

- ☐ New Rulers Bring Royal Family Closer to Ordinary Japanese
- ☐ China and Nepal Hail “Beginning of New Era”
- ☐ How Asia Became a Global Economic Powerhouse
- ☐ Green Banking: A Climate Friendly Banking
- ☐ China Remains Pakistan’s Key Partner
- ☐ ‘We Are Doing What We Can’ German Domestic Intelligence Chief on the New Wave of Hate

Rising Asia

October-December 2019 Issue 17



Indonesian President Joko Widodo’s Big Political Gamble.



Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (L) has asked Russia’s President Vladimir Putin for help investigating the attacks on Saudi oilfield facilities.



Oman Keen to Deepen Ties with Bangladesh: H.E. Taeib Salim Al Alawi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Bangladesh.



Indo-Pacific Strategy: Growing Opportunities for Shared Prosperity, Sustainable Growth- H. E. Earl R. Miller, The US Ambassador



Exclusive Interview with H.E. Devrim Ozturk, Turkish Ambassador to Bangladesh

In Pictures: 35th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, Thailand



(From L to R) Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, Myanmar State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Brunei Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen, Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Lao Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith pose for photos at the opening ceremony of the 35th summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the related summits in Bangkok, Thailand, Nov. 3, 2019. The 35th ASEAN Summit and related summits kicked off here on Sunday with multilateralism and connectivity taking the center stage. (Xinhua/Zhu Wei)



Spouses of ASEAN leaders discuss to find solutions to sustainably tackle plastic waste problem. Photo From: Royal Thai Government



Thailand Passes Chairmanship Gavel to Vietnam at ASEAN summit



Rising Asia

A Quarterly Magazine of CEAF

Issue-17
October-December 2019

Striving for Asian Solidarity

Editorial Board:

Nasim Mahmud

Chief Editor

Rumman Uddin Ahamed

Associate Editor

Ahmed Husnein Choudhury

Assistant Editor

Nafees Sakhawat

Tashfia Tasreen

Editorial Assistants

Advisers:

Prof. Selina Mohsin

Former Ambassador

Prof. Sukomal Barua PhD

*Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies
University of Dhaka*

Barrister Masudur Rahman

Legal Adviser

Dr. Md. Rakibul Hoque

*Associate Professor
Department of Management Information
Systems, University of Dhaka*

Published by:

Centre for East Asia (Foundation), Bangladesh

House- 49, Road-1, Flat-3AB, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205

Phone: 88-02-9615834, Cell: 01711 825799, 01977825799, 01701775562

Email: ndipu1966@gmail.com, info@ceafasia.org

Website: www.ceafasia.org, www.bri-ceafbd.com

All Rights Reserved:

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise without prior permission of the publisher.

Disclaimer:

All the information and opinions expressed in the magazine are those of authors' own.
The Centre for East Asia (Foundation) does not take any responsibility of its correctness whatsoever.

Centre for East Asia Foundation (CEAF)
Bangladesh, Dhaka



Contents

	Page No.
Editor's Note	i
Indo-Pacific strategy: Growing opportunities for shared prosperity, sustainable growth <i>Earl R. Miller, The US Ambassador to Bangladesh</i>	1
Exclusive interview of Turkish ambassador to Bangladesh <i>Shahriar Feroze</i>	3
Oman keen to deepen ties with Bangladesh <i>Md Enamul Hassan</i>	5
New Rulers Bring Royal Family Closer to Ordinary Japanese <i>The Reuters News Agency</i>	7
Saudis ask Russia to probe oilfield attack <i>Sputnik</i>	9
Widodo's big political gamble <i>Donald Greenlees</i>	10
China and Nepal hail 'beginning of new era' <i>AFP</i>	12
How Asia became a global economic powerhouse <i>Deepak Nayar</i>	13
Green banking: A climate friendly banking <i>Md Zillur Rahaman</i>	16
China remains Pakistan's key partner <i>Dr. Ghulam Ali</i>	17
'We Are Doing What We Can' German Domestic Intelligence Chief on the New Wave of Hate <i>DER SPIEGEL, Germany</i>	19

QUOTATION



WORDS OF WISDOM

"I would advise people not to rest when they grow old because if you rest, you will soon become very weak and incapable, and may become senile. Be active after you reach retirement age.

It is the same as your muscles. If you don't use your muscles and lie down all the time, the muscles cannot even carry your weight. You cannot stand. you cannot walk.

The brain is the same. If you don't use your brain, you don't think, you don't read, you don't write, the brain regresses and you become senile. So always be active".

(Mahathir)

Editor's Note



The Arctic is estimated to contain 30 percent of the world's undiscovered oil and gas reserves. Climate change has accelerated the melting of the Arctic ice, making these resources more available. This backgrounder looks at the status of Chinese-Russian energy cooperation in the Arctic. Since the past decade, Russia has been actively developing the extraction of Arctic resources and shipping routes, whilst boosting its military presence in the region. While Russia has primarily worked with European countries to develop its energy resources, including in the Arctic, a number of factors have led Russia to reconsider and look at Asia for potential investors and technological partners, in addition to being a key consumer market. China has been increasingly highlighted as an important partner for Russia in developing the Russian Arctic.

China has increased its focus on its engagement in the Arctic over the past decade. From a Chinese perspective, cooperation with Russia on Arctic resources and shipping routes also helps facilitate a greater Chinese role and influence in the region which will allow China to gradually gain respect and acceptance to eventually become a legitimate Arctic stakeholder.

Furthermore, China is interested in securing a voice in the evolving Arctic governance regime which is related to its importance and has potential implications for wider global and regional governance.

As a result, China seeks to diversify and strengthen its bilateral relations with all the Arctic states by establishing stronger diplomatic ties, scientific cooperation and economic partnerships.

Nasim Mahmud

Chief Editor

Rising Asia Magazine (RAM)

Bangladesh, Dhaka.

CORRECTION

We are deeply sorry for erroneously misidentifying Her Majesty Queen Suthida Bajrasudhabimalalakshana as Her Majesty Empress Mochiko Shoda of Japan in the caption of a feature photo of her with His Majesty King Maha Vagiralongkorn Phra Vagiraklaochaoyuhua in his Royal Coronation Ceremony held in early May, 2019.

The aforementioned photo was located on the inside front-cover of the previous issue as a sign of our respect and allegiance towards the Royal Thai Family.

Our sincerest apologies to our esteemed readership for the unintended error.

–Chief Editor



Indo-Pacific strategy: Growing opportunities for shared prosperity, sustainable growth

Earl R. Miller

The US Ambassador to Bangladesh



There is now-
here I would
rather be U.S.
Ambassador
than Bangla-
desh at this
point in his-
tory. As I near
the one-year
anniversary

of my arrival in this remarkable country, I feel extraordinarily privileged to be part of the growing partnership between Bangladesh and the United States. The dynamic people I meet every day inspire me with their passion, ingenuity, and determination to succeed. They represent the best of this nation, promising to contribute to a bright future for Bangladesh, the Indo-Pacific region, and the world.

The Indo-Pacific region is one of the world's most vibrant. Rich in natural beauty, fascinating history, vast resources and human capital, the region is poised to catalyze the world's growth. That is why the United States, as an Indo-Pacific nation itself, is deeply invested here, with total regional foreign direct investment of nearly \$1 trillion dollars. These kinds of investments are possible because they rely and build upon bedrock principles - peaceful resolution of disputes, freedom of navigation, open and transparent investment environments, and responsible, accountable governing institutions. This is the

crux of our whole-of-government vision for the region, termed the Indo-Pacific Strategy. In short, the United States supports a free and open Indo-Pacific in which sovereign and independent nations like Bangladesh can prosper in freedom and peace, where every nation in the region - large and small - creates its own destiny, without ceding to one dictated by any other country.

