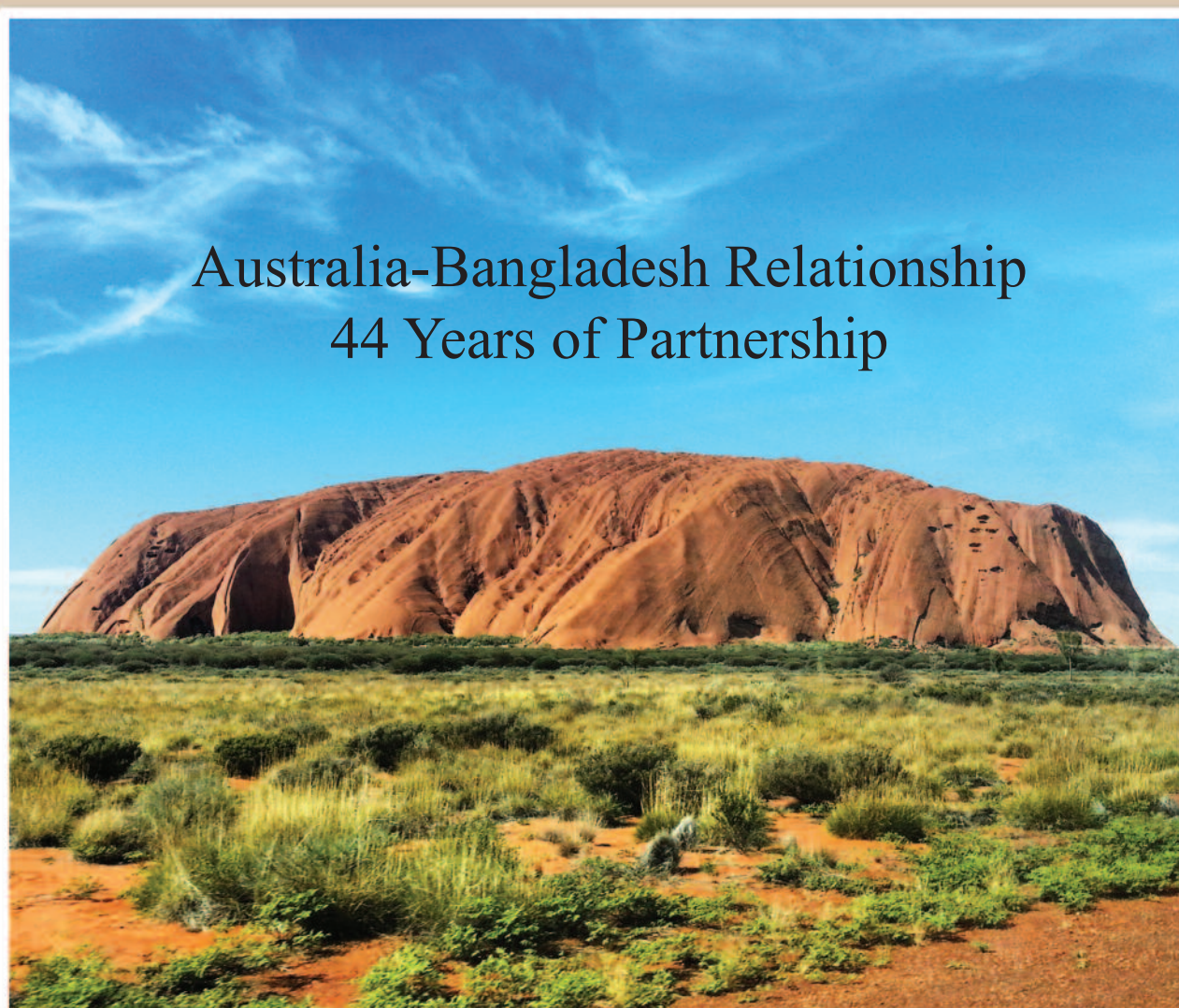


Rising Asia

April-June 2016 Issue 05

Special Issue



Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Australia

The Silk Road Economic Belt & 21st Century
Maritime Silk Road

Denuclearizing North Korea: Revisiting Denucle-
arization Strategy after the 4th Nuclear Test

Why UAE Ministers for Happiness, Tolerance,
Youth & the Future?

Top Diplomat Outlines Priorities of Chinese
Diplomacy

"King Salman Bridge" to Connect Egypt & Saudi
Arabia Over Red Sea

Russia's Foreign Policy-Historical Background

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CICA's Fifth Ministerial Meeting Concludes with
Pledge to Enhance Cooperation for Asian Security

Malaysia's Political Crisis: Can Najib Survive?

Brexit & British National Security

There's nothing like Australia



Kangaroos are endemic to Australia



Koala is a unique marsupial



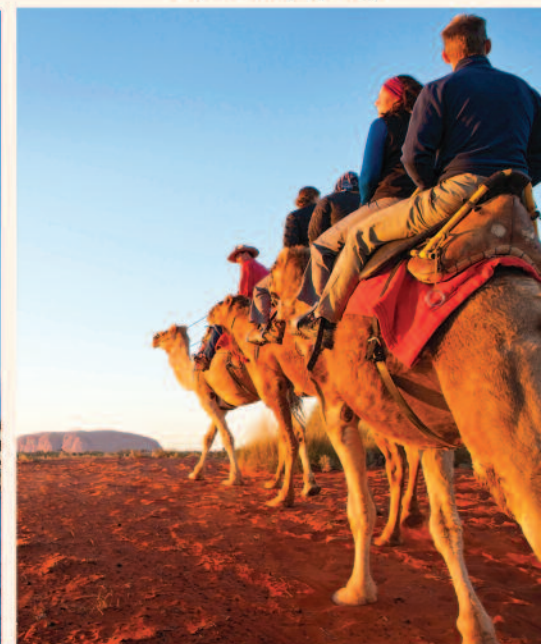
Flinders Street railway station, Melbourne



