

The global economy is increasingly shifting its gravity from West to East and the role of the two Asian economies – i.e. China and India – are therefore gaining wider scope to work for regional integration.

India is in the BCIM initiative which is in line with the Chinese OBOR initiative. Since India needs to engage in its efforts in developing regional integration, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Myanmar along with China can therefore play wider and more sincere roles to access opportunities in the region by resolving the issues of mutual mistrust.

Given the reality, it is now urgent for Bangladesh to build a secure relationship with India and China on the basis of mutual respect, trust and friendship. Since China's OBOR initiative fits into Bangladesh's goals of connectivity and increased trade, Bangladesh now needs to make all efforts to ensure good governance and political stability so that it can achieve the aims and expectations of OBOR, which could have a great impact on the long term future of the economy of Bangladesh.

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## Chinese Wisdom in BRICS Governance

*Promoting connectivity through building roads has become vital to the prosperity of China, a country with a huge population and vast territory. This is a key facet of the Chinese wisdom that President Xi has alluded to so many times in his speeches.*

Li Xia

“Xiamen’s success provides a good example of what can be possible with the perseverance of the 1.3 billion-plus Chinese people,” remarked Chinese President Xi Jinping in his keynote address. “In close to 40 years of reform and opening up under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), we Chinese people have forged ahead fearlessly and with great determination, and we have successfully embarked on a path of socialism with distinctive Chinese features. We have encountered difficulties and challenges along the way forward, but we have persevered and kept pace with the times. With dedication, courage and ingenuity, we are making great progress in pursuing development in today’s China.” The speech, titled Working Together to Usher in the Second “Golden Decade” of BRICS Cooperation, was presented at the opening ceremony of the BRICS Business Forum. His words evidenced President Xi’s pride in the Chinese nation’s tireless spirit and wisdom.

In the late 1970s, China remained a populous country with lagging economic development and low living standards. With wisdom and resolution, the CPC took bold action to introduce and implement the reform and opening-up policy to meet the nascent trend of globalization and lead China onto a road to prosperity. An old Chinese proverb goes “When the lead rope of a fishing net is pulled, all its meshes open.” It describes how a key link can cause everything else to fall into proper place. Improving living standards conforms with the CPC’s fundamental goal of serving the people wholeheartedly, which is the “lead rope” of China’s economic reform.

The ultimate goal of improving living standards is enabling people to lead more affluent lives. But achieving such a goal is never easy. Different regions in China’s vast territory vary in natural conditions. But, as another Chinese saying goes, “if you want to get rich, start by building



roads.” One rural area after another are getting connected to urban areas, the east and west meet, and developed areas have been connected to underdeveloped areas to facilitate the circulation of production materials, industrial products, commodities and people. Promoting connectivity through building roads has become vital to the prosperity of China, a country with a huge population and vast territory. This is a key facet of the Chinese wisdom that President Xi has alluded to so many times in his speeches.

Road construction is an integral part of infrastructure development. The strategy of “getting started by building roads” has resulted in a giant leap forward for China’s infrastructure construction. Over the past four decades, the country has made considerable achievements in transport infrastructure including highways, railways and civil aviation. Currently, China’s high-speed railways have become one of the country’s shiniest global calling cards.

After nearly 40 years of reform and opening up, China has embraced great progress. However, as the country’s reform enters a deep-water zone in which tough challenges must be addressed, some underlying problems have surfaced. The “medicine” that the Chinese government has prescribed for itself is all-out reform. So far, breakthroughs have been made in multiple areas, and reform is being pursued with greater intensity. In particular, the pace of economic structural adjustment and industrial upgrade has accelerated. This embodies the Chinese wisdom to pull the lead rope. China’s economy has maintained steady and solid performance, and new drivers sustaining development have strengthened. Against the backdrop of the lingering impact of the global financial crisis, the sound development of the Chinese economy has become a highlight of world economic recovery.

It was meaningful that President Xi started his speech at the BRICS Business Forum with comments on Xiamen’s reform and development. Those with insight on the Belt and Road Initiative and the BRICS cooperation mechanism—both of which involve emerging market and developing countries—understand that operation of the Initiative and the mechanism is immersed with China’s experiences in reform and opening up and economic development as well as the wisdom of traditional Chinese culture. For example, facility connectivity, a key component of the Belt and Road Initiative, is simply an upgraded and expanded version of the Chinese proverb and experience of “getting rich by building roads first.” Facing the

global economic recession caused by the 2008 worldwide financial crisis, BRICS countries need to focus on boosting economic growth and improving living standards. This also aligns with the popularly held philosophy of traditional Chinese culture and the CPC’s fundamental goal of serving the people wholeheartedly.

President Xi presented three important practices for BRICS countries in his speech at the opening ceremony of the BRICS Business Forum: First, treating each other as equals and seeking common ground while shelving differences. In terms of BRICS cooperation, decisions are made through consultation among all BRICS members, never unilaterally. Second is taking a results-oriented, innovative approach to make cooperation benefit all. BRICS is not a talk shop, but a task force that gets things done. Third, developing to help others with the well-being of the world in mind. We are committed to observing the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, international law and basic norms governing international relations when conducting state-to-state relations. While in the process of development, we are ready to share development opportunities with other countries.

These three practices not only embody the BRICS spirit and the common pursuit of BRICS countries throughout the past decade of cooperation, but also showcase the essence of traditional Chinese culture and China’s experience of building socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The past decade has not only seen solid progress in the BRICS cooperation mechanism, but also witnessed the unfolding of all-out reform and opening up in China and rapid economic and social development. Over these 10 years, China’s economic aggregate has grown by 239 percent to become the world’s second largest economy, the lives of 1.3 billion-plus people have been significantly improved, and China has made an increasingly greater contribution to both regional and global economic development. Meanwhile, by implementing the Belt and Road Initiative, promoting effective BRICS cooperation and participating in international organizations and mechanisms such as the G20, China has contributed its unique wisdom and experience to global governance and the peaceful development of mankind.

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**Li Xia** is an executive editor-in-chief of *China Pictorial*.





## Maldives, a state failing

Prof. Selina Mohsin



As darkness fell on the Maldives in the vast Indian Ocean it seemed like a fairy land. The sky over the island tourist resorts and the capital Male dazzled with millions of stars. The dark blue water had flecks of light from the sky. It seemed a heavenly place and the resort islands are still a paradise for tourists. But what of

the capital Male, which is almost a separate world?

A few men perspired as they each carried heavy sacks containing US \$ 1 million each towards President Yameen's residence. One man declared it was "difficult to carry" such heavy loads".

Coming to power in 2013 through dubious means, violating Articles 107, 262, 268 of the constitution, Yameen promulgated an anti-terrorism bill granting him exclusive authority to declare individuals and groups 'terrorists'. Former President Nasheed, a prisoner of conscience and renowned climate change advocate was sent to jail, despite an initial commutation to house arrest. His trial under the new anti-terrorism law had been a farce and his 13 years sentence an unjust outrage.

On the 1st of May 2015 the air was filled with pepper spray and tear gas from pitched battles between Naseed's sup-

porters and the police. Twenty thousand people had come out to seek Nasheed's release and demand that the government negotiate with opposition parties. Police violence and arrests brought fear and intimidation.

Critical global attention fell on President Yameen. His "politicised judiciary" was condemned across the world, yet the two judges who sentenced Nasheed have since been promoted to the High Court. Known for extreme corruption, bad governance and authoritarian cruelty, Yameen has created a fear ridden state. He has reintroduced the death sentence and invalidated many earlier reforms. To buy the complicity or silence of MPs, judges, lawyers, businessmen has seemed his main agenda.

In March 2016 news leaked out of over US\$30 million corruption. President Yameen was alleged to have been responsible, with Ministers and MPs also benefitting from the heist. In response Yameen immediately proposed a bill to criminalise 'defamation'.

Journalists campaigned against it as it would kill press freedom and debates on political or human rights issues. Their slogan "In defence of 27" referred to the provision in the constitution guaranteeing freedom of speech. In April 2015 the police arrested some 18 persons from a 'sit in protest' and on 26 July broke up a silent protest by journalists. Amnesty International called on the government to stop enacting the bill into law as it would have a "stifling effect on the right to freedom of expression". Disregarding widespread public outrage, the bill was made into law and





*Maldives President Abdulla Yameen*

sparked fierce criticism from USA, UK, EU, Germany, Norway and Netherlands. Even some MPs of Yameen's own People Progressive Maldives (PPM) criticised it.