Through this strategy we promote shared values, prosperity, and security. Our vision for the Indo-Pacific codifies what many of us already understood: the stability ensured by free and transparent governments, and the security promoted through an open and rules-based order have the potential to unlock trillions of dollars more of private sector investment in the region. And that means an unmistakable boost in opportunity and prosperity.

When we speak of prosperity, we speak of private sector-driven investment. No one country, through government funding or state-owned enterprise investment, can supply the \$26 trillion of infrastructure investment the Asia Development Bank estimates the Indo-Pacific region will require in the coming years. But the private sector, alone and in partnership with governments throughout the region, can.

Through the Indo-Pacific Strategy the United States seeks to unleash private

sector investment to do what it does best: tap into this potential and spark economic growth, innovation, and long-lasting prosperity. In Bangladesh, the strategy focuses particularly on creating conditions to expand upon historic economic growth, tap into private investment, and encourage job creation in key sectors. Working side-by-side, exchanging ideas, and sharing best practices, U.S. and Bangladeshi partners can grow together in a global economy, creating opportunities to expand markets and take businesses to the next level.

Our embassy team works with the Government of Bangladesh to ensure the business environment is attractive to American private sector investors - and we congratulate Bangladesh on moving up eight places on the World Bank's latest Ease of Doing Business index. We both know companies seek investment climates free of bureaucratic red tape, corruption, and poor labor conditions. Continuing efforts to strengthen Bangladesh's processes and institutions will help curb these business risks and open new doors to trade and investment opportunities. Programs under the Strategy seek to unlock potential in the energy, infrastructure, and digital economy sectors that stimulate growth today and in the future.

Democratic institutions, respect for an international rules-based system,



and sustainable economic development go hand-in-hand. In recent decades, when they adhere to international rules, laws, and standards, nations of all sizes have prospered in freedom and peace. Our Indo-Pacific Strategy is rooted in our conviction that renewing commitments to protect freedoms and promote democratic institutions will spur additional growth.

The Indo-Pacific Strategy's vision of a stable, free, and open region also relies on shared security. To protect the shipping lanes vital to the movement of people and goods, we work with countries across the region through our Maritime Security and Bay of Bengal Initiatives. For example, equipment funded by these initiatives helps detect and deter illegal activities and the actors who threaten stability. As a key partner, Bangladesh is enhancing its maritime security capabilities, protecting its interests, and working with us to deter those who would seek to do harm.

It is important to stress the U.S. vision for common security and pros-

perity with our Indo-Pacific partners is an inclusive one. Our vision for a free and open region excludes no nation. We welcome constructive participation by all countries that uphold an international system based on clear, fair, and transparent rules. But when we see challenges to the free and open standards that have governed the Indo-Pacific in its historic growth, we will push back. A rules-based order, where countries adhere to international laws, rules, and standards, best allows nations of all sizes to prosper in freedom and peace.

American businesses have a proud history in Bangladesh. They create mutually-beneficial growth by introducing leading technologies and brands into Bangladesh markets, and generate export and other opportunities for Bangladeshi goods and people. Chevron not only provides Bangladesh the natural gas it needs to fuel its historic economic growth, but also invests in this country's most precious resource: the Bangladeshi people. It employs thousands of Bangladeshis-95 percent of its work-

force is Bangladeshi-and gives back to the community, offering hundreds of scholarships, teacher training, and educational supplies through its Quality Education Support Initiative. Coca Cola supports women entrepreneurs through its Women Business Centers across Bangladesh.

There are countless other examples of strong partnerships between American and Bangladeshi companies that benefit the United States and Bangladesh alike. The November 4 Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok gives us yet another opportunity to make these bonds even stronger. I look forward to leading a delegation of 17 Bangladeshi companies to the forum. I have no doubt we will find many new opportunities for American and Bangladeshi companies to partner together to bring even greater shared growth and prosperity, based on shared values, to the people of both our great nations.

This article was published at the Daily Financial Express, Bangladesh on November 2, 2019.



Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Darwin. He is a fan of the Indo-Pacific concept (Photo: Michael Franchi via Getty)



Exclusive interview of Turkish ambassador to Bangladesh

The Turkish envoy to Bangladesh, His Excellency Devrim Ozturk's interview comes at a crucial time as the Turkish military forces launch decisive military operations against Kurdish fighters in northeast Syria. Following a wide range of players holding geopolitical interests in Syria, the latest Turkish military operations is likely to shape, even redefine forthcoming geopolitical calculations in the Middle East. Even though, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is reported to have said the primary aim of the military operations was to eliminate a 'terror corridor' but the Western powers, namely France, Germany and Britain have jointly condemned the Turkish actions. His Excellency Devrim Ozturk shares his detailed and incisive explanation behind the recent Turkish military actions in Syria with The Daily Observer's Assistant Editor Shahriar Feroze...



Daily Observer: Can you give us a background on Turkey's fight against terrorist organizations beyond its southern borders?

Turkish envoy: Turkey is currently fighting a number of terrorist organizations that present risk and threat to our national security. Our resolve to fight against these terrorist organizations is firm. It is with this understanding that we have given our full support to all international efforts to this end since day one.

We have a proven record of accomplishment in contributing to counter-terrorism efforts in Syria. We are a committed member of the Global Coalition against DEASH. We have neutralized more than 4,000 DEASH terrorists on our own. However, the threat of terrorism originating from Syria and targeting our borders is not limited to DEASH.

During the last two years, especially from the east of River Euphrates, we have been exposed to more than hundred cases of attacks or hostile acts by PYD/YPG, the Syrian offshoot of PKK which is designated as a terrorist organization by the EU and NATO. PYD/YPG has perpetrated terrorist attacks also within Syria and against

Syrians. Northwest Syria is a particular case in point. More than 200 cases of attacks and killing or wounding of scores of civilians took place. PYD/YPG-affiliated elements assumed responsibility in these cases without hesitation.

Turkey has already conducted two major counter-terrorism operations, "Euphrates Shield" in 2017 and "Olive Branch" in 2018, in northwest Syria, and cleared an area over 4,000 km² from DEASH and PYD/YPG terror, allowing more than 360,000 Syrians to return to their homes in this area. The threat of terrorism originating from Syria and targeting our borders has not yet ended. Through tunnels dug by PYD/YPG along the bordering areas in this region, explosives and ammunition have been smuggled to Turkey to be handed over to the PKK terrorist organization.

So far, more than 220 PYD/YPG attacks have been recorded according to PYD/YPG-affiliated open sources. There is credible evidence that DEASH terrorists detained by PYD/YPG were released in exchange of infiltrating into Turkey or northwest Syria in order to conduct terrorist acts. There has been growing evidence about PYD/YPG's human rights violations such as recruiting child soldiers, intimidating dissidents, demographic engineering and forced

conscription in areas under its control. Local population's grievances against PYD/YPG's tyrannical rule has been on constant rise.

DO: Why did Turkey decide to carry out the "Operation Peace Spring"? What does Turkey expect to accomplish?

Turkish envoy: The objective of this operation will be to ensure our border security, neutralize terrorists in the region and thus, save Syrians from the oppression and cruelty of these terrorists. The operation will be carried out on the basis of the international law, in accordance with our right to self-defence as outlined in Article 51 of the UN Charter and the relevant Security Council resolutions 1373(2001), 1624(2005), 2170(2014) and 2178(2014), 2249(2015) and 2254(2015) and in full respect of Syria's territorial integrity and unity.

As was the case with Operations Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch, only terrorist elements and their hideouts, shelters, emplacements, weapons, vehicles and equipment will be targeted during the planning and execution phases of the operation. Bases and observation posts in the operation area belonging to our Allies are not targets. Channels of military deconfliction will remain open and functional.

We intend to continue the operation until all terrorists have been wiped out of the region, our border security has been ensured, and local Syrians have been liberated from the tyranny of PYD/YPG as well as the DEASH threat.