Lighthouse, Sydney



Sydney Opera House



The Australian desert tourism



Rising Asia

A Quarterly Magazine of CEAF

Issue - 5
April-June, 2016

Striving for Asian Solidarity

Centre for East Asia Foundation (CEAF)
Dhaka, Bangladesh



Rising Asia

A Quarterly Magazine of CEAF

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Editor's Note



Australia has been a friendly country to Bangladesh from its very beginning. During the Liberation War in 1971, the Australian Government, People and media supported the people of Bangladesh in their just struggle to liberate the country. Australia is the first western country to recognize Bangladesh on 31 January, 1972. Australia has been a regular source of aid to Bangladesh— a member of the Bangladesh Aid Group and contributes monetary aid under their global program along with other donors. Over the forty four years of diplomatic relationship- Bangladesh has been continuously deriving benefits by way of development cooperation from Australia. We look forward to building on the foundation of warmth and friendship in future.

China's the Belt and Road Initiative is another "string of keys" for Bangladesh that can be used by various countries as well for development, offering win-win solutions for bilateral cooperation. Also the initiative would help to promote regional economic integration and inter-connectivity by lifting barriers to trade and investment as well as facilitating the flow of capital and human resources.

Food security and climate change are the new frontiers in International Security. The danger from climate change and absence of food security is real, urgent and severe. In this situation, food scarcity, climate change, human mobility, water scarcity, and adverse demographic dynamics may become serious local and regional challenges and create instability far beyond any one region. World leaders should take immediate and pragmatic steps to resolve such dangerous situations.

Very shortly, the UK will vote on 23 June to determine whether it remains in or leaves the European Union. The subject dominates political discourse in Great Britain. What would a vote to leave mean for British national security, remains a question?

In the Middle East, Prime Minister of the UAE and the ruler of Dubai His Highness Mohammad Bin Rashid has established- the Ministry of Happiness, Tolerance and the Future. He has also appointed Ohood Al Roumi (22), a young lady, as the state minister of the newly established ministry. The PM in his recent interview has said, "We are proud of our youth. We believe that they are faster than us in acquiring and processing knowledge. We entrust them with driving our country to new levels of growth and development, which is why we have now appointed a "cabinet minister of their age and created a special council of youth".

We hope the formula benefits others in the region especially in the whole Middle-East.

Best regards,

Nasim Mahmud

Editor,

Rising Asia Magazine (RAM)

Message from the Australian High Commissioner to Bangladesh



Through well over 40 years of diplomatic relations, Australia and Bangladesh have come to share much. We are proud of our historical links. Equally, we look to our shared future as partners in the world's most dynamic region, the Indo-Pacific.

Drawing on our democratic traditions and our record of sustained economic growth, Australia has a lot to offer the region. We have strong, world-class institutions, a multicultural and highly skilled workforce, and a productive, open and resilient economy. These assets have been reinforced by a series of economic reforms and sound decisions made over past decades.

Australia's strengths have long been reflected in our engagement with the countries of Asia. Over the past 50 years, we have been a reliable development partner working through collaborative relationships aimed at reducing poverty and improving sustainability throughout the region. Our financial, political and cultural links with the region have deepened.

As this is true for Australia's links in the region, so it is for Australia's relationship with Bangladesh. Our two-way trade has grown rapidly during recent years, reflecting Bangladesh's significant economic growth. Almost 30,000 Bangladeshi-born people live in Australia, and the community is growing quickly.

Around 7000 Bangladeshis are studying in Australia at any one time. The personal ties between us - forged by family, business and education - are striking.

This beginning of this year saw Bangladesh succeeding Australia as the chair of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (or IONS), a forum of regional navies that promotes cooperation among the littoral states of the Indian Ocean. The forum helps to preserve peaceful relations between nations, and is critical to fostering maritime security and collective prosperity in our shared region.

Along with other senior naval officers from the region, Australia's Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, visited Dhaka as a guest of the Bangladesh Navy for IONS. He welcomed the opportunity to pass leadership of IONS to Admiral Md Farid Habib. It was a further demonstration of the long-standing friendship between our countries, and the growth of our relationship into new and promising fields of collaboration.

Australia appreciated the opportunity to chair the Indian Ocean Regional Association (or IORA) 2014-15. Australia's two year term as Chair provided us the opportunity to broaden our horizons, by strengthening the Indian Ocean region as a common economic and strategic resource. I am confident this has contributed to the shared prosperity and stability of the region that Australia and Bangladesh share.

Greg Wilcock
Australian High Commissioner
To the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Sheikh Hasina made member of UN high-level panel on water



United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim have formally announced on 21 April, 2016 in New York, the appointment of 10 heads of state and government, including Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, as well as two special advisers, to the high-level UN panel on water.

The newly appointed other panel members are Ameenah Gurib, President of Mauritius (Co-Chair), Enrique Peña Nieto, President of Mexico (Co-Chair), Malcolm Turnbull, Prime Minister of Australia, János Áder, President of Hungary, Abdullah Ensour, Prime Minister of Jordan, Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Jacob Zuma, President of South Africa, Macky Sall, President of Senegal, Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan, Han Seung-soo, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea (Special Adviser) and Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Minister of State for the Environment of Peru (Special Adviser).