Yameen then faced a new threat to his power. He was elected as President from the PPM party but his half brother, Gayoom leader of PPM and for three decades President of Maldives, withdrew his support and declined to nominate Yameen to contest the 2018 Presidential election as PPM candidate. When Yameen challenged this the court declared that Gayoom was "incapable of attending to the duties of his job" as leader of PPM and tamely gave the leadership to Yameen.

The ball on the Maldives roulette table spun again. In March 2017 four political party leaders – Gayoom, former president Nasheed, Gasim Ibrahim and Aadalath Party leader Abdulla formed the 'Maldives United Opposition' (MUO) and signed a declaration to restore democracy.

Yameen was cornered when he lost his majority in the Parliament after 10 MPs defected to the new coalition opposition (MUO). The MUO now has 45 seats in the 85 seat Parliament and they are the majority party in the Parliament. In July 2017, after the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) of Nasheed had routed Yameen's party in local elections, the opposition coalition thought that it was the right time to begin impeachment of the Speaker. This would further weaken Yameen's grip on the Parliament.

The political game turned nastier when the MUO opposition lodged a motion for the impeachment of the Speaker. Chaos and pandemonium followed. A parliamentary sitting scheduled on 22 August 2017 was cancelled and the parliament was padlocked as armed guards surrounded the building.

The political scenario now appeared as 'warped' as the system on which it rested. On one side was Yameen and his now fragmented PPM party. On the other side was the opposition MUO, itself an 'unholy alliance' with out of power politicians, some with questionable pasts.

Subsequently, fifty four lawyers on 11 September 2017 attempted to submit a petition detailing serious concerns with the judiciary to the Supreme Court. As a result, these lawyers were suspended indefinitely and barred from appearing in any court in the country. They comprised 30% of all licensed legal practitioners of Maldives.

The four-party opposition reacted immediately to this 'unprecedented mass suspension' by asking the international community to impose sanctions on the Chief Justice. In 2015 the UN Human Rights Council had suggested massive judicial reforms to ensure objectivity and transparency. But this had gone unheeded by Yameen. .

Yameen is now in a defensive dilemma and, in the midst of this political turbulence, has appealed to the opposition for dialogue. He says the government is willing to consider constitutional amendments that, if all political parties reach a consensus, could pave the way for Nasheed to contest the 2018 presidential election.

The opposition in reply accused the government of unfair jailing of leaders, raising 'baseless' charges against opposition lawmakers, encouraging rampant corruption, and compromising the prosecutor general, judges and other autonomous state bodies.

A UN sponsored effort to initiate a dialogue between the political parties failed in early 2016. Now there are two recalcitrant political groups seemingly unable to join in dialogue, let alone come to any consensus.

The outer islands of Maldives are still a paradise for tourists. But is the Maldivian state heading towards failure?

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**Prof. Selina Mohsin** is the Former Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

## South-South and Triangular Economic Cooperation

Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed



The countries of the Asia Pacific region which are marked as the countries in the South of the globe are striving to end poverty and hunger to achieve sustainable development and promote faster economic growth with equity. UN adopted 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with 21 targets and sixty indicators for the period from 1990 to 2015. Several countries are evaluating their respective performances. In September, 2015 the UN adopted post 2015 development agenda which is incorporated in Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) to be achieved by the year 2030. The 8 goals of SDGs have to be achieved in the context of complex relationship between the state and the market within the economy and the also the relationship with the other countries located in both North and South of the globe.

The Heads of State and Government and the High representatives who gathered in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia in July 2015, reaffirmed that a global framework for financing development in the poor countries has to be formulated with strong political commitment. The South-South and Triangular cooperation is needed to encourage global partnership and solidarity to transform the conditions of the least developed countries (LDCs), land locked developing countries (LLDC), small island developing states (SIDS). A vast majority of the world's poor live in Asia. A substantial amount of poor people also live in Pacific island nations termed as SIDS. The emergence of globalization has increased the openness of the world economy, which has resulted in greater cooperation among nations, donors, international financial institutions, multinational corporations, private entrepreneurs and non-government organizations. The countries however, have not benefited uniformly; some even suffered negative "backwash effect" of global development. The countries of south are specifically lagging behind; except few big ones like China, India,

Brazil, and South Africa.

The list of "least developed countries" applied for 48 countries according to the United Nations with some that are categorized into the landlocked developing countries and the Small Island Developing States. In Africa 34 countries, in Asia 9 countries, Oceania 4 countries and Americas one country.

Since the LDC category was initiated, only four countries have graduated to developing country status. The first country to graduate from LDC status was Botswana in 1994. The second country was Cape Verde, in 2007. Maldives graduated to developing country status on 1 January 2011, while Samoa graduated in 2014. It is anticipated that Equatorial Guinea and Vanuatu will be the next countries to be promoted from LDC status. At the UN's fourth conference on LDCs held in May 2011, delegates endorsed a goal targeting the promotion of at least half the current LDC countries within the next ten years.

There are three countries which presently meet the criterion for LDC status, but have declined to be included in the index, questioning the validity or accuracy of the UN data: Ghana, Papua New Guinea, and Zimbabwe

The post-2015 development agenda for the less developed countries needs to recognize the complex relationship between the state and the market, the nature of which is mostly complementary. Moreover, it is important to recognize the changing role of both state and market with time and specific country situation and the need to adapt to one another. The success in the past has come in countries which succeeded in bringing the right blend of the roles of the state and the market especially in ensuring investments in infrastructure and social sectors and promoting employment-creating and inclusive growth and development. There should be a clear message that achieving the MDGs and delivering on the post-MDG agenda is not optional, since the agenda involves an essential investment for a safer, more human and prosperous world. The goals are not just an 'aid obligation' but the basis for political and economic strategies that will benefit all the world's citizens, and not just the least fortunate.

In addition, the post-2015 agenda should include some explicit accountability mechanisms for the relevant stakeholders. Within the agenda, specific goals should form part of a conceptual framework for development for the post-2015 period. The above requires considerable thought and appropriate responses which meet the political and technical needs of the multiple actors in global development.

Drivers of South-South Cooperation (SSC) that developing countries have found to have long-lasting benefits and deserve further attention include:

- ◆ **Health:** Cooperation in public health increases the collective ability of southern countries to fight inequality and to promote highest attainable level of health for all. In the midst of different crises, the South has seen tremendous success in combating a number of infectious diseases.
- ◆ **Education:** The developing nations have worked hard to provide education and skills to their respective workforces.
- ◆ **Policy:** effective policy frameworks in countries that have efficient governance and functioning economies could share their experiences with other developing countries whose weak policy-making structures and inefficient and often corrupt governments hamper their development.
- ◆ **Science & technology:** Developing countries are rapidly moving ahead to create hubs of knowledge based on bright and educated people and are looking for ways to exchange relevant technology across the South.
- ◆ **Institutional capacity:** The developing nations often have world class institutions owing to immense experience; numerous ways to develop institutional capacities have been tried and tested in the South.
- ◆ **Interdependency:** The South realizes the interdependency between individuals and their communities can

## South-South and Triangular Cooperation in Implementing the 2030 Agenda



UNSSC Knowledge Centre for Sustainable Development | Izmir, Turkey | 27-28 April 2017

- go a long way to overcoming their development challenges.
- ◆ **Outlook towards globalization:** Many developing countries have been able to derive benefits from globalization. South South Cooperation (SSC) and Triangular Development Cooperation (TDC) provide a platform to exchange experiences and foster innovative developmental strategies.
- ◆ **Support of the North:** Shared goals (such as human development, security, peace etc.) can be achieved effectively if SSC can be supplemented in cooperation with the North.

SSC can take place on a bilateral, regional, sub-regional or inter-regional basis and can involve two or more developing countries. Despite the fact that SSC can be more sustainable than traditional North-South cooperation allowing better adaptation to the country situation, in practice there is still no shared understanding on the very nature and goals of SSC. This is true on the basis of the various and sometimes divergent “interpretations” on SSC given by both emerging economies and developed countries. Some argue that South-South Cooperation should not be seen as a substitute for, rather a complement to North-South cooperation. While others argue that the two models can’t be placed on an equal footing. Triangular Development Cooperation (TDC) involves two or more developing countries in collaboration with a third party, typically a devel-



oped country government or organization, contributing to the exchanges with its own knowledge and resources.