The operation also aims to support the international efforts to facilitate safe and voluntary returns of displaced Syrians to their homes of origin or other places of their choice in Syria. A safe zone free from terror will encourage about two million Syrians, including more than 300 thousand Syrian Kurds taking refuge in Turkey, to voluntarily return to their homes. In fact, Turkey has best practices in terms of liberating areas from terrorism and facilitating safe and voluntary returns of Syrians. In northwest Syria, more than 360 thousand Syrians returned from Turkey to their homes in areas cleared of terrorists by Operations Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch.

DO: How is Turkey planning to deal with the consequences of this military operation?

Turkish envoy: Turkey has no plans whatsoever to modify the demographic structure in the operation area. To the contrary, this counter-terror operation is intended also to facilitate the returns of Syrians, including Kurds, Arabs and Christians, who had been displaced due to acts of PYD/YPG amounting to crimes against humanity, including ethnic cleansing. Turkey's counter-terrorism efforts in Syria will also contribute to the territorial integrity and unity of Syria by disrupting separatist agendas.

As the only country engaging in chest-to-chest combat against DEASH in Syria, the future of detained DEASH terrorists is of paramount importance for Turkey. The only sustainable solution is repatriation of all foreign terrorist fighters by their countries of origin. The issue of foreign terrorist fighters can be effectively dealt with only by collective action by the international community.

DO: What were the diplomatic efforts of Turkey towards the international community on the verge and beginning of the operation?

Turkish envoy: The US and other allies who have a military presence in the region were informed of the operation in a timely manner. We took immediate steps to inform the international community on the background, legal basis and goals of this operation. President Erdogan had already informed President Trump about our intention and also called President Putin before the start of the operation. The UN Secretary General, the President of the UN Security Council and the Secretary General of NATO were notified of the start of this operation in writing. We invited



ambassadors representing permanent members of the UN Security Council as well as regional countries to the Ministry.

We delivered a verbal note to the Syrian Consulate General in Istanbul. We made clear that this was limited to a counter-terrorism operation. We reiterated our commitment to Syria's territorial integrity and unity. Our vision is recognized and supported by the Syrian National Coalition and the Syrian Interim Government, as the legitimate representatives of the Syrian people, along with the tribal representatives, Kurdish and Christian leaders across the region.

Courtesy: *The Daily Observer, Bangladesh.*



Taeeb Salim Al Alawi
Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Bangladesh

Oman keen to deepen ties with Bangladesh

Md Enamul Hassan

Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Bangladesh Taeeb Salim Al Alawi has said his country wants to build strong bilateral relations with Bangladesh on all fronts.

The Oman envoy said this in an exclusive interview with the daily sun recently.

He said: “My first priority is to strengthen and enhance the existing bilateral relations between our two brotherly countries.”

“Furthermore, I want to stress the importance of upgrading the existing people-to-people contact between Bangladesh and Oman.”

There are huge opportunities to boost bilateral trade and investment between the two countries as they are naturally resourceful, said the diplomat.

Bangladesh has huge manpower resources and Oman can be a partner of Bangladesh in energy sector, especially in LNG sector.

He mentioned, “there are other promising sectors like education, agriculture and RMG.”

Asked about Yemen War, the envoy said the stance of the Sultanate of Oman is very much clear and well-known because Oman is always against war.

Oman engaged in dialogue with the international communities to bring down the negative impact of the war to the least by giving access to the international humanitarian aids to the war-affected people and emphasizes the need for dialogue among warring factions to bring back peace to war-

torn Yemen.

“Oman also allows its neighbour Yemen to use Omani land for transit to and from Yemen on humanitarian grounds as we support all international efforts to end the war.”

In reply to a question, Taeeb said Muslim Ummah is passing through its toughest time and Oman wants to see a peaceful world for all including Muslims.

Over Qatar crisis, he said his country puts an all-out effort for the success of Kuwaiti mediation towards resolving the ongoing crisis between Qatar and other boycotting countries.

Palestinian people have also long been suffering a lot to get their legitimate rights, which were approved by the regional and international organ-

isations as well as the international community.

“Our stance emanates from the policy, which is based on belief in peace, dialogue and negotiations.”

The Arabian diplomat observes that the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East can only be brought through recognition of the inherent legal rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

The establishment of independent Palestine state, a return of sovereignty over the territory occupied since 1967, is a must for finding a permanent solution to the crisis.

According to Taeab, Bangladesh has a good reputation for exporting RMG products worldwide especially in the Western and European countries, and Gulf markets also have huge potentials for the readymade garment products.

Both the countries are exerting their sincere efforts to create an ideal business climate for traders and investors to enhance trade volume in different sectors.

Citing that ensuring dynamism and free trade are the two key elements for enhancement of trade volume, he said: “If investors or businesses find an ideal business climate, I am sure

the bilateral trade volume between the two countries will increase.”

The Gulf envoy said the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment between Bangladesh and Oman is in the final phase of its conclusion.

The government of Bangladesh has taken some good initiatives like exemption of tariff and allocation of special Economic Zones to draw foreign investment in Bangladesh, he noted.

In reply to a query, the Omani head of mission said his country has long been playing role in the development of Bangladesh in many ways.

Around seven lakh Bangladeshis are living and working in Oman and keeping the economy of Bangladesh very vibrant.

Bangladeshi expatriates in Oman have good reputation of hard work, and they are talented and loyal to their employers. In fact, they are also contributing to the development of Oman as well, Taeab noted.

“We consider the workforce to be our development partners,” he added.

The Arabian diplomat said as a brotherly Muslim country, Oman always stands beside Bangladesh and extends humanitarian assistance whenever necessary.

“I can recall Oman Charity Organisation (OCO) came up with an emergency humanitarian assistance during SIDR in 2007, which hit coastal areas of Bangladesh very badly,” he added.

Bangladesh is now facing Rohingya influx crisis in its small territory as more than one million Rohingyas have reportedly taken shelter in Bangladesh.

“We thank the people and the government of Bangladesh for the generosity shown towards the oppressed Muslim minority of Rohingyas who fled from their homeland in Myanmar.”

The Omani envoy said the Sultanate of Oman has provided emergency humanitarian aid to around one thousand Rohingya families in Cox’s Bazar.

Besides, Oman is building 1,000 safe shelters to accommodate around 10,000 Rohingya families under its humanitarian aid programme.

“My country is also building other facilities like sanitation, drinking water, street lights, interior lights, Mosques, classrooms and emergency field hospital under UNHCR guidelines,” added the envoy.

Interviewed by Md. Enamul Hasan of the Daily Sun, Bangladesh.

Omani Culture





Japan's new Emperor Naruhito and new Empress Masako are driven to Imperial Palace May 1, 2019. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

New Rulers Bring Royal Family Closer to Ordinary Japanese

Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako are bringing changes to one of the world's oldest royal families.

The two have spoken with foreign visitors in English. They laugh with children and even play with dogs.

They are Japan's first emperor and empress to have earned university degrees. They speak several languages and have years of experience of living overseas. At one time, the future emperor even washed his own clothes.

Six months after starting their official duties, they appear to be making Japan's royal family more international and bringing it closer to the lives of average citizens.

They have also surprised many Japanese who worried they might have trou-

ble taking the place of Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko. Many were worried about Empress Masako, who has struggled for years with what officials call an "adjustment disorder."

"Though the previous emperor and empress were seen as being close to the people, these two seem even closer," said Hideya Kawanishi. She is an assistant history professor at Nagoya University.

Emperor Naruhito is the first Japanese ruler to be cared for by his mother instead of being raised by nurses and teachers. His parents made efforts to give him a normal childhood, including sending him to school with food for lunch.

He earned a degree from Gakushuin University where he studied water sys-

tems. He then spent two years at the University of Oxford, which he said were some of the best years of his life. He later married Masako Owada, a diplomat, following objections to his choice from officials.