The panel, which was launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos last January, aims to mobilise effective action to accelerate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6), which focuses on ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, at a time of unprecedented challenges.

“Ensuring water and sanitation for all is crucial for reducing poverty and achieving other Sustainable Development Goals,” said Ban in a statement issued by his spokesperson, through which he urged all partners to mobilise behind SDG 6 with political, financial and technological support.

Today, more than 2.4 billion people lack access to improved sanitation and at least 663 million do not have access to safe drinking water. Poor sanitation, water, and hygiene lead to about 675,000 premature deaths annually, and estimated annual economic losses of up to seven percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in some countries.

Floods and droughts already impose huge social and economic costs globally, and climate variability will make water extremes worse. If the world continues on its current path, projections suggest that the world may face a 40 per cent shortfall in water availability by 2030. The consequences of such stress are local, transboundary and global in today's interconnected world.

The panel will provide the leadership required to tackle these challenges and champion a comprehensive, inclusive and collaborative way of developing and managing water resources, and providing improved access to clean water and sanitation.

Kim said, “Growing cities and populations, as well as a changing climate, are placing unprecedented pressures on our water resources. Addressing this challenge, and ensuring that we can provide clean water and sanitation for all, requires the kind of global action, strong leadership and commitment shown by the members of the High Level Panel on Water.”

Source: United Nations News Centre.

Indian Ocean Dialogue

*Highlights of the speech by Australian Foreign Minister the Hon. Julie Bishop, MP
at Perth Convention Centre on September 6, 2015*



The best way to do this is through entrenching habits of regional cooperation and consultation. This is not always high profile work. Often, it lies beneath the surface of political announcements and summit outcomes. Closer and more consistent collaboration happens quietly and over time. The key actors include business people, academics and officials.

As the only ministerial-level forum that spans the Indian Ocean, we must continue to bolster IORA's profile and capacity to enhance regional cooperation and consultation.

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) offers us the unique capacity to address key political, security and economic issues in a constructive dialogue. As a significant part of the Indo-Pacific regional architecture, IORA's role in building regional connectivity is absolutely vital.

The inaugural Indian Ocean Dialogue, hosted by India's leading think tank the Observer Research Foundation in Kochi last year, was a landmark moment for IORA. We are proud to be hosting the second Indian Ocean Dialogue in Perth today.

Building mechanisms for closer cooperation through fora such as the Indian Ocean Dialogue can, and should, act as a safeguard against such disputes arising, and, help better manage differences where they do arise. That's why our engagement and cooperation through organisations such as IORA really does matter.

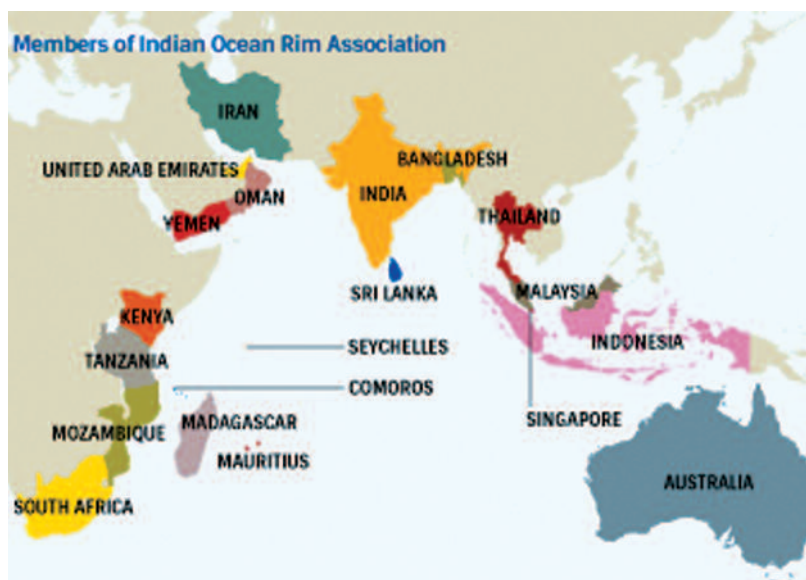
The loss of the Malaysian Airline MH370 in March, 2015 is a poignant example of how we can – when we see a clear need – work together effectively. For 18 months, the search of the Indian Ocean for MH370 and the 239 people on board has continued. It

has been a joint effort between no fewer than 26 states, many of them represented here today, with the coordination centre based here, in Perth.

Over a year after MH370's fateful flight, it was confirmed that part of its wing had been found on the Indian Ocean island of Reunion, but we still haven't found the plane. The vastness of the Indian Ocean means families and friends continue to remain in doubt as to the final resting place of their loved ones. The tragedy of MH370 has demonstrated how vast our Indian Ocean is, how little we still know about it, and how the best possible way to take on these hurdles is to work together. That is why I was pleased to introduce the IORA Memorandum of Understanding on Search and Rescue Cooperation in the Indian Ocean region.

I'd like to touch on one other topic before I conclude. In my time as Australia's Foreign Minister I have repeatedly and consistently made clear my firm commitment to the empowerment of women. Breaking down gender equality isn't just a moral issue, it's an economic one. More women in the workforce lead to stronger economic growth and greater poverty reduction. That's why Australia has made women's empowerment a priority during our term as chair of IORA.

Women must stand to benefit from the economic potential of our oceans. To that end, we co-hosted a successful event with the Seychelles just two weeks ago, which focused on mobilising markets to empower women,



Mahé Consensus embedding in IORA's agenda strategies championed by Australia to advance the economic empowerment of women across the region.