To promote SSC and TDC in the Asia-Pacific region the following areas should be given priorities:

1. Domestic resource mobilization: Broadening tax bases, enhancing efficiency of the tax collecting authority, ensuring transparency, reducing discretionary power of tax officials. However, strategy for domestic financing should be determined by the national governments. It should be pointed out that domestic resource mobilization should not be taken as the pretext by the developing countries to reduce the relevance of official development assistance (ODA).
2. Strengthening regulatory regime and creating enabling environment for private sector investment including FDI: Laws related to land registration, contract enforcement, to be made more relevant in the present context.
3. Strengthening the financial sector: Banks, non-bank financial institutions, insurance companies, capital market, should promote private sector investment, financial inclusion and gender equality.
4. Roles of Policies: Along with fiscal and monetary policies, other policies like industrial policy, export policy, financial inclusion policy that hold out the promise of ensuring sustainable and inclusive growth should be introduced by the respective government.
5. Stronger and better-coordinated South-South cooperation in dealing with security issues has the potential to dramatically reduce international and civil conflicts, especially if drug trafficking and the global black market are collectively targeted for elimination.
6. South-South cooperation that aims to address humanitarian and social ills in Latin America and the Caribbean may be emulated to accelerate economic growth pursued with prudential measures to reduce inequalities, prevent social unrest and promote social cohesion.
7. As individual organizations of the United Nations system adopt strategic approaches to South-South and triangular cooperation in their policies and programmes, additional measures should be taken enabling agencies with similar expertise to pool or systematize their support to efforts of developing countries in priority areas such as the enhancement of productive capacities and the establishment of regional and global value chains that are essential to job creation and poverty eradication.
8. The most radical implications of information and communications technologies have not been realized yet, especially in enabling new financing, management and marketing arrangements that will render obsolete the hierarchical, top-down organization of corporations. The ability to target niche markets cheaply will make artisanal and/or rural production competitive if the capacity to use off-grid renewable energy and other affordable technologies is better utilized for small-scale, high-quality industrial production in rural areas across the South.
9. The numerous contributions of the private sector and civil society to South-South and triangular cooperation should be better harnessed through stronger public-private partnerships that are systematically forged to address priority development needs through investments in science, technology and innovation as well as in other fields where non-State actors have high levels of expertise and resources.
10. The export sector of developing countries can increasingly participate in global value chains (GVC) which will spread benefits within and across countries. Programmes for increasing GVC can be tied with post-2015 SDGs

The foremost requirement is the realization of the centrality of the role of countries of the North, multilateral and bilateral agencies and international financial institutions. This coupled with the increasing awareness for South South and Triangular cooperation will facilitate mobilization of more resources from existing and innovative funding sources. More effective and viable framework (s) for achieving broad based cooperation has to be instituted where the roles of the public sector, private sector and non-government civil society organizations have to be clearly delineated.

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**Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed**, *Former Governor, Bangladesh Bank (Central Bank) & Professor, BRAC University, Bangladesh.*



## His Majesty the King Condemns in Letter to United Nations Secretary General (UNSG) Unacceptable Israeli Policies, Urges International Community to Compel Israel to Put an End to Those Practices

*HM King Mohammed VI, Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, strongly condemned, in a letter on 26 July, 2017 to UN Secretary General António Guterres, the unacceptable Israeli policies and insisted on the need for resolute action on the part of the international community and the influential powers to compel Israel to put an end to those practices, through which it seeks to impose a fait accompli and decide single-handedly the fate of the City of Jerusalem – an issue which should be addressed within the context of final status negotiations.*



والصلاة والسلام على كافة أنبيائه ورسله.

الحمد لله وحده،

Here follows the full text of the royal letter to the UNSG:

His Excellency António Guterres,

Secretary-General of the United Nations Organization

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

I am writing to you today in my capacity as Chairman of

the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Al-Quds Committee regarding the Israeli authorities' continued, systematic violations in the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and around the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the first of the Two Qiblas and the third Holy Mosque, blatantly breaching international law.

Regrettably, whenever there appear to be signs of a chance

to revive the peace process between the Palestinians and Israel, the latter resorts to fabricating events and fomenting tensions to abort those prospects. This is precisely what Israel has done again in respect of the regional and international efforts led by the United States of America. Thanks to those efforts, the international community sensed there was a positive atmosphere that could effectively lead to the resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

**Israel has recently taken a number of serious provocative measures, including the following:**

1. It staged unprecedented celebrations on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the annexation of Al-Quds; on Sunday 28 May 2017, the Israeli government held a meeting in a tunnel under the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in which it approved development plans for the Old City, including the digging of more tunnels, the installation of elevators and the construction of corridors.
2. The Israeli government introduced a bill at the Knesset requiring Arab schools to teach Israeli curricula and use textbooks to Judaize education in the occupied city of Al Quds.
3. Members of the Knesset submitted a draft bill on Greater Jerusalem, which aims to annex Israeli settlements in the West Bank as well as other areas in East Jerusalem.
4. The Ministerial Committee for Legislation approved the 'unified Jerusalem' bill, which undermines chances to reach an agreement on the city's future.
5. The Israeli Knesset approved a preliminary reading of a bill that bans the adhân (call to prayer) in Jerusalem and the surrounding Arab neighborhoods.

The Israeli authorities are launching a comprehensive campaign of escalation against the Old City in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its surroundings by confiscating Palestinian land, by denying Palestinians the right to build and by carrying out arbitrary evictions.

As if all those illegal practices were not enough, Israel has taken even more serious measures. On Friday 14 July 2017, it proscribed the Friday prayers, closed Al-Aqsa Mosque to worshipers for three days and, for the first time in half a century, banned the call to prayer. It also detained, for several hours, Sheikh Mohammad Hussein, the Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestinian territories.

Israel has increased tension in the region by introducing

additional provocative and unacceptable security measures, installing surveillance cameras throughout the Al Aqsa Mosque compound as well as security gates to check the worshipers and assaulting officials and employees of the Islamic endowment department.

These illegal actions undermine the dignity of the inhabitants of Al Quds and constitute a provocation for all Palestinians. They may lead to an outpouring of anger and an overall public reaction that could compound the situation in the Palestinian territories. These provocative practices arouse the feelings of Arabs, Muslims and freedom lovers in the world. They could incite extremist tendencies that may lead to further tension, animosity and violence in the entire region.

Given this alarming situation, I cannot but strongly condemn these unacceptable Israeli policies in my capacity as Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee. I insist on the need for resolute action on the part of the international community and the influential powers to compel Israel to put an end to those practices, through which it seeks to impose a fait accompli and decide singlehandedly the fate of the City of Jerusalem – an issue which should be addressed within the context of final status negotiations.

I therefore call on you, Mr. Secretary-General, to approach the Israeli authorities as soon as possible and compel them to respect the legal and historical status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Holy Places, and to ask them to cancel all illegal measures, including the additional security arrangements, which have prompted suspicion that there might be an Israeli plan for the spatial and temporal division of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

I must insist on the centrality of the issue of Jerusalem and its special spiritual significance. No infringement on its symbolic character or its time-honored cultural identity can be tolerated. I must also warn against the risk of turning the issue into a religious conflict, and exploiting the cultural heritage to incite hatred, fuel extremism and undermine the ideals of tolerance and affection between the followers of the revealed religions.

The Kingdom of Morocco believes firmly in peace - an ideal endorsed by the international community - and considers that Jerusalem is about roots and identity. It is, therefore, convinced that forcibly imposing the fait accompli will only lead to more tension and violence, particu-





larly in these complex, turbulent times for the region.

Mr. Secretary-General,

Although the above-mentioned Israeli policies and the goals behind them - which I condemn and reject - are alarming, I will remain optimistic and hope the Israeli authorities will make reason and wisdom prevail. I hope they will ask themselves the right questions and opt for peace and integration, rather than isolation, and thus enable the Palestinians to establish their independent State on Palestinian land, along the lines of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as their capital.

Given your political acumen and your vast experience in international affairs, there is no doubt in my mind that you will spare no effort to restore normalcy and thus con-

tribute to setting the peace process back on track in order to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting solution that guarantees the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, living side by side with the State of Israel, in security, peace and concord.

Yours sincerely,

**Mohammed VI**  
**King of Morocco**

The Royal Palace, Tetuan  
25 July 2017.