The two have one daughter, 17-year-old Aiko who, as a woman, cannot take the Chrysanthemum Throne.

The royal couple's overseas experience was evident when they held a dinner for U.S. President Donald Trump soon after they took power. They spoke to Trump and his wife, Melania, in English, only later agreeing to use an interpreter because of official rules.

The emperor and empress speak

English so well, it is clear they have lived internationally, Kawanishi said. The couple seems a world away from the traditional behavior of the past.

Emperor Naruhito has agreed to have his picture taken with members of the public while traveling overseas. In Japan, he and his wife recently laughed with children and played with dogs during a visit to a dog shelter.

“This is not something you could imagine the previous imperial couple ever doing, at least not so naturally,” Kawanishi said.

Worries have faded

Empress Masako’s struggles with her adjustment disorder and official duties. She lived a very private life for the past 10 years, but now she is an empress with a quick smile. The Japanese public seems to have forgotten about her health issues.

“Of course, her health is a mental issue so there are ups and downs, but worries have rather faded,” said Hidehiko Kasahara, a professor at Keio University who specializes in royal issues.

Empress Masako may have more responsibilities, but taking the throne may also give her more freedom because she is now the empress.

“The fact that she can act as she wants means there is less stress. Rather, it’s a plus for her recovery,” Kasahara said.

For now, she and the emperor appear to be moving slowly as they take on their official duties.

The Reuters News Agency reported this story.



Japanese Art & Culture



Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (L) has asked Russia's President Vladimir Putin for help investigating the attacks on Saudi oilfield facilities. Photo: AFP/Mikhail Klimentyev/Sputnik

Saudis ask Russia to probe oilfield attack

Putin agrees to investigate attack on oilfield facilities, but said he would not take sides in any disputes

Russian President Vladimir Putin has agreed to look into September's attack on the Saudi Aramco oil facilities and said Russia would condemn whoever was behind it, but added that he would not take sides in the feud between Saudi Arabia and Iran, according to reports in the Arabic-language and Russian media.

Putin said Russia valued its ties with countries and understood the concerns on both sides after the attacks on the facilities in Abqaiq.

Putin said Moscow had kept "close contacts with the leadership of Saudi Arabia, including the Crown Prince [Mohammad bin Salman]," who had asked if Russia could help investigate

the incident thoroughly.

"I said yes, we are ready to share anything that might be necessary, everything we have for a thorough investigation," Putin told the media.

But when asked if he would condemn Iran if it was found to have been behind the attack, he said regardless of who was behind the attack, Russia would condemn it.

But he added that before assigning blame it was important to find out the facts. Assigning blame would be counter-productive, he added, in a reference to Riyadh and Washington pointing the finger at Tehran.

Putin added that while Russia was ready to help the Saudi fact-finding effort, it would remain a firm friend of

Iran. He described Iran as "a big country" that "has existed on its territory for thousands of years [and] has its own interests."

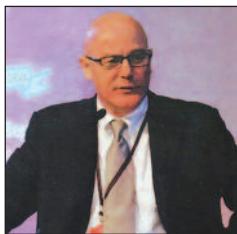
"Russia will never be friends with one country against another. We build bilateral relations that rely on positive trends generated by our contacts. We do not build alliances against anyone," he said.

The Russian leader also said Moscow would not take on the "unrewarding" role of mediator in the Riyadh-Tehran feud and added that he believed the two nations were capable of solving their disputes without a middleman.

Source: Sputnik

Widodo's big political gamble

Donald Greenlees



Joko Widodo has taken a big gamble that he can run a more effective second-term administration by bringing in his strongest opponent. His political strategy, and possibly the success of his administration, will be defined by that move as he enters his final five years in office.

The decision is a product of both political culture and rational political playmaking—cultural, because Widodo's Javanese roots dispose him to a political style that maintains at least the appearance of inclusion and aversion to open conflict, and rational because a large coalition potentially offers him a clearer path to enacting his agenda.

The political playmakers might applaud the appointment of Prabowo Subianto, Widodo's challenger in the April presidential elections, to the post of minister of defence as the smart move. It contains Widodo's biggest potential opponent and greatest point of resistance to the government's program in the House of Representatives (DPR).

It gives Widodo, unique as a president in not controlling his own political machine, more scope to play the parties off against each other, including his nominal sponsor, the Indonesian Democratic Party Struggle (PDIP), and its proprietorial leader Megawati Sukarnoputri.

But there are four broad categories of risk for Widodo from bringing in a man who has run against him in two bitterly fought presidential elections

and threatened to unleash civil and legal crises when he lost.

First, Prabowo, chair of the Gerindra Party, the third biggest in the DPR, could be a source of internal destabilisation. Throughout a long career in the public eye, the former army general has exhibited a strong authoritarian streak and a defiance of leaders. One has to wonder at the state of mind that permits Prabowo himself to believe that it's a good idea to work as a minister under the man he only a few months ago dismissed as unfit for office.

In the ministerial line-up announced by Widodo last week, the defence portfolio will be overseen by Mahfud MD, the new coordinating minister for political, legal and security affairs. Mahfud once served as a chief justice of the constitutional court and as defence minister under former president Abdurrahman Wahid, when he was prone to accusing the US and Australia of running spying operations and clashed with ambassadors from both countries.

Mahfud was Widodo's initial choice for vice president; yet he doesn't look

like being a substantial check on a headstrong Prabowo.

The irritation of other political parties in the governing coalition over the inclusion in the cabinet of the biggest opposition party only serves to compound the potential for internal tensions. Without an expansion of the size of the cabinet, parties that backed Widodo in the elections have had to make way.

The Nasdem Party, led by tycoon Surya Paloh, looks like one of the big losers in the new administration. It was forced to relinquish the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Trade—two prized jobs—in exchange for others of lesser money-making capacity and influence.

Nasdem obtained no additional ministerial slots, despite increasing the number of its seats in the DPR from 36 to 59. There's been rumbling in Nasdem's senior ranks about walking out of the government if things don't go better for them from here.

Second, if Prabowo adopts an expansive view of his authority as minister, he might set back the clock on civil-military relations. With a bloat-





ed officer corps in the military (TNI), there has been pressure to restore the practice of appointing military men to civilian posts. Prabowo also might aim to push for a gradual return of the military to internal security operations.

For the live security challenge posed by the Papuan provinces, the appointment of Prabowo sends a bad signal. Widodo appears to have a Papua strategy based only on two strands—the ‘stick’ of firm internal security measures and the ‘carrot’ of new development projects. That approach bypasses Papuan demands for political dialogue and accountability for past human rights abuses—both of which look much less likely to happen.

The defence ministry is also an often overlooked source of financial power. How Prabowo manages the budget will be closely watched by rival political parties.

Third, Widodo has injected another awkward dimension into Indonesia’s relations with Western countries. Prabowo hasn’t been able to get a visa for either the US or Australia for a number of years because of his implication in various human rights cases, including the kidnapping of political activists in the lead-up to the fall of his one-time father-in-law, the late president Suharto.

Both the US and Australian embassies had contemplated the circumstances under which Prabowo could be permitted to travel when he was putative opposition leader. They put it in the too hard basket.

Now, both countries will have to set aside any discomfort over visits and photo-ops to embrace him as a dialogue partner. They have too much riding on a strategic relationship with

Indonesia to do otherwise. Certainly, none of the Asian states, most importantly China, will be troubled by Prabowo’s chequered military past.

But it could crimp the space for increased Western engagement and create a focal point for protests, particularly on hot-button topics like Papua. The US military is keen to step up cooperation with TNI’s special forces, Kopassus, including the resumption of lethal training. It remains to be seen whether Prabowo’s appointment is taken by congressional critics of military engagement as a signal that TNI will be wedded to the past.