I am pleased to announce today that Australia will back implementation of this consensus with \$1.5 million in an initiative to help export ready women-owned small businesses to build their export competitiveness in selected IORA States. This initiative will be delivered over three years in association with the International Trade Centre.

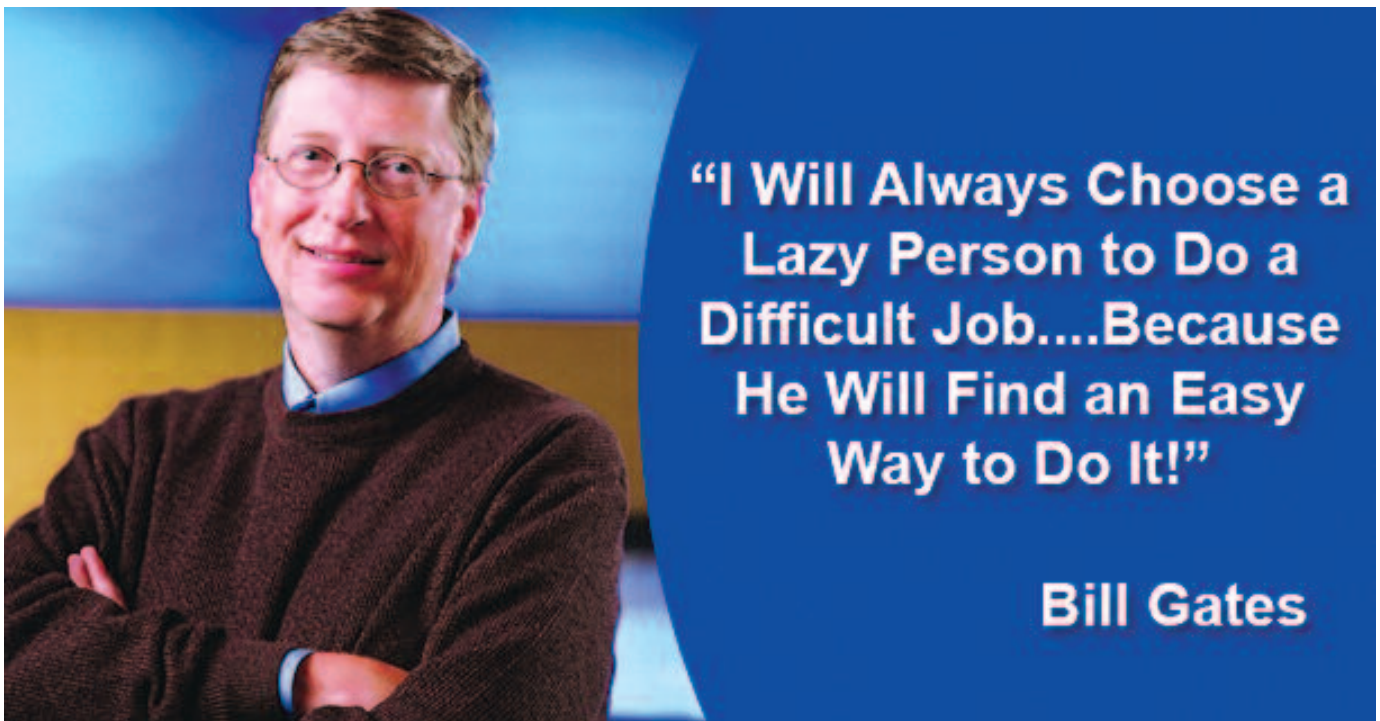
I look forward to IORA leaders joining with me in committing to further advance women's empowerment, particularly their economic empowerment, at the upcoming IORA Council of Minister's Meeting in Padang, where Australia will hand over the IORA Chair to our friend and neighbour Indonesia.

Australia has been committed to strengthening this Association, the Indian Ocean Rim Association and to building its profile during our term as Chair. As incoming Chair Indonesia can count on our full support to take forward our region's mutual maritime interests.

As a country with our Indo-Pacific lens firmly in place, Australia looks forward to working with IORA members and Indian Ocean Rim states to maximise the potential that our common resource can provide.

Our discussions here today will inform deliberations at the upcoming Council of Ministers Meeting in Padang later this year. I urge you to continue to seek out new ways of working together in areas of mutual interest and benefit. I'm delighted to declare this Dialogue open and wish you the very best in your deliberations over the following two days.

QUOTABLE QUOTES



Top diplomat outlines priorities of Chinese diplomacy



[Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi speaks during a discussion on Chinese foreign policy and China-U.S. Relations at Center for Strategic and International Studies(CSIS) in Washington D.C., the United States, on Feb. 25, 2016.]

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi delivered a speech at a U.S. think tank in Washington on February 25, 2016 laying out priorities of Chinese diplomacy that are in line with the country's development objectives.

Wang said, "We are uniting all the people in China in the common effort to realize the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation, Chinese diplomacy will serve this overriding domestic objective."

Diplomacy is an extension of internal affairs, Wang said, adding that Chinese diplomacy is aimed at creating a more stable and friendly external environment for China's development.

He also said, over the past years, China has been more proactive in defending its legitimate and lawful national interests, shouldering international obligations, and working with other countries, particularly the United States.

Wang reiterated that China is firmly safeguarding the international order and system established since the end of the Second World War.

Speaking about the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Wang said, China is willing to make it an open, international and professional body that complements the existing international financial system. He also highlighted the "Belt and Road Initiative" that China proposed, pledging to increasing connectivity, production-capacity cooperation and people-to-people exchange to the benefit of all.