## “Rabat, an Imperial and UNESCO World Heritage City”



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## US Accuses Russia of Arming Taliban 'to Hide Its Own Defeat' in Afghanistan

Unfounded speculations by US politicians about alleged supplies of arms to the Taliban by Russia are aimed at concealing the truth of America's obvious defeat in Afghanistan, which Washington is still struggling to postpone, Afghan political observer Vahid Mojda told Sputnik.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's claim that Russia is arming the Taliban bears no relation to reality, Vahid Mojda, a political observer and former Afghan Foreign Ministry official under the Taliban government, told Sputnik. "I talked with Talibs about it and they told me that neither Russia nor any other countries provided any assistance to them," Mojda said in an interview with Sputnik Afghanistan. "They [said] they could get Kalashnikov assault rifles in Afghanistan at a very cheap price. They can buy [the rifles] directly from the Afghan Army. The Taliban usually draws on corrupt [Afghan] politicians to buy weapons from the Afghan military for bribes."

On 22 August 2017, during a press briefing, Tillerson claimed that Russia was providing weapons to the Taliban. "With respect to the comment about Russia, to the extent, Russia is supplying arms to the Taliban, that is a violation, obviously, of international norms and it's a violation of UN Security Council norms," Tillerson said, "We certainly would object to that and call Russia's attention to that. If anyone is going to supply arms, it needs to be through the Afghan government." However, the US secretary of state didn't refer to any credible evidence to back his claim.

In response to Tillerson's unfounded allegations Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova highlighted on 24 August that Moscow has provided no support to the Taliban movement in Afghanistan. She pointed out that Moscow has repeatedly rejected similar accusations and has demanded Washington provide evidence that it supports the militant movement. The spokeswoman stressed, "There is none. Such statements do not contribute







to the establishment of effective cooperation between our countries on Afghanistan."

"If Talibs received weapons from other countries it wouldn't be Kalashnikov rifles: what the Taliban needs are anti-aircraft guns," Mojda underscored in his interview with Sputnik. "If the Taliban obtains these [anti-aircraft] weapons, the US will find itself in a heap of trouble in Afghanistan."

Why does Washington accuse Russia of arming the Taliban? Mojda assumed that the US is apparently trying to drive a wedge between various groups within the Taliban. He noted, "They are doing this to sow discord among the Taliban by convincing militants that some Talibs are connected to Russia. This is a propaganda campaign against the Taliban."

On the other hand, according to the political observer, Washington is making attempts to divert attention away from the obvious fact that the US is losing its war in Afghanistan. "By pointing the finger of blame to Russia, Pakistan and other countries, they [the US] want to conceal their defeat in Afghanistan," Mojda stressed. "The goal of Washington's strategy is not to win in Afghanistan, but to postpone the US' defeat."

Commenting on the issue, Russian Senator Frants Klintsevich, the first deputy chairman of the Parliament's upper chamber's Defense and Security Committee, denounced Tillerson's allegations as groundless. "The United States continues to measure others by its own standards," Klintsevich told reporters. "The logic of US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who accused Russia of arming the Taliban,

is absolutely 'one-dimensional': [he believes that] if the Americans supported [Afghan] Mujahedin by all means available — including weapon supplies — during the Soviet Union's Afghan war in the 1980s, Russia cannot but do completely the same. Of course, no proof was presented to confirm the claim."

It is not the first time that US policy makers and mainstream media have made unfounded claims about Moscow's alleged assistance to the Taliban. In March, US Army General Curtis Scaparrotti, who is also NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, claimed that he had seen "Russian influence growing" on Taliban insurgents. He went even further suggesting that possibly Moscow could have been helping "supply" the militants. Scaparrotti didn't specify what kinds of supplies he meant. A month later the head of US and international forces in Afghanistan, General John Nicholson, stepped up with a similar claim saying that he was "not refuting" reports that Russia was providing support, "including weapons," to the Taliban. Neither Scaparrotti nor Nicholson cited any evidence to confirm their assumptions. Predictably, US mainstream media immediately blew up the story. Nearly a month ago CNN reported that it obtained a video showing sniper rifles and heavy machine guns "stripped of any means of identifying their origin." The media outlet presumed that the rifles appeared to look like Russian-made Kalashnikov guns. Still, the report admitted that "the videos don't provide incontrovertible proof of the trade."

The Russian Foreign Ministry's reply was not long in coming.

"We have said many times that the allegations regarding Russian support for the Taliban, which some Western media make and some Afghan media repeat, are absolutely groundless," the Foreign Ministry said in an official statement. "So far, neither the Afghan authorities, nor the US and NATO commands in Afghanistan have presented any facts to prove these allegations." The ministry called attention to the fact that the "Taliban drove American-made Humvees in a recent attack on the base of the Afghan National Security Forces in Helmand."

The statement said, "It is easy to imagine the conclusion that can be made from this news based on CNN's logic."

**Source:** *Sputnik*.





*Chinese President Xi Jinping and other senior leaders Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli attend a rally marking the 95th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, capital of China, July 1, 2016. (Xinhua/Ju Peng)*

## CPC 19th Congress will be a New Milestone

Yu Sui



Occurring once every five years, the Communist Party of China National Congress is the most important meeting in the Chinese political sphere, drawing the roadmap for national development. The upcoming 19th CPC National Congress will definitely become an epoch-making milestone for China's peaceful devel-

opment.

The meeting will exhibit the following characteristics:

First, it will be a solemn meeting that will certify Xi Jinping's core status in the CPC at the highest level.

Since the 18th CPC National Congress, dramatic changes have taken place in Chinese economic conditions, foreign relations, and its political ecosphere under General Secretary and President Xi. His philosophy and practice of national governance have successfully created remarkable achievements in China. Grand goals, outstanding leadership, and a simple, personable style have earned Xi the trust, respect, and admiration of his party and his nation.

It will be a splendid occasion to affirm Xi's leadership role in the form of a CPC National Congress. Whether that will be done via organizational change within the party will be a key focus of public attention.

The People's Republic of China has witnessed substantial twists and turns since 1949. Between 1949 and 1978, under Mao Zedong, China established its socialist political and economic foundation. From 1978 to 1989, under



Deng Xiaoping, the country formulated its brand of socialism with Chinese characteristics through reform. Beginning with the 18th CPC National Congress, in a brand-new 30-year period, the country will become an intermediately developed one under Xi.

Second, it will be a summary of the outstanding achievements in national governance since the 18th Congress.

At the first press conference after assuming leadership of the CPC, Xi announced the implications of “Chinese Dream”, saying that people’s wishes for better lives will be the primary foundation of the CPC’s goals.

Extraordinary progress has been made toward those goals in the past five years: corrupt officials have been severely punished, citizens’s livelihoods have seen obvious improvements, and the country’s military prowess has been upgraded, along with its international status. Subsequent achievements are expected to be based in the idea of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development. The nation has benefited tremendously from Xi’s mission to build a relatively well-off society, deepen reforms, enforce the rule of law, and implement strict self-discipline within the CPC “in an all-round manner”.

Third, it will be an oath-taking ceremony for the country’s advance toward a stage of innovative development.

The CPC’s grandiose ideals derive from self-confidence in the path it has taken, its theories, systems, and culture. To this end, the report of the 19th Congress will be very comprehensive. It is not difficult to imagine the most appealing parts of it will be:

First, the CPC should address how to fundamentally solve the problem of poverty while maintaining sustained, steady and healthy development of the national economy. Through decades of reform and opening up, there has been a decrease in the number of people living below the poverty line; more than 200 million have seen their fortunes improve, but 27 million still struggle daily. According to the nation’s poverty alleviation plan, the CPC will not only will it lift poor people and regions out of difficulty by 2020, but will also lay a strong foundation for sustainable relief mechanisms.

Second, the 19th National Congress should discuss how to institutionalize the fight against corruption and finally tackle the such vices while maintaining a democratic system guarantee. The people are expecting that Xi’s promise to “lock power in the cage of systems” will be honored at the 19th Congress.

Third, the CPC should examine how to build a stronger military, so as to preserve national security, facilitate national reunification, and protect regional and global peace.

Fourth, the 19th National Congress will be an occasion to demonstrate the country’s sense of responsibility as a global power.

Xi has proposed to build a human community of shared destiny in our uncertain world. This community is the organic integration of our shared interests and shared responsibility. True to the objective of this community, peace, development, and a “win-win” idea of cooperation have been consistent principles in Chinese diplomacy. Of course, preserving peace is not the same as outright appeasement and so, there is no room for compromise when it comes to national sovereignty. Similarly, promoting development does not mean indiscriminate giving and promoting cooperation does not mean supplicating anyone. Seeking win-win outcomes must be based on sincerity.