Finally, the inclusion of the biggest opposition party in the government threatens to weaken Indonesia’s democracy. The country’s political elites have always struggled with Western notions of dialectic democracy. In their hearts, they prefer an insulated mode of governing which prevails in various Asian capitals.

They won’t lament the absence of a substantive opposition in the DPR (at the moment only the small Islamic Prosperous Justice Party appears seriously committed to the role).

Already some of Widodo’s youthful allies are abandoning his support groups in protest against the Prabowo appointment. One of the big worries for democrats is that the government will acquiesce to political party plans to restore the power of the supra-parliamentary People’s Consultative Assembly (MPR) to set policy guidelines and select presidents.

The elites might not like them, but direct elections have been very popular with Indonesian voters. They are unlikely to meekly accept an erosion of fundamental citizens’ rights.

That said, Widodo has taken steps to break up some old patronage systems and stave off the challenge to secular politics from Muslim activists. The appointment of retired general Fachrul Razi as minister for religious affairs breaks a longstanding linkage between Muslim politicians and a ministry that was rich in patronage opportunities. It sets up an effort to challenge religious radicalism.

But the Prabowo appointment is symbolic of a wider notion that weighs on Widodo’s second term. He oversees an administration that is politically mature in its habits and devoid of any of the excitement that accompanied his 2014 victory.

It always was probably wrong to assume Widodo was a social and political reformer of Western ilk. Increasingly, it looks like that was an expectation imposed on him by his youthful admirers, who believed his man-of-the-people image equated with a willingness to break the traditional pattern of elite politics. Widodo has shown he is a conservative governor in an Indonesian and Javanese meaning of that term.

He has taken a calculated bet that he can manage Prabowo and benefit from the weakening of external opposition. But it sets the tone for an administration that will be largely managerial, placing emphasis on economic invigoration and overcoming administrative inefficiency, even at the expense of the protection and advancement of social and political liberties.

Donald Greenlees is senior adviser to Asialink at the University of Melbourne and a visiting fellow at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University.



(L-R) Chairman of Nepal's National Assembly Ganesh Prasad Timilsina, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, Chinese President Xi Jinping, President Bidhya Devi Bhandari and Vice-president of Nepal Nanda Kishor Pun pose for a photo in Kathmandu on October 13, 2019. Photo: Narayan Maharjan/NurPhoto

China and Nepal hail 'beginning of new era'

President Xi Jinping ends his visit with promises of a railway and tunnel connecting the two countries

China and Nepal hailed the "beginning of a new era" in relations on October 13, 2019 as President Xi Jinping ended his visit with promises of a railway and tunnel connecting the two countries.

Xi – in the first state visit by a Chinese leader in 23 years – announced 3.5 billion RMB (\$493 million) of aid between 2020-2022 "to uplift the living standard of Nepali people" during talks with President Bidhya Devi Bhandari, an official said.

China has been wooing Nepal, which rival India considers as within its sphere of influence, with pledges of development in the Himalayan nation sandwiched between the regional giants.

Kathmandu has also sought closer ties and much-needed energy and infrastructure investments from Beijing.

In a joint statement, the two countries said Xi's visit "marked the beginning of a new era in Nepal-China

relations and served as an important milestone in the history of friendly cooperation."

During the visit, Nepali and Chinese officials signed at least 15 agreements, including a feasibility study for a cross-border railway project that would give Beijing access to the south through Nepal's open border with India.

"We will develop a multi-dimensional trans-Himalayan connectivity network and help Nepal to realize its dream to transform itself from a landlocked country to land-linked country," Xi said in his address during a banquet evening.

They also undertook to carry out another feasibility study to construct a tunnel from China's Kerung to Kathmandu and to repair existing highways, as well as to strengthen hydropower, security, trade and education links.

Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's foreign affairs adviser Rajan Bhattarai said Xi showed "China is ready to

help Nepal with an open heart on its goal of development and prosperity, helping with infrastructure development and enhancing connectivity."

Nepali Times editor Kunda Dixit said the key test would be if China's deals help boost the impoverished nation's economy.

"The big test of whether or not Xi's visit will benefit Nepal is if these infrastructure projects will help Nepal become more self-reliant and use access to China to sell our goods, not increase our dependence," he told AFP.

China has intensified its presence in Nepal in recent years, pumping millions of dollars into projects ranging from roads to hydropower plants.

In 2017, Nepal signed up to China's Belt and Road Initiative, a vast global infrastructure program, which includes the building or upgrading of highways and airports in the country

Source: AFP



A busy shopping street in Nanjing. Photo: iStock

How Asia became a global economic powerhouse

The poorest continent in the late 60s has undergone a profound transformation

Deepak Nayyar



In 1820, Asia accounted for two-thirds of the world's population and more than one-half of global income. The subsequent decline of Asia

was attributed to its integration with a world economy shaped by colonialism and driven by imperialism.

By the late 1960s, Asia was the poorest continent in the world when it came to income levels, marginal except for its large population. Its social

indicators of development, among the worst anywhere, epitomized its underdevelopment. The deep pessimism about Asia's economic prospects, voiced by the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal in his 1968 book *Asian Drama*, was widespread at the time.

In the half-century since then, Asia has witnessed a profound transformation in terms of the economic progress of its nations and the living conditions of its people. By 2016, as my analysis of UN data shows, it accounted for 30% of world income, 40% of world manufacturing, and over one-third of world trade, while

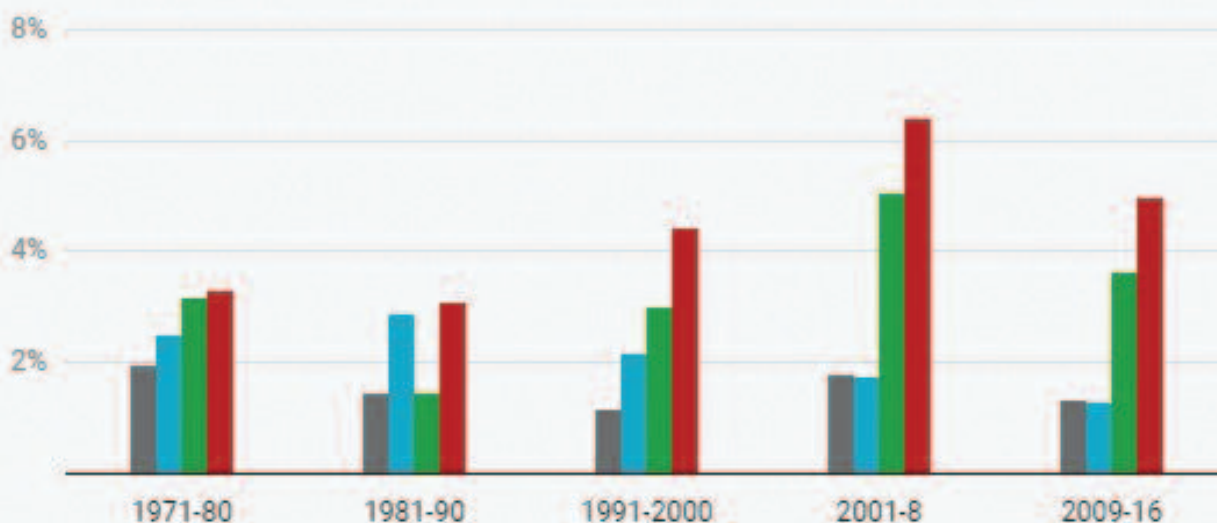
its income per capita converged towards the world average.

This transformation was unequal across countries and between people. Even so, predicting it would have required an imagination run wild. Asia's economic transformation in this short time-span is almost unprecedented in history. My new book, *Resurgent Asia*, looks at this phenomenal change.