On the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Wang emphasized China's firm goal that the Korean Peninsula must be Denuclearized and there can be no war or turbulence.

"How can Denuclearization be achieved?" Wang said. "Ultimately we have to go through negotiation, just as the case

the Iranian nuclear issue where 10 years of negotiation has produced a comprehensive agreement there.”

Wang also voiced China’s concerns over the possible deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), an advanced U.S. missile defense system, in the Republic of Korea (ROK), saying that it could threaten China’s security interests. The X-band radar associated with the THAAD system has a radius that goes far beyond the Korean Peninsular and reaches into the interior of China.

“We believe China’s legitimate security concerns must be taken into account” as the United States and ROK discuss the deployment of the defense system, he said. “A convincing explanation must be provided to China. I don’t think it’s too much to ask.”

The United States and the ROK started talks on THAAD after the DPRK conducted its fourth nuclear test on Jan. 6 and allegedly launched an Earth-observation satellite to test ballistic missile technology on Feb. 7.

On the issue of South China Sea, the Chinese foreign minister said the general situation there is stable and China adheres to solving the disputes through dialogue.

“No commercial vessel has complained that its freedom of navigation has been threatened or jeopardized,” Wang added.

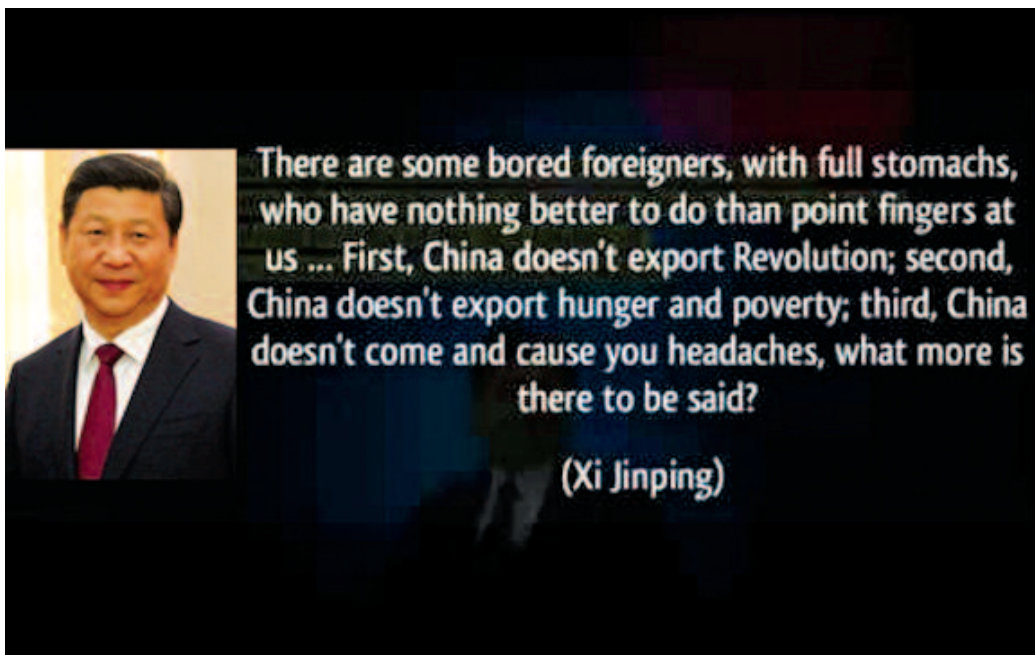
He said that Beijing and Washington have “far more common interests than areas of disagreement,” adding that the two sides should boost strategic mutual trust, deepen practical cooperation and constructively manage differences to achieve greater progress in bilateral ties.

Developing a strong China-U.S. relationship is in the interests of both sides and is in accordance with the aspirations of the international community, he said.

The Chinese foreign minister, who arrived in USA on 23 February, 2016 for a three-day official visit, also held meetings with U.S. President Barack Obama and U.S. National Security Advisor Susan Rice.

Source: Xinhua

QUOTABLE QUOTES



“Russia’s Foreign Policy: Historical Background”

H.E. Sergey Lavrov



International relations have entered a very difficult period, and Russia once again finds itself at the crossroads of key trends that determine the vector of future global development.

Many different opinions have been expressed in this connection including the fear that we have a distorted view of the international situation and Russia’s international standing. I perceive this as an echo of the eternal dispute between pro-Western liberals and the advocates of Russia’s unique path. There are also those, both in Russia and outside of it, who believe that Russia is doomed to drag behind, trying to catch up with the West and forced to bend to other players’ rules, and hence will be unable to claim its rightful place in international affairs. I’d like to use this opportunity to express some of my views and to back them with examples from history and historical parallels.

It is an established fact that a substantiated policy is impossible without reliance on history. This reference to history is absolutely justified, especially considering recent celebrations. In 2015, we celebrated the 70th anniversary of Victory in WWII, and in 2014, we marked a century since the start of WWI. In 2012, we marked 200 years of the Battle of Borodino and 400 years of Moscow’s liberation from the Polish invaders. If we look at these events carefully, we’ll see that they clearly point to Russia’s special role in European and global history.

History doesn’t confirm the widespread belief that Russia has always camped in Europe’s backyard and has been Europe’s political outsider. I’d like to remind you that the adoption of Christianity in Russia in 988 – we marked 1025 years of that event quite recently – boosted the development of state institutions, social relations and culture and eventually made Kievan Rus a full member of the European community. At that time, dynastic marriages were the best gauge of a country’s role in the system of international relations. In the 11th century, three daughters of Grand Prince Yaroslav the Wise became the queens of Norway and Denmark, Hungary and France. Yaroslav’s sister married the Polish king and granddaughter the German emperor.