China is promoting economic globalization with the “Road and Belt” and actively participating in global governance, particularly with its leadership on climate change. The CPC 19th National Congress will usher China into what James C. Hsiung calls “Xi Jinping Era”, a new period of Chinese history that will be marked by prosperity and peace.

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**Yu Sui** is Professor at China Center for Contemporary World Studies.



## Modi's Visit: The View from Jerusalem

Efraim Inbar

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi embraces 11-year-old Moshe Holtzberg in Jerusalem. Known as "Baby Moshe" to millions of Indians, Holtzberg lost both his parents in the November 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.

The visit by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi caused many Jerusalemites, like me, a lot of traffic delays. In retrospect, it was definitely a price worth paying.

Modi showed remarkable courage by coming to Israel without balancing it with a visit to the Palestinian Authority. His departure from the politically correct symmetry pleased the Israelis and signalled that India decided to act on its national interests. Israelis hope that Modi's pragmatic approach will be emulated by high dignitaries who come to Israel from all over the world.

Modi arrived last July, making him the first-ever head of India's government to visit the Jewish state. Israel went out of its way to extend a most warm welcome, underscoring the good personal chemistry between the Indian Prime Minister and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu. The manner in which Israel managed the visit was well appreciated by Indians. "Israel is a real friend and I have really felt that feeling of kinship. I feel absolutely at home here," Modi said during a meeting with President Reuven Rivlin in Jerusalem. He emphasised that the very warm reception was "a mark of respect to the entire Indian nation comprising 1.25 billion people."

Modi's visit reflects the success of the reorientation of Israel's foreign policy. Recognising that there is a shift in the distribution of power in the international system and that the Asia-Pacific region is gradually becoming the centre of gravity for international interactions, Israel has paid greater attention to Asia. Within such a perspective, Israel courted India, a rising global power located in that region. India, for its own reasons, responded positively, turning into the most important market for Israel's defence exports.

Israel's export policy is flexible, meeting Indian demands for technological transfer and offsets. The India-Israel Joint Statement hailed defence cooperation, noting that India and Israel agreed that "future developments in this sphere should focus on joint development of defence products, including transfer of technology from Israel, with a special emphasis on the 'Make in India' initiative."

Beyond the billions of dollars in defence deals, India and Israel share a common strategic agenda. Indeed, the first paragraph of the India-Israel joint statement states that the friendship between the two states has been raised to "a strategic partnership." Modi explained: "Israel and India live in complex geographies ... We are aware of strategic threats to regional peace and stability ... Prime Minister Netanyahu and I agreed to do much more together to protect our strategic interests..."

In the joint statement, both prime ministers reiterated their strong commitment to combat global terror. "They stressed that there can be no justification of acts of terror on any grounds whatsoever." The Working Groups of the two states on Homeland and Public security were encouraged to implement the agreements in an efficient and effective manner. Also, cybersecurity was recognised as an



*Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi embraces 11-year-old Moshe Holtzberg in Jerusalem. Known as "Baby Moshe" to millions of Indians, Holtzberg lost both his parents in the November 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.*





important area for enhanced cooperation.

Interestingly, Modi's visit coincided with a rise in Sino-Indian tensions in the Sikkim border area, underscoring India's threat perceptions and military needs. Israel, on a different scale, is concerned about Chinese behaviour that challenges its main ally - the US.

While national security issues, including defence contracts, are an important facet of bilateral relations, it is only one component. The joint statement mentions a myriad of items of mutual interest in the civilian sphere. Looking to deepen ties, the two prime ministers presented a series of agreements between India and Israel for cooperation in the field of space, water management, agriculture, science and technology. In addition, the two countries decided to create a US \$40 million innovation fund to allow Indian and Israeli enterprises to develop innovative technologies and products with commercial application.

The Modi visit was extremely well covered by the Indian and the international media. It was a great opportunity for Israel not to be seen through the prism of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but as a technological superpower able to attract the attention of rising global powers such as India. Modi's warmth toward Israel was a great public relations benefit for Israel and also a welcome promotion for Israeli products.

The many Indian journalists that accompanied Modi were also an important tool to present Israel as an attractive tourist destination. Netanyahu expressed his wish to see many more, "but not too many," Indians coming for vacation to the Jewish State.

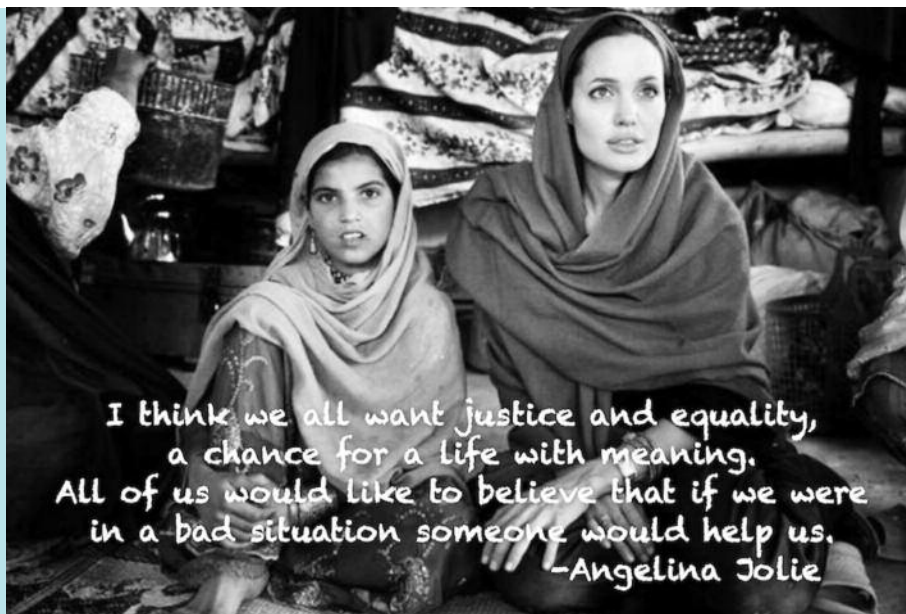
Netanyahu touted Israel's growing ties with the second-most populous country in the world. Modi's visit serves him well in refuting the accusations from the opposition that his foreign policy leads to the isolation of Israel in the international arena. He can convincingly argue that Israel has become a preferred partner in the international community because it has many things to offer in the defence and civilian spheres.

Netanyahu accepted an invitation from his Indian counterpart to visit New Delhi. The visit had already been in the works and Indian officials said the trip would likely take place toward the end of 2017. That will provide an opportunity to check the progress made, identify the blocks hindering the implementation of the agreements and further solidify the ties between the two countries.

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**Efraim Inbar**, *professor emeritus of political studies at Bar-Ilan University and former director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, Israel.*

## QUOTABLE QUOTE



## The President's Afghan Speech

*US President Donald Trump unveiled his policy for Afghanistan on August 21, in his first speech on the subject.*

**Dr. Chen Jimin**

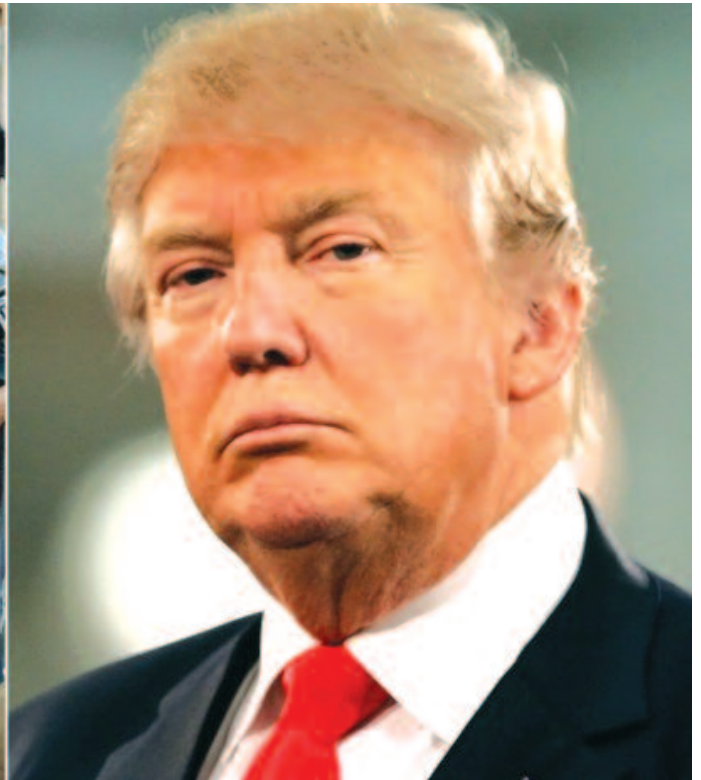


First, the speech defined the strategic principle of his Afghan policy as “principled realism”, which means the new strategy is a shift from a time-based approach to one based on conditions. Trump said that the United States had spent 16 years in Afghanistan with huge costs in manpower and material

resources, whilst gaining little, and that this was unacceptable. Trump stressed that the United States could not easily withdraw troops from Afghanistan, because “a hasty withdrawal would create a vacuum that terrorists, including ISIS and al Qaeda, would instantly fill”. Whilst Trump doesn’t want American forces to remain in Afghanistan for long, he recognizes why that might be necessary. He

made it clear that the first US core interest in Afghanistan was to “seek an honorable and enduring outcome worthy of the tremendous sacrifices that have been made, especially the sacrifices of lives”.