Given the size and the diversity of the Asian continent, looking at the region as a whole is not always appropriate. So in my research, I've disaggregated Asia into its four constituent sub-regions – East, South-

GDP per capita growth rates between 1971 and 2016

World Industrialised countries Developing countries Asia



United Nations, National Accounts Statistics

Source: Nayyar, D, in *Resurgent Asia* • [Get the data](#)

East, South and West Asia – and further into 14 selected countries described as the Asian-14. These are China, South Korea and Taiwan in East Asia; Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam in South-East Asia; Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in South Asia; and Turkey in West Asia. These countries account for more than four-fifths of the population and income of the continent. Japan is not included in the study because it is a high-income country in Asia, and was already industrialized 50 years ago.

It's essential to recognize the diversity of Asia. There have been marked differences between countries in geographical size, embedded histories, colonial legacies, nationalist movements, initial conditions, natural resource endowments, population size,

income levels and political systems. The reliance on markets and the degree of openness of economies has varied greatly across countries and over time.

Across Asia, the politics has also ranged widely from authoritarian regimes or oligarchies to political democracies. So did ideologies, from communism, to state capitalism and capitalism. Development outcomes differed across space and over time too. There were different paths to development because there were no universal solutions, magic wands, or silver bullets.

Absolute poverty persists

Despite such diversity, there are common discernible patterns. Economic growth drove development. Growth

rates of GDP and GDP per capita in Asia have been stunning and far higher than elsewhere in the world.

Rising investment and savings rates combined with the spread of education were the underlying factors. Growth was driven by rapid industrialization, often led by exports and linked with changes in the composition of output and employment. It was supported by coordinated economic policies, unorthodox wherever and whenever necessary, across sectors and over time.

Rising per capita incomes transformed social indicators of development, as literacy rates and life expectancy rose everywhere. There was also a massive reduction in absolute poverty. But the scale of absolute poverty that persists, despite



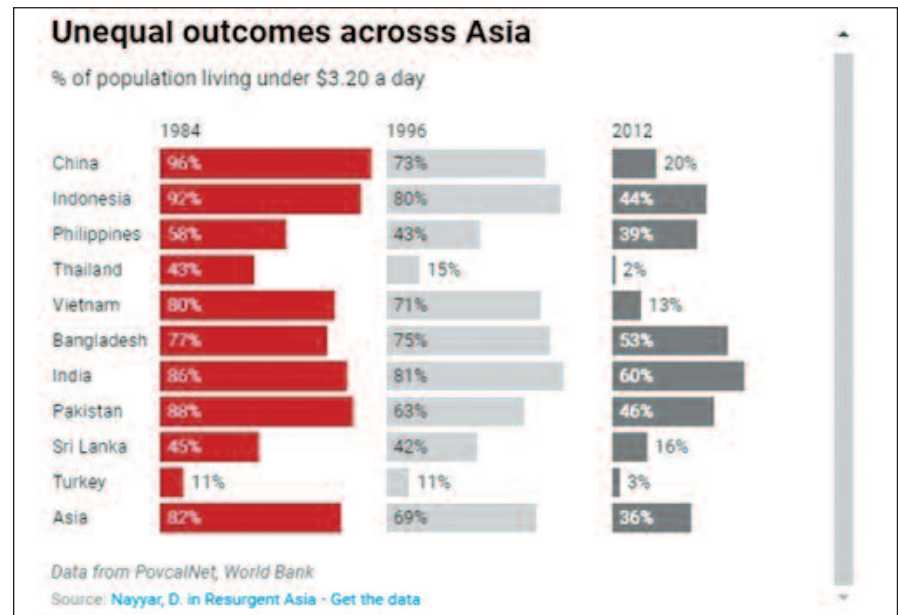
unprecedented growth, is just as striking as the sharp reduction of poverty that happened between 1984 and 2012, according to data from the World Bank.

The poverty reduction could have been much greater but for the rising inequality. Inequality between people within countries rose almost everywhere, except South Korea and Taiwan. Yet the gap between the richest and poorest countries in Asia remains awesome and the ratio of GDP per capita in the richest and poorest countries in Asia was more than 100:1 in both 1970 and 2016.

Role of governments

Economic openness has performed a critical supportive role in Asian development, wherever it was in the form of strategic integration with the world economy, rather than passive insertion into it. For example, trade policy was liberal for exports but restrictive for imports. Government policies towards foreign investment have been shaped by industrial policy in the pursuit of national development objectives. While openness was necessary for successful industrialization, it was not sufficient and facilitated industrialization only when combined with industrial policy.

In the half-century economic transformation of Asia, governments performed a vital role, ranging from leader to catalyst or supporter. Success at development in Asia was about managing this evolving relationship between states and markets, by finding the right balance in their respective roles that also changed over time. The developmental states in South



Korea, Taiwan and Singapore coordinated policies across sectors over time in pursuit of national development objectives, using carrot-and-stick policy to implement their agenda, and were able to become industrialized nations in just 50 years. China emulated these developmental states with much success, and Vietnam followed on the same path two decades later, as both countries have strong one-party communist governments that could coordinate and implement policies.

Shift in economic power

It is not possible to replicate these states elsewhere in Asia. But other countries, such as India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Bangladesh and Turkey, did manage to evolve some institutional arrangements, even if less effective, that were conducive to industrialisation and development. In some of these countries, the checks and balances of political democracies were crucial to making governments more orientated towards develop-

ment and people-friendly.

The rise of Asia represents the beginnings of a shift in the balance of economic power in the world and some erosion in the political dominance of the West. The future will be shaped partly by how Asia exploits the opportunities and meets the challenges and partly by how the difficult economic and political conjuncture in the world unfolds.

Yet it's plausible to suggest that by around 2050, a century after the end of colonial rule, Asia will account for more than one-half of world income and will be home to more than half of the people on earth. It will have an economic and political significance in the world that would have been difficult to imagine 50 years ago, even if it was the reality in 1820.

Deepak Nayyar is Emeritus Professor of Economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India and Honorary Fellow, Balliol College, University of Oxford, England.

Green Banking: A Climate Friendly Banking

Md Zillur Rahaman



Presently climate change is the most complicated issue, the world is facing and there have been continuous endeavors to measure and mitigate

the risk of climate change caused by human activities. Green banking is like a normal bank but it considers all the social and environmental or ecological factors with an aim to protect the environment and conserve natural resources. It is also called as an ethical bank or a sustainable bank.

It refers to the initiatives taken by banks to encourage environment friendly investment. Green banking is a proactive and smart way of thinking towards future sustainability. It is very important for the banks to be proactive and accelerate the rate of the growth of the economy. As there is a continuous change in the environmental factors leading the banks face intense competition in the global market. Banks need to apply morality of sustainability and responsibility to their business model, strategy and formulation for products and services, operations and financing activities and become stronger. By adopting the environmental factors in their lending activities banks can recover the return from their investments and make the polluting industries become environment friendly.

Globally in the United States, green banks have been created at the state and local levels and the green bank concept was originally developed by

Reed Hundt and Ken Berlin, as a part of the 2008 Obama-Biden Transition Team's efforts to facilitate clean energy development. The United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, and Malaysia have all created national banks dedicated to leveraging private investment in clean energy technologies. Green banking is something not new in Bangladesh and this innovative banking system has been incorporated in Bangladesh since 2011.

It is basically the paperless banking which doesn't harm the environment or emission at all. It is also the finance of the banking project, service or trade in a firm or individual which doesn't pollute the environment in any way or causes any harmful elements or waste to the atmosphere. On-line banking, i-banking (Internet banking), ATM, POS, IDM, SMS service, finance in solar energy etc are the some examples of green banking technology in Bangladesh.

The banking sector is one of the major sources of financing industrial projects such as steel, paper, cement, chemicals, fertilizers, power, textiles, etc., which cause maximum carbon emission. Therefore, the banking sector can play an intermediary role between economic development and environmental protection, for promoting environmentally sustainable and socially responsible investment.