Numerous scientific investigations bear witness to the high cultural and spiritual level of Rus of those days, a level that was frequently higher than in western European states. Many prominent Western thinkers recognized that Rus was part of the European context. At the same time, Russian people possessed a cultural matrix of their own and an original type of spirituality and never merged with the West. It is instructive to recall in this connection what was for my peo-



tragic and in many respects critical epoch of the Mongolian invasion. The Great Russian poet and writer Alexander Pushkin wrote: *“The barbarians did not dare to leave an enslaved Rus in their rear and returned to their Eastern steppes. Christian enlightenment was saved by a ravaged and dying Russia.”* We also know an alternative view offered by prominent historian and ethnologist Lev Gumilyov, who believed that the Mongolian invasion had prompted the emergence of a new Russian ethnos and that the Great Steppe had given us an additional impetus for development.

However that may be, it is clear that the said period was extremely important for the assertion of the Russian State’s independent role in Eurasia. Let us recall in this connection the policy pursued by Grand Prince Alexander Nevsky, who opted to temporarily submit to Golden Horde rulers, who were tolerant of Christianity, in order to uphold the Russians’ right to have a faith of their own and to decide their fate, despite the European West’s attempts to put Russian lands under full control and to deprive Russians of their identity. I am confident that this wise and forward-looking policy is in our genes.

Rus bent under but was not broken by the heavy Mongolian yoke, and managed to emerge from this dire trial as a single state, which was later regarded by both the West and the East as the successor to the Byzantine Empire that ceased to exist in 1453. An imposing country stretching along what was practically the entire eastern perimeter of Europe, Russia began a natural expansion towards the Urals and Siberia, absorbing their huge territories. Already then it was a powerful balancing factor in European political combinations, including the well-known Thirty Years’ War that gave birth to the Westphalian system of international relations, whose principles, primarily respect for state sovereignty, are of importance even today.

At this point we are approaching a dilemma that has been evident for several centuries. While the rapidly developing Moscow state naturally played an increasing role in European affairs, the European countries had apprehensions about the nascent giant in the East and tried to isolate it whenever possible and prevent it from taking part in Europe’s most important affairs.

The seeming contradiction between the traditional social order and a striving for modernisation based on the most advanced experience also dates back centuries. In reality, a rapidly developing state is bound to try and make a leap forward, relying on modern technology, which does not necessarily imply the renunciation of its “cultural code.” There are many examples of Eastern societies modernising without the radical breakdown of their traditions. This is all the more typical of Russia that is essentially a branch of European civilisation.

Incidentally, the need for modernisation based on European achievements was clearly manifest in Russian society under Tsar Alexis, while talented and ambitious Peter the Great gave it a strong boost. Relying on tough domestic measures and resolute, and successful, foreign policy, Peter the Great managed to put Russia into the category of Europe’s leading countries in a little over two decades. Since that time Russia’s position could no longer be ignored. Not a single European issue can be resolved without Russia’s opinion.

It wouldn’t be accurate to assume that everyone was happy about this state of affairs. Repeated attempts to return this country into the pre-Peter times were made over subsequent centuries but failed. In the middle 18th century Russia played a key role in a pan-European conflict – the Seven Years’ War. At that time, Russian troops made a triumphal entry into Berlin, the capital of Prussia under Frederick II who had a reputation for invincibility. Prussia was saved from an inevitable rout only because Empress Elizabeth died a sudden death and was succeeded by Peter III who sympathised with Frederick II. This turn in German history is still referred to as the Miracle of the House of Brandenburg. Russia’s size, power and influence grew substantially under Catherine the Great when, as then Chancellor Alexander Bezborodko put it, *“Not a single cannon in Europe could be fired without our consent.”*

I’d like to quote the opinion of a reputable researcher of Russian history, Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, the permanent secretary of the French Academy. She said the Russian Empire was the greatest empire of all times in the totality of all parameters – its size, an ability to administer its territories and the longevity of its existence. Following Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev, she insists that history has imbued Russia with the mission of being a link between the East and the West.

During at least the past two centuries any attempts to unite Europe without Russia and against it have inevitably led to grim tragedies, the consequences of which were always overcome with the decisive participation of our country. I’m referring, in part, to the Napoleonic wars upon the completion of which Russia rescued the system of international relations that was based on the balance of forces and mutual consideration for national interests and ruled out the total dominance of one state in Europe. We remember that Emperor Alexander I took an active role in the drafting of decisions of the 1815 Vienna Congress that ensured the development of Europe without serious armed clashes during the subsequent 40 years.

Incidentally, to a certain extent the ideas of Alexander I could be described as a prototype of the concept on subordinating national interests to common goals, primarily, the maintenance of peace and order in Europe. As the Russian emperor said, *“there can be no more English, French, Russian or Austrian policy. There can be only one policy – a common policy that must be accepted by both peoples and sovereigns for common happiness.”*

By the same token, the Vienna system was destroyed in the wake of the desire to marginalise Russia in European affairs. Paris was obsessed with this idea during the reign of Emperor Napoleon III. In his attempt to forge an anti-Russian alliance, the French monarch was willing, as a hapless chess grandmaster, to sacrifice all the other figures. How did it play out? Indeed, Russia was defeated in the Crimean War of 1853-1856, the consequences of which it managed to overcome soon due to a consistent and far-sighted policy pursued by Chancellor Alexander Gorchakov. As for Napoleon III, he ended his rule in German captivity, and the nightmare of the Franco-German confrontation loomed over Western Europe for decades.