Second, it clarified the strategic objectives of his Afghan policy. Trump said that “[v]ictory will have a clear definition: attacking our enemies, obliterating ISIS, crushing Al Qaeda, preventing the Taliban from taking over Afghanistan, and stopping mass terror attacks against America before they emerge.” This means US strategic objectives consist of both defeating the terrorists and preventing large-scale terrorist attacks on the United States and ensuring the Afghanistan doesn’t fall into the hands of the Taliban. Although Trump claimed that Afghan nation building was not the priority of US foreign policy, the establishment of a capable Afghan government friendly to the US is the desired outcome.





Third, it means a larger role for the military. He declared that whilst “[m]ilitary power alone will not bring peace to Afghanistan or stop the terrorist threat arising in that country...strategically applied force aims to create the conditions for a political process to achieve a lasting peace”. Trump has already lifted restrictions the previous administration placed on soldiers, enabling them to fully and swiftly engage with the enemy.

Fourth, it attached importance to the role of allies and partners, and called for them to assume more financial responsibilities. This time, the United States made India its main focus. Trump said that whilst “[w]e appreciate India’s important contributions to stability in Afghanistan...India makes billions of dollars in trade with the United States, and we want them to help us more with Afghanistan, especially in the area of economic assistance and development”. In addition, the US also required its NATO allies and global partners to support the new strategy with additional troop and funding increases.

Fifth, it deemphasized democratization. Trump stressed more than once that democracy building in other countries was not worthwhile. The Trump administration doesn’t see regime change or nation reconstruction as an important goal. He said: “We will no longer use American military might to construct democracies in faraway lands, or try to rebuild other countries in our own image. Those days are now over.” Trump shows less enthusiasm for democratization than previous American presidents.

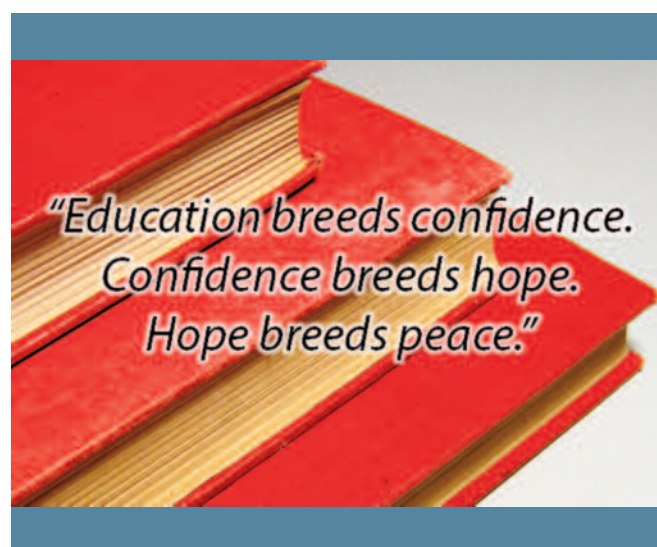
Trump’s speech sparked controversy both at home and abroad. India welcomed the new Afghan strategy, while Pakistan showed strong dissatisfaction. Pakistani Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif said that the US “should not make Pakistan a scapegoat for their failures in Afghanistan”.

The new strategy stirred up different reactions at home, showing a clear partisan divide. Republicans welcomed it. Senator John McCain praised Trump’s new strategy, saying he believed that “the President is now moving us well beyond the prior administration’s failed strategy of merely postponing defeat.” Most Republicans applauded the decision to avoid a timetable for withdrawing troops. But Democrats criticized it as a speech devoid of substance. Particularly, they disagreed with the policy of increasing troop levels without a set time frame. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said that by not setting a ceiling on the number of troops or a timetable for withdrawal, he was “declaring an open-ended commitment of American lives with no accountability to the American people”.

Of course, no strategy Trump sets can succeed without the approval of Congress. The first challenge his new strategy faces will likely be domestic.

**Chen Jimin, Ph.D.**, is an Associate Research Fellow for the Institute for International Strategic Studies at the Party School of Central Committee of C.P.C.

#### QUOTABLE QUOTES





# Climate change disastrous for Asia

Prof. Sarwar Md. Saifullah Khaled



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in a report that, a business-as-usual approach to climate change will be "disastrous" for Asia, undoing much of the phenomenal economic growth that has helped it make vast inroads against poverty. A continued reliance on fossil

fuels will see the world's most populous region face prolonged heat waves, rising sea levels, and changing rainfall patterns that will disrupt the ecosystem, damage livelihoods and possibly even cause wars. The report from the Manila-based bank said that "Unabated climate change threatens to undo many of the development advancements of the last decades, not least by incurring high economic losses". Asia's global economic links mean that extreme climate events could disrupt supply chains not only in the region but also in the rest of the world, the report warned.

The ADB said that despite stunning economic growth that saw Asian per capita incomes rise 10-fold in the past 25 years; it remains home to the majority of the world's poor people. This, along with the fact that large shares of its population inhabit low-lying coastlines, has made the world's largest continent "particularly vulnerable" to climate change. Myanmar, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Pakistan, and Thailand are among the world's top 10 countries most affected by extreme weather events. The ADB vowed in 2015 to double its climate finance mitigation investments to US \$6 billion by 2020, including US \$2 billion to help countries shift to renewable energy.