Many countries all over the world have made commitments necessary to mitigate climate change. Although banks are considered environment friendly and do not impact the environment greatly through their own 'internal' operations, the 'external' impact on the environment through

their customers' activities is substantial.

Geographically Bangladesh is one of the most affected climate change countries in the world and the people of Bangladesh have been suffering for years from it. BB has the legitimate right to mold the actions of the banks and it is able to coerce all banks to put into action green banking policy to subdue its own environmental pollution as well as a commercial bank through the country. Bangladesh Bank issued the Environmental Risk Management Guidelines for banks and financial Institutions (FIs) in 2011 to assess environmental risk in their credit and policy guidelines for Green Banking for Banks.

For surviving the competitive market all the banks of Bangladesh should comprehend the hard reality of environmental pollution and take action against it. We boldly deserve in the near future the banking department of Bangladesh will make an effective structure that will be consisted of SDG and protect society as well as the environment from various types of pollution such as air, water, soil, etc. According to the entity and responsible corporate citizen, banks believe that all of the small 'green banking initiatives' taken today will be created in a green future.

If we all are well aware about our environment, we can save and change our risky climate through green banking initiative and investment.

Md. Zillur Rahaman is banker in a leading Shariah based bank and freelance writer, Bangladesh.

China remains Pakistan's key partner

Dr. Ghulam Ali



While meeting with a visiting Chinese military delegation led by General Xu Qiliang, Pakistani Prime Minister

Imran Khan termed ties with China an 'anchor for regional stability'. The visit of the military delegation came amidst rising India-Pakistan tensions over India's unilateral revocation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, stripping Indian-controlled Kashmir of its autonomy. The action led to a series of measures by China and Pakistan, again proving China to be Pakistan's irreplaceable ally.

Pakistan is facing myriad internal and external challenges in three key areas – economic, diplomatic and strategic. In facing these challenges, Pakistan often turns to its traditional sources of support – Muslim countries, especially the wealthy Arab states, China and the United States. In addition to this, the IMF and the World Bank have also provided bailout packages on different occasions. The role of these countries is limited to one area or the other. But it is only China which can address Pakistan's needs in all three areas.

The help Islamabad receives from

Arab countries is largely confined to the economic domain. The current Imran Khan administration, like its predecessors, received oil on deferred payments, economic bailouts and cash from some Middle Eastern states. In addition, Pakistani expatriates in the Middle East send remittances that play a crucial role in Pakistan's balance of payments.

But these Muslim countries lack diplomatic clout, not to mention military power and technology. On the Kashmir issue, the Muslim countries merely provided verbal support – and reluctantly. Adding to the current India-Pakistan tensions, Pakistan faced an embarrassing situation when it was lobbying against India's alleged human rights violations in Kashmir while the UAE and Bahrain honoured Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the highest civilian

awards. Of the Muslim countries, only Turkey, Malaysia and to some extent Iran provided some support to Pakistan. The statement from the Organization of the Islamic Conference has no practical utility.

In strategic terms, none of the Muslim states have any significant impact. Most of the Arab world, despite oil wealth, are dependent on the West for their own defence. Some of them even seek Pakistan's help for defence purposes.

The US has also proved to be a source of (political) economic and military assistance to Pakistan. However, the ebb and flow of US-Pakistan relations determines the level of such support. In the past, the United States made notable diplomatic efforts to settle the Kashmir issue and provided state-of-the-art military weapons and



Pakistan Chief of Army Staff Qamar Javed Bajwa meeting China's military leadership.

considerable economic assistance under the alliance relationship with Pakistan, especially during the Cold War.

The US support largely depended on Washington's strategic interests in the region, which inevitably changed over time. Regarding the current India-Pakistan tensions over Kashmir, US President Donald Trump offered to mediate between Pakistan and India, but changed his position soon after. After a meeting with Modi, in which the latter rejected any scope for third party mediation, Trump stated that India and Pakistan could resolve the dispute by themselves.

US-Pakistan relations do appear to be thawing, but it seems to be a reward for Pakistan's role in the Afghan peace process by pushing the Taliban to the negotiation table, rather than a recognition of Pakistan's strategic role in South Asia. Most sources of political, economic and strategic support for Pakistan is limited and subject to other factors – they are far from enduring.

China seems to be the only country that has both the capability and willingness to support Pakistan economically, diplomatically and strategically. Beijing has proved this in past and in recent crises. China was among the countries that provided economic assistance to Imran Khan's government when foreign exchange reserves had reached a record low. Although China's economic assis-



Chinese President Xi Jinping (C) addresses a joint session of the parliament in Islamabad. Chinese President Xi Jinping said a \$46 billion economic corridor offered Pakistan a "historic development opportunity", but security fears linger over the project which involves major construction in some highly unstable areas. - AFP photo

tance was not a free lunch, nor was it excessive, Beijing stood there to prevent Islamabad from defaulting.

On India's recent move in Kashmir, China condemned Indian 'unilateral' action and warned of 'grave consequences'. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated, 'The recent unilateral revision of domestic laws by the Indian side continues to undermine China's territorial sovereignty, which is unacceptable and will not have any effect'.

China fully supported Pakistan in approaching the UN Security Council (UNSC) over the issue. After the UNSC session, Chinese UN representative Zhang Jun stated that India's move challenged China's 'sovereign interests' and violated a bilateral agreement related to peace in the border area. Zhang emphasised that the action would not change China's 'exercise of sovereignty and effective administrative jurisdiction' over Aksai Chin, a dis-

puted territory in Jammu and Kashmir. Although the UNSC session could not issue a joint statement, Pakistan could not have taken the issue to the world body without China's support.

Zooming in on the recent crises, China's position against India's revocation of Article 370 was closer to Pakistan's own stance than any other country in the world. Although China's position stemmed from its own security concerns, its support proved valuable to Pakistan. On the whole, Beijing's support to Pakistan in the economic, diplomatic and strategic fronts are key factors behind its dependence on China. As the Kashmir issue is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon, additional strategic consultation between Beijing and Islamabad is to be expected.

Dr Ghulam Ali is Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science, School of Marxism, Sichuan University of Science & Engineering.



‘We Are Doing What We Can’ German Domestic Intelligence Chief on the New Wave of Hate

*In an interview, **Thomas Haldenwang**, the president of Germany's domestic intelligence agency, discusses the new threat of extremism in the wake of the Halle attack and his agency's need for greater authority in the monitoring of such threats.*

Interview Conducted by **Martin Knobbe** and **Wolf Wiedmann-Schmidt**

DER SPIEGEL: Mr. Haldenwang, the perpetrator in Halle who attempted to conduct a mass murder at a synagogue on October 9, 2019 appears to have come out of nowhere. He seems to have struck without the authorities ever having noticed his extremism. As president of Germany's Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) what's your explanation for this?

Haldenwang: He must have had a long-term plan of action – he built his weapons using his own resources. To do that, he must have obtained material from the internet. But as far as we know so far, he didn't share his plans for the anti-Semitic attack with anyone.

DER SPIEGEL: Perpetrators like him radicalize themselves in forums

and networks on the internet that often have links to the gamer scene. Is Germany's interior minister right when he says that the scene needs to be the subject of greater scrutiny?

Haldenwang: The majority of gamers have nothing to do with right-wing extremism, not even the ones who like the shooting games. But if I perceive that hatred and agitation are developing on these sites, if right-wing extremist ideas are being shared, including the idea of committing a terrorist attack, then we have to deal with these platforms.

DER SPIEGEL: Shouldn't you have done so long ago?

Haldenwang: We are doing what we can, but we need more staff to conduct considerably more intensive in-

ternet monitoring. This is a complex task and you need skilled employees who can identify trends and suspicious individuals.

DER SPIEGEL: How many people do you need?