Here is another Crimean War-related episode. As we know, the Austrian Emperor refused to help Russia, which, a few years earlier, in 1849, had come to his help during the Hungarian revolt. Then Austrian Foreign Minister Felix Schwarzenberg famously said: *“Europe would be astonished by the extent of Austria’s ingratitude.”* In general, the imbalance of pan-European mechanisms triggered a chain of events that led to the First World War.

Notably, back then Russian diplomacy also advanced ideas that were ahead of their time. The Hague Peace conferences of 1899 and 1907, convened at the initiative of Emperor Nicholas II, were the first attempts to agree on curbing the arms race and stopping preparations for a devastating war. But not many people know about it.

The First World War claimed lives and caused the suffering of countless millions of people and led to the collapse of four empires. In this connection, it is appropriate to recall yet another anniversary, which will be marked next year – the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Today we are faced with the need to develop a balanced and objective assessment of those events, especially in an environment where, particularly in the West, many are willing to use this date to mount even more information attacks on Russia, and to portray the 1917 Revolution as a barbaric coup that dragged down all of European history. Even worse, they want to equate the Soviet regime to Nazism, and partially blame it for starting WWII.

Without a doubt, the Revolution of 1917 and the ensuing Civil War were a terrible tragedy for our nation. However,

other revolutions were tragic as well. This does not prevent our French colleagues from extolling their upheaval, which, in addition to the slogans of liberty, equality and fraternity, also involved the use of the guillotine, and rivers of blood.

Undoubtedly, the Russian Revolution was a major event which impacted world history in many controversial ways. It has become regarded as a kind of experiment in implementing socialist ideas, which were then widely spread across Europe. The people supported them, because wide masses gravitated towards social organisation with reliance on the collective and community principles.

Serious researchers clearly see the impact of reforms in the Soviet Union on the formation of the so-called welfare state in Western Europe in the post-WWII period. European governments decided to introduce unprecedented measures of social protection under the influence of the example of the Soviet Union in an effort to cut the ground from under the feet of the left-wing political forces.

One can say that the 40 years following World War II were a surprisingly good time for Western Europe, which was spared the need to make its own major decisions under the umbrella of the US-Soviet confrontation and enjoyed unique opportunities for steady development.

In these circumstances, Western European countries have implemented several ideas regarding conversion of the capitalist and socialist models, which, as a preferred form of socioeconomic progress, were promoted by Pitirim Sorokin and other outstanding thinkers of the 20th century. Over the past 20 years, we have been witnessing the reverse process in Europe and the United States: the reduction of the middle class, increased social inequality, and the dismantling of controls over big business.

The role which the Soviet Union played in decolonization, and promoting international relations principles, such as the independent development of nations and their right to self-determination, is undeniable.

I will not dwell on the points related to Europe slipping into WWII. Clearly, the anti-Russian aspirations of the European elites, and their desire to unleash Hitler's war machine on the Soviet Union played their fatal part here. Redressing the situation after this terrible disaster involved the participation of our country as a key partner in determining the parameters of the European and the world order.

In this context, the notion of the "clash of two totalitarianisms," which is now actively inculcated in European minds, including at schools, is groundless and immoral. The Soviet Union, for all its evils, never aimed to destroy entire nations. Winston Churchill, who all his life was a principled opponent of the Soviet Union and played a major role in going from the WWII alliance to a new confrontation with the Soviet Union, said that graciousness, i.e. life in accordance with conscience, is the Russian way of doing things.

If you take an unbiased look at the smaller European countries, which previously were part of the Warsaw Treaty, and are now members of the EU or NATO, it is clear that the issue was not about going from subjugation to freedom, which Western masterminds like to talk about, but rather a change of leadership. Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke about it not long ago. The representatives of these countries concede behind closed doors that they can't take any significant decision without the green light from Washington or Brussels.

It seems that in the context of the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, it is important for us to understand the continuity of Russian history, which should include all of its periods without exception, and the importance of the synthesis of all the positive traditions and historical experience as the basis for making dynamic advances and upholding the rightful role of our country as a leading centre of the modern world, and a provider of the values of sustainable development, security and stability.

The post-war world order relied on confrontation between two world systems and was far from ideal, yet it was sufficient to preserve international peace and to avoid the worst possible temptation – the use of weapons of mass destruction, primarily nuclear weapons. There is no substance behind the popular belief that the Soviet Union's dissolution signified Western victory in the Cold War. It was the result of our people's will for change plus an unlucky chain of events.

These developments resulted in a truly tectonic shift in the international landscape. In fact, they changed global politics altogether, considering that the end of the Cold War and related ideological confrontation offered a unique opportunity to change the European architecture on the principles of indivisible and equal security and broad cooperation without dividing lines.

We had a practical chance to mend Europe's divide and implement the dream of a common European home, which many European thinkers and politicians, including President Charles de Gaulle of France, wholeheartedly embraced.

Russia was fully open to this option and advanced many proposals and initiatives in this connection. Logically, we should have created a new foundation for European security by strengthening the military and political components of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Vladimir Putin said in a recent interview with the German newspaper Bild that German politician Egon Bahr proposed similar approaches.