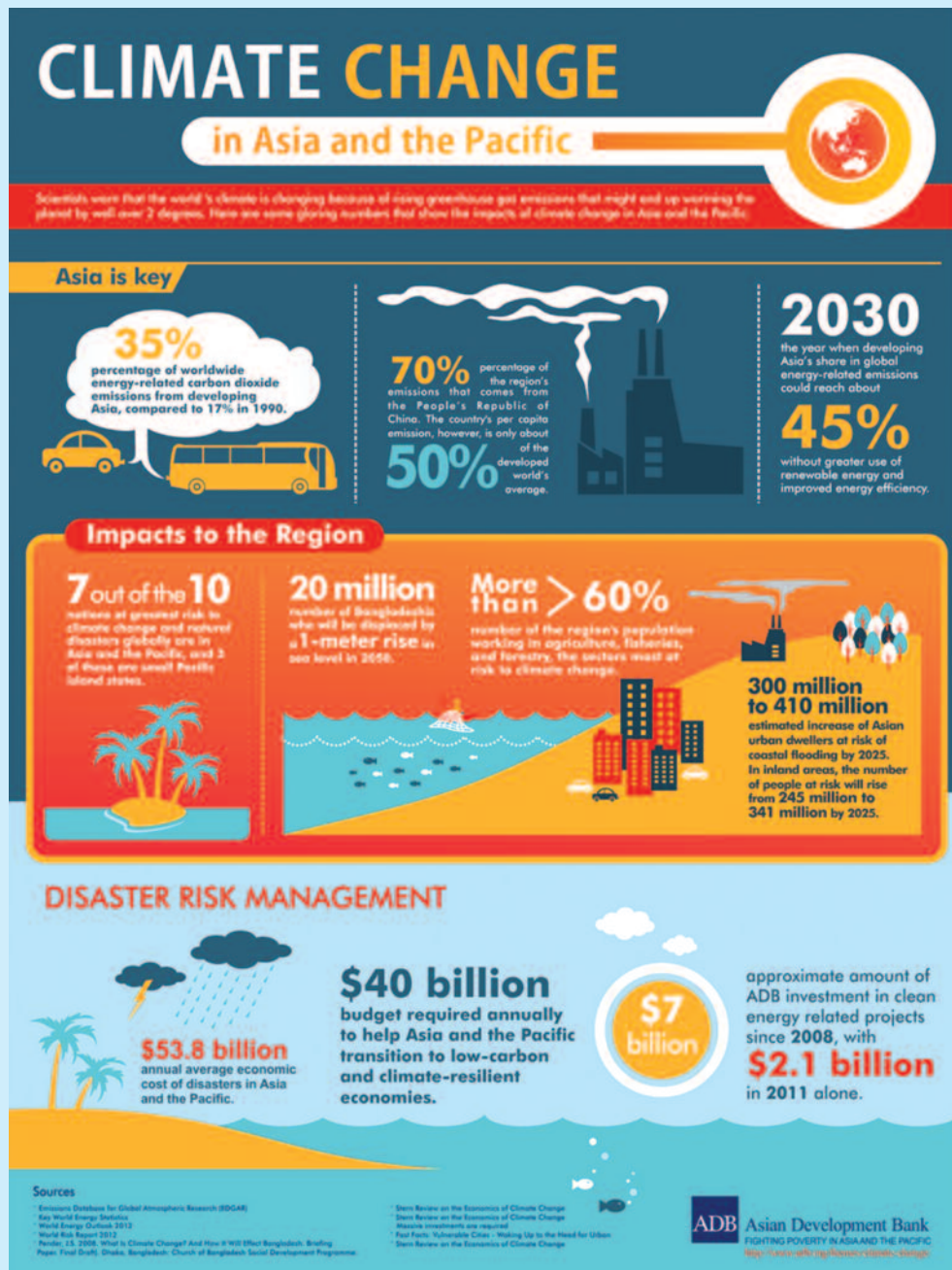
Parts of the continent could see mean temperatures shoot up to eight degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels by the end of the century, as the global mean temperature rises by half that, ADB added. It said that "A business-as-usual scenario will lead to disastrous climate impacts for the people of Asia and the Pacific, especially for poor and vulnerable populations". But it said the region could avert disaster by shifting to renewable energy sources. The 2015 Paris climate accord commits nations to keep global tem-

peratures well below 2.0 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times.

The report said that while a 2 degrees Celsius rise will be difficult to manage, "one can assume that a 4 degrees Celsius increase would lead to humanitarian disasters in many nations and result in unmanageable migration flows or locked-in populations". Asia as a whole would see sea levels rise by 1.4 metres (4.6 feet) within this century. The ADB warns that climate change will be nearly twice the projected increase under the Paris deal, and face more destructive cyclones. In this scenario, the region's coral reef systems would collapse from mass bleaching, with severe consequences for fisheries and tourism. Melting Asian glaciers would cause floods and water shortages, disrupting agriculture, and increase dependence on rainfall to meet water needs.

The impact of such changes on access to energy and natural resources were all potential powder kegs for conflict, the report said. The study projects additional heat-related deaths of nearly 52,000 elderly people across the region annually by the 2050s, nearly 8,000 extra diarrhoeal deaths in South Asia, and some 10,000 more malaria and dengue deaths in Asia.

But, nevertheless, the best ways to cut climate change are overlooked. A new study made by the researchers, from Lund University in Sweden says that teachers and policy-makers are missing a golden opportunity to show people the best ways to cut climate change and reduce their carbon footprint. It identifies four ways of behaving it says will have the most substantial effect in decreasing someone's climate impact: eating a plant-based diet, avoiding air travel, living without reliance on a car, and having smaller families. The researchers analysed 39 peer-reviewed papers, carbon calculators and government reports to calculate the potential of a range of individual lifestyle choices to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. According to a Climate News Network message received from London, they say their comprehensive analysis identifies what people can do to have the greatest impact.



Writing in the journal *Environmental Research Letters*, the authors say that their study found that the incremental changes advocated by governments may represent a missed opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions beneath the levels needed to prevent climate warming – the goal set by the 2015 Paris Agreement. The lead author of the Swedish study, Seth Wynes, said that there are so many factors that affect the climate impact of personal choices. But bringing all these studies side-by-side gives us confidence we have identified actions that make a big difference. He said that those of us who want to step forward on climate need to know how our actions can have the greatest possible impact; this research is about helping people make more informed about choices.

For example, living car-free saves about 2.4 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>

equivalent per year, while eating a plant-based diet saves 0.8 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent a year. Seth Wynes said that these actions, therefore, have much greater potential to reduce emissions than commonly promoted strategies like comprehensive recycling – which is four times less effective than a plant-based diet – or changing household light bulbs – eight times less effective. "We recognise these are deeply personal choices. But we can't ignore the climate effect our lifestyle actually has. Personally, I've found it really positive to make many of these changes" said Study co-author Kimberly Nicholas.

**Prof. Sarwar Md. Saifullah Khaled** is a retired Professor of Economics, BCS General Education Cadre.

## Hong Kong's Return to Motherland, 1997

Abu Naser Wahid



Twenty years ago on July 1, 1997 had occurred a momentous event of the modern Chinese history. China on that day had resumed her sovereignty over Hong Kong after a break of 156 years. In 1842, China had to cede Hong Kong island located on the south – east coast of China to Britain

after losing the 1st Opium War (1839 – 42 ). This occupation of Chinese land by the British was followed by annexation in 1861 of adjoining Kowloon peninsula area consequent upon the defeat suffered by China in the 2nd Opium War. A further instalment of land from Kowloon peninsula and over 250 small islands off Hong Kong was secured by the British in 1898 through a 99 year lease deal forced upon China as a sequel to defeat suffered by her in the 1894 Sino-Japan War. With all these acquisitions, Hong Kong 's area had grown to 1067 sq kilometres. It was governed as a British Crown Colony during 1842 – 1997 . During this period, Hong Kong which was a sparsely populated place had grown to become one of the world's leading port and financial hub with nearly six million people.

( 2 ) But this occupation of territory which had been an integral part of China since pre – historic days was badly humiliating for the Chinese government and people. So when the territories lost in wars were being finally retrieved in 1997 through diplomatic efforts , a visible sense of pride and euphoria engulfed the Chinese people and the government. To celebrate the home coming of people and lost territory, a huge Countdown Clock was erected in 1996 at the hallowed ground of the Tiananmen Square of the Chinese capital Beijing showing the progression of number of days and hours left for the “ Return of Hong Kong “ to the motherland and was continuously telecast country wide. As the Countdown Clock struck zero at the midnight between 30 June and 1 July of 1997, the whole country erupted in great joy. A marathon 7 hour long Pub-

lic Welcome ceremony unfolded at the Tiananmen Square. Simultaneously , a more formal and tightly choreographed official handover ceremony took place in Hong Kong attended by Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Prime Minister Li Peng, Foreign Minister Qian Qichen and Prince Charles representing British Queen, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and the last British Governor of Hong Kong Chris Patten. This capitalist entity got accommodated keeping its governing and economic management system intact alongside the Chinese socialist market economy system under a one country – two system formulation innovated in 1984 by the Chinese Supreme Leader Deng Xiaoping.

( 3 ) A look back at the history may now be useful. China since middle ages had been a prosperous country and at ease with herself without bothering to cultivate close commercial contacts with the outside world. The first formal contact was with an European maritime power was with the Portuguese who was able to secure a trading post in Macao ( near Hong Kong ) in 1557 trading in silk. Tea etc for European market. The other European nations of course tried unsuccessfully to get involved. Trading with the Chinese was not easy. In those days Canton (present day Guangzhou ) was the only Chinese port permitted by the government of China to carry out foreign trade. And there, the foreign traders were required to deal with only 13 Chinese companies – known as Hongs –who were authorised by the Chinese government to undertake foreign trade. Against this restrictive environment, British East India Company was assiduously engaged in its effort. It was of course suitably placed to carry out China trade as she was the only trading house authorised by British Government to handle trade in Asia. And this Company at that time had also been active in Indian subcontinent and was already tasting success there. The British East India Company in time started doing well in Chinese operation selling luxury items like: clocks, watches and some opium and buying Chinese tea , silk etc for the British market. Chinese market had shown great demand for opium which the British could meet with supplies from India. Opium was permissible item in China and its trade flour-





ished till 1799 when Chinese government imposed ban on it fearing its debilitating effect on its populace. However, the Hong and the corrupt government officials helped the foreigners to ensure that clandestine trade in Opium continued. All sides involved amassed great fortune in this operation.