Haldenwang: The 50 percent increase announced when I took office has already taken place. With 300 additional positions, we would move in the right direction, bringing us closer to the size of our department that deals with Islamism and Islamist terrorism. But we also need to be granted the authority commensurate with today's challenges.

DER SPIEGEL: You are referring to the monitoring of chat communications, which are often encrypted?

Haldenwang: Yes. Messenger serv-

ices, for example. It should make no difference whether we want to be able to read an SMS or a WhatsApp message.

DER SPIEGEL: Should providers be required to hand the authorities a decrypted version of chats, if required?

About Thomas Haldenwang



• Thomas Haldenwang, 59, has served as president of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution since November 2018. Prior to that, the

lawyer was the deputy of the Cologne-based agency, which is responsible for monitoring and combating extremism in all its forms in Germany.

Haldenwang: That would be a very far-reaching approach; there are alternatives, such as tapping sources, which would be our preferred approach. We would access extremists' phones at the point before communications become encrypted ~ always subject to the strict requirements of the law, according to which all surveillance must be approved by an independent body, and only if the person has the potential to be particularly dangerous.

DER SPIEGEL: That wouldn't have helped at all in Halle. You can't plant a Trojan horse on someone's phone to monitor them if you don't even know who that person is.

Haldenwang: Unfortunately, there will always be cases that can't be detected in advance. But we can increase the chances ~ by, for example, observing the internet more closely with additional staff.

DER SPIEGEL: In June, Walter Lübcke, a senior regional government official in Kassel, was shot dead on the terrace of his home, likely by a man who has been deeply rooted in the extreme right-wing scene for years. How could such a thing happen?

Haldenwang: The alleged perpetrator had not appeared to be visibly extremist to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution since 2005. There was also a seemingly plausible explanation. He had married, built a house, had regular work, children, a dog and he was a member of a club. From all outside appearances, it was a successful resocialization.

DER SPIEGEL: But the suspect, Stephan Ernst, had been involved in an attack on a trade union rally in the city of Dortmund in 2009. Your office wasn't aware of that?

Haldenwang: That didn't make it into the systems of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution. He had disappeared from our radar four years earlier. That's why our authority deleted all data about him from our files in 2015, after the expiry of the maximum storage period of 10 years. After the revelations about the NSU terrorist group, though, a moratorium was placed on deleting data. That's the only reason there were any documents left.

DER SPIEGEL: Is there a lesson to be learned from the Lübcke murder?

Haldenwang: We should consider extending the deadline for deletion to 15 years. And then you need to check each individual case carefully before you delete it: Has the person really left the scene, or are there any indica-

tions to make you doubt it? We shouldn't have automatic deletion any longer.

DER SPIEGEL: Is Ernst an isolated case?

Haldenwang: We have conducted an intensive search of our documents and files to determine whether there are similar cases. As of today, we haven't seen any.

DER SPIEGEL: You often receive tips about suspicious Islamists from foreign partners like the United States. Have you ever received a tip about a right-wing terrorist in the states of Saxony or Hesse?

Haldenwang: In the fight against right-wing extremism, cooperation on the national level is the chief priority. But international exchange has intensified since the attacks in Norway and New Zealand. I am confident that this will lead to the exchange of tips in the future. Given our expertise, we are also a sought-after partner internationally.

DER SPIEGEL: Is there anything novel about the type of perpetrator who emerged in the Halle attack?

Haldenwang: What's new is the international dimension. Right-wing extremism as we know it was long a particularly German phenomenon. But now, we see Anders Breivik in Oslo, Brenton Tarrant in Christchurch, Patrick Crusius in El Paso, the perpetrator in Halle. It's like links in a chain, almost an international competition. Another insight is that it appears that no deep ideology is needed to radicalize and develop plans for attacks. All that's needed is this emotion, hate, incitement, the web-based instigation and



this convergence of people who, on the basis of simplistic messages often rooted in fake news, arrive at this world view and think they have to strike immediately.

DER SPIEGEL: Is there a societal discourse that promotes these kinds of crimes?

Haldenwang: There is currently growing acceptance of ideologies in Germany that are crossing the lines. The New Right practices a very intellectual right-wing extremism. On the surface, it distances itself from violence, but it also promotes the conspiracy theory of the "Great Replacement," (Eds: the idea of the government deliberately swapping out the native German population with refugees and foreigners) and conveys the feeling that something needs to be done to stop these alleged developments. That creates the intellectual breeding ground for these kinds of crimes.

DER SPIEGEL: One of the protagonists of the movement is Björn Höcke, the regional leader of the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party in the eastern state of Thuringia and a man known for peppering his language with Nazi rhetoric. Do you consider him to be a right-wing extremist?

Haldenwang: I ask for your understanding that I cannot comment on a leading candidate shortly before a state election for legal reasons.

DER SPIEGEL: What, for you, is the definition of a right-wing extremist?

Haldenwang: If, for example, analogies to National Socialism are drawn in the wording. If historical revision-

ist, ethnic and xenophobic views are not only held, but also ultimately pursued. If human dignity is denied to large sections of the population with immigration backgrounds.

DER SPIEGEL: Another prominent figure is Andreas Kalbitz, the AfD's chair in the state of Brandenburg. Has he credibly distanced himself from his right-wing extremist past?

Haldenwang: Mr. Kalbitz has made statements that can be categorized under the aforementioned. I cannot recognize that he has distanced himself from his past. Like Höcke, he's one of the leading figures on the AfD's "Flügel" ("Wing"), which we classified as a suspicious case (Eds: meaning it is under observation by Haldenwang's agency) several months ago. We don't see anything that would dissuade us from this assessment. On the contrary, the Flügel is growing increasingly extremist.

DER SPIEGEL: There are also other influential New Right groups, like publisher Götz Kubitschek, who influences Höcke, or the magazine Compact. Are you looking into them, as well?

Haldenwang: There are many organizations that we are scrutinizing very intensively. "Reconquista Germanica," a project of net activists, for example. It has been obvious to us for a few weeks now that they are clearly right-wing extremists. We can use intelligence agency means for such objects of observation.

DER SPIEGEL: Right-wing extremist elements have also been popping up repeatedly in Germany's armed forces,

the Bundeswehr, and in the police. Are we talking about individual cases or structures?

Haldenwang: The overwhelming majority of the staffs of German security authorities abide fully by the constitution. But there have been cases of right-wing extremism. You could say they're isolated cases, but one can also say, and this is my opinion, that there are too many isolated cases for me not to look at them systematically. That's why we work together with the state-level agencies under the tutelage of the federal agency to compile all the relevant information. And we plan to set up a telephone hotline for tips that will not only be there for government instances, but for all indications of right-wing extremism. That's already an effective tool in combating Islamist terrorism.

DER SPIEGEL: Your predecessor Hans-Georg Maassen makes no secret of the fact that he views Chancellor Angela Merkel's refugee policy to be the culprit of the current wave of hate. Do you share that view?

Haldenwang: I supported the federal government's policies, also back in 2015. It is part of my Christian worldview that you help people who are in need. Germany did a remarkable job in that respect in 2015. However, it was also right to restore the normal procedures for immigration. So, no, I do not share my predecessor's criticism.

Courtesy: DER SPIEGEL, Germany.

A revolutionary memorial site in the Fragrant Hills opened to the public on 12 September, 2019 in the western suburbs of Beijing. The site includes a museum and former headquarters for the CPC. President Xi Jinping visited the site and called on the whole Party and nation to strive for realizing the two centenary goals and the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.



In Pictures: North Korean Art and Culture



Rising Asia

Published by:

Centre for East Asia (Foundation), Bangladesh
House- 49, Road- 1, Flat- 3AB, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka- 1205

Cell: 01711825799, 01977825799, 01701775562

Email: ndipu1966@gmail.com, info@ceafasia.org

Website: www.ceafasia.org, www.bri-ceafbd.com