Unfortunately, our Western partners chose differently. They opted to expand NATO eastward and to advance the geopolitical space they controlled closer to the Russian border. This is the essence of the systemic problems that have soured Russia's relations with the United States and the European Union. It is notable that George Kennan, the architect of the US policy of containment of the Soviet Union, said in his winter years that the ratification of NATO expansion was "a tragic mistake."

The underlying problem of this Western policy is that it disregarded the global context. The current globalised world is based on an unprecedented interconnection between countries, and so it's impossible to develop relations between Russia and the EU as if they remained at the core of global politics as during the Cold War. We must take note of the powerful processes that are underway in Asia Pacific, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

Rapid changes in all areas of international life is the primary sign of the current stage. Indicatively, they often take an unexpected turn. Thus, the concept of "the end of history" developed by well-known US sociologist and political researcher Francis Fukuyama, that was popular in the 1990s, has become clearly inconsistent today. According to this concept, rapid globalisation signals the ultimate victory of the liberal capitalist model, whereas all other models should adapt to it under the guidance of the wise Western teachers.

In reality, the second wave of globalisation (the first occurred before World War I) led to the dispersal of global economic might and, hence, of political influence, and to the emergence of new and large centres of power, primarily in the Asia-Pacific Region. China's rapid upsurge is the clearest example. Owing to unprecedented economic growth rates, in just three decades it became the second and, calculated as per purchasing power parity, the first economy in the world. This example illustrates an axiomatic fact – there are many development models – which rules out the monotony of existence within the uniform, Western frame of reference.

Consequently, there has been a relative reduction in the influence of the so-called "historical West" that was used to seeing itself as the master of the human race's destinies for almost five centuries. The competition on the shaping of the world order in the 21st century has toughened. The transition from the Cold War to a new international system proved to be much longer and more painful than it seemed 20-25 years ago.

Against this backdrop, one of the basic issues in international affairs is the form that is being acquired by this generally natural competition between the world's leading powers. We see how the United States and the US-led Western alliance are trying to preserve their dominant positions by any available method or, to use the American lexicon, ensure their "global leadership". Many diverse ways of exerting pressure, economic sanctions and even direct armed intervention are being used. Large-scale information wars are being waged. Technology of unconstitutional change of governments by launching "colour" revolutions has been tried and tested. Importantly, democratic revolutions appear to be destructive for the nations targeted by such actions. Our country that went through a historical period of encouraging artificial transformations abroad, firmly proceeds from the preference of evolutionary changes that should be carried out in the forms and at a speed that conform to the traditions of a society and its level of development.

Western propaganda habitually accuses Russia of "revisionism," and the alleged desire to destroy the established international system, as if it was us who bombed Yugoslavia in 1999 in violation of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, as if it was Russia that ignored international law by invading Iraq in 2003 and distorted UN Security Council resolutions by overthrowing Muammar Gaddafi's regime by force in Libya in 2011. There are many examples.

This discourse about "revisionism" does not hold water. It is based on the simple and even primitive logic that only Washington can set the tune in world affairs. In line with this logic, the principle once formulated by George Orwell and moved to the international level, sounds like the following: all states are equal but some states are more equal than others. However, today international relations are too sophisticated a mechanism to be controlled from one centre. This is obvious given the results of US interference: There is virtually no state in Libya; Iraq is balancing on the brink of disintegration, and so on and so forth.

A reliable solution to the problems of the modern world can only be achieved through serious and honest cooperation between the leading states and their associations in order to address common challenges. Such an interaction should include all the colours of the modern world, and be based on its cultural and civilisational diversity, as well as reflect the

interests of the international community's key components.

We know from experience that when these principles are applied in practice, it is possible to achieve specific and tangible results, such as the agreement on the Iranian nuclear programme, the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons, the agreement on stopping hostilities in Syria, and the development of the basic parameters of the global climate agreement. This shows the need to restore the culture of compromise, the reliance on the diplomatic work, which can be difficult, even exhausting, but which remains, in essence, the only way to ensure a mutually acceptable solution to problems by peaceful means.

Our approaches are shared by most countries of the world, including our Chinese partners, other BRICS and SCO nations, and our friends in the EAEU, the CSTO, and the CIS. In other words, we can say that Russia is fighting not against someone, but for the resolution of all the issues on an equal and mutually respectful basis, which alone can serve as a reliable foundation for a long-term improvement of international relations.

Our most important task is to join our efforts against not some far-fetched, but very real challenges, among which the terrorist aggression is the most pressing one. The extremists from ISIS, Jabhat an-Nusra and the like managed for the first time to establish control over large territories in Syria and Iraq. They are trying to extend their influence to other countries and regions, and are committing acts of terrorism around the world. Underestimating this risk is nothing short of criminal shortsightedness.

The Russian President called for forming a broad-based front in order to defeat the terrorists militarily. The Russian Aerospace Forces make an important contribution to this effort. At the same time, we are working hard to establish collective actions regarding the political settlement of the conflicts in this crisis-ridden region.

Importantly, the long-term success can only be achieved on the basis of movement to the partnership of civilisations based on respectful interaction of diverse cultures and religions. We believe that human solidarity must have a moral basis formed by traditional values that are largely shared by the world's leading religions. In this connection, I would like to draw your attention to the joint statement by Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis, in which, among other things, they have expressed support for the family as a natural centre of life of individuals and society.

I repeat, we are not seeking confrontation with the United States, or the European Union, or NATO. On the contrary, Russia is open to the widest possible cooperation with its Western partners. We continue to believe that the best way to ensure the interests of the peoples living in Europe is to form a common economic and humanitarian space from the Atlantic to the Pacific, so that the newly formed Eurasian Economic