(4) But in 1833, the British Government ended the monopoly right of the British East India Company in carrying out trade in Asia. As a result, many other British trading companies got the opportunity to rush in to China to set a foothold there. These Companies would come to be known as Taipans and they competed with each other fiercely to get hold of Chinese commodities specially tea. At that time, Britain had developed an insatiable demand for tea but the British companies did not have many products that were of interest to the Chinese. The Chinese therefore asked for the balance payment in either silver or gold but the British Crown was not willing to use their reserve for the Chinese trade. The Taipans started to smuggle in larger quantities of Opium - which always had a strong underground demand - to pay for their purchases of ever higher quantities of tea. The toxic trade in officially banned Opium grew rather fast and soon reached to 18000 chests. The Chinese government then vigorously renewed its efforts to restrict smuggling of Opium into the country. When the Chinese government seized 20,000 chests of smuggled Opium, the British government used it as an alibi to declare War on China in 1839 in the name of defending the principle of free trade. The resultant war came to be known in history as the 1st Opium War and continued until 1842. The British Royal Navy was able to overpower the unsophisticated Chinese fleet and occupied Hong Kong island and laid siege on all South China sea ports. For cessation of the hostilities, under the Nanjing treaty, China was made to cede Hong Kong island to the British for turning it into a Freeport with the right to trade with mainland. China was also made to open up five other ports to foreign trade operations thereby effectively breaking down the monopoly of Canton as the foreign trade gateway of China. Further, the British secured the most favoured nation right for their trade and own the right to import Opium.

(5) France, Belgium, Sweden and Russia joined the fray to grab "Concessions" of their own in which pieces of territory each countries' rules ran supreme.

(6) Now on becoming a British entity, Hong Kong was de-

clared as a Freeport for everyone to use as a trading base and with aggressive promotional activities, it started attracting other European and non-European businesses to establish their shops there. The population of Hong Kong as a result started to grow fast putting pressure on space available. With growing prosperity, the concern for providing security to the businesses also came to the fore. The British then initiated the 2nd Opium War in 1856 on some pretext. The Chinese were overwhelmed again and forced to sue for peace. In terms of the resultant unequal treaty : the Treaty of Peking of 1860, southern part of Kowloon peninsula adjoining Hong Kong was ceded to the British. The British thus got a foothold on the mainland China as well as had met their immediate requirement of space for spatial development of Hong Kong. Further, the European powers for the first time won the right to set up Diplomatic Representations in Beijing.

(7) But the desire of more territory for Hong Kong didn't stop there. The Sino - Japan War of 1894 which China lost provided another opportunity to the British. The British as well other European powers ganged up together for demanding more concessions from China. As a sequel, the Chinese were forced to sign "The Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory" in 1898 granting a 99 year lease ( instead outright seizure - courtesy of the benign US intervention on the side of China ) a large area of northern Kowloon Peninsula and over 250 small islands surrounding Hong Kong island collectively known as New Territories. This lease was set to expire in 1997. The total area of Hong Kong was thus raised to 1067 sq km giving it a depth and it continued to grow fast to become a global centre of commerce and finance.

(8) As the 20th century wore on, most people continued to bet on Hong Kong's unhindered growth and prosperity. Although, Britain was legally required to surrender the leased land of New Territories in 1997, the prevailing wisdom and mood in Hong Kong and in Britain till late 1970s was that it was a mere technicality which would be glossed over and status quo would be allowed to prevail. That is , the business as usual scenario for Hong Kong would remain unchanged and uninterrupted.

(9) But to the Chinese consciousness, the status of Hong Kong was always a highly problematic situation and not possible to set aside or forget. All the three treaties which had gone to create Hong Kong were coerced through British armed invasions and the Chinese people wilfully

never accepted or recognised their outcome. Since the birth of Peoples' Republic of China in 1949, the Chinese government had time again clearly stated : Hong Kong is a part of Chinese territory and China refuses to abide by the terms of these unequal treaties signed between the British and the then Chinese government. While the historical legacy was acknowledged, the firm belief was that a peaceful and negotiated solution would be achieved for re-uniting Hong Kong with the motherland.



(10) As the expiration date of the Lease of the New Territories continued to advance, the issue of Hong Kong consistently found its place in the Agenda of all interactions between Chinese and the British governments. The Beijing government continued to make it clear that it expected the return of the New Territories in 1997 as per original lease term, thus leaving no choice for Britain. It then dawned on the British that Hong Kong and Kowloon without New Territories are too small to be self-sustainable and they as such reached a reluctant conclusion that the entire territory would need to be returned to China. To smoothen the path of reunification and to enlist enthusiastic cooperation of Hong Kong people, the Supreme Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping – famed for steering China towards opening up of the economy to the outside world for building a socialist market economy – proposed the concept of “One Country – Two Systems” in 1982. Under this formula, even after reunification with socialist mainland, Hong Kong’s capitalist system of economy and way of life – including its British laid legal system - would remain protected for the next 50 years. The Colony will become a SAR – Special Administrative Region – within China and would enjoy a high degree of autonomy in all matters except foreign affairs and defence. A Basic Law ie a mini- constitution incorporating these safeguards would be promulgated to run the Hong Kong beyond 1997. Between 1982 and 1984, the Chinese and British side had conducted 22 rounds of talks to hammer

*Jiang Zemin and Prince Charles at the handover ceremony in 1997. [Credit: AFP]*

out the details of arrangements for transfer of the Hong Kong territory on 1 July, 1997 and the architecture of administrative system for the subsequent 50 years. Rest is now history and Hong Kong as we know has continued its uninterrupted robust growth under Chinese the sovereignty also.

(11) To conclude this story on a lighter vein, a reference to history may be interesting to recall. “ Albert ( my husband ) was so amused at my having got the barren island of Hong Kong with hardly a house on it “ so wrote the then British Queen Victoria to King Leopold of Belgium in 1841. Captain Elliot , the Commander of British Naval Force which had occupied Hong Kong was dismissed by the British Government for obtaining such a barren island instead of a more promising spot such a big expedition was supposed to yield. Little did many people took note of the deep but well sheltered harbour that barren island – known as heung gwang or fragrant harbour in local dialect - offered to enable it to allow in time to become a top port of the world. Captain Elliot should be turning in his grave now!

We salute the Chinese people on this happy anniversary.

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**Abu Naser Wahid** is a former Economic & Commercial Minister at the Embassy of Bangladesh in Beijing and a former Consultant of World Bank Projects.





*The 150-member student delegation at the Chinese Embassy in Dhaka on 31 August, 2017. Dhaka University former Vice-Chancellor Prof. AAMS Arefin Siddique and Chinese Ambassador Ma Mingqiang were present at the flagging off program.*

## 150 Students Visits China to Strengthen Dhaka-Beijing Ties

As a part of China-Bangladesh Youth Exchange Programme, 150-member student delegation from Bangladesh visited China's Yunnan Province for two weeks that began on September 11.

The visit took place following the Chinese President Xi Jinping's announcement during his visit to Bangladesh in 2016 that China would invite 600 Bangladeshi students to China during 2016-2020. This is the first visit.

The Chinese Embassy in Dhaka and Confucius Institute/Hanban has sponsored the visit with Cooperation from the Yunnan University in Kunming. The student delegation made this visit with an objective to strengthen cul-

tural and people-to-people exchanges and carry forward friendship between the two countries.

During their visit to China, the student delegation vowed to work as "Ambassadors of Friendship" to contribute to better future of the two countries and help grow them in a faster pace.

As part of 'Bangladesh-China Youth Camp 2017', the student delegation have visited prominent cultural and historical sites, top educational institutions across the Yunnan Province and called on the prominent figures there.

Desk Report: CEAF.



*Youth Team were at stone forest in Kunming, Yunnan, China.*



*The 7 member CEAF Youth Team with the Chief Guest Prof. Dr. Chang Li, Vice-President, Yunnan University, China.*



## THE CELEBRATION OF ASEAN'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY IN DHAKA

The ASEAN Dhaka Committee (ADC) organized the 50th ASEAN Anniversary Celebration at the Royal Thai Embassy on 8 August 2017. The Program began with the ASEAN Flag Raising Ceremony followed by the ASEAN Food Festival. The Ceremony Commemorated the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of ASEAN on 8 August 1967.







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To Another Golden Decade

S



## Rising Asia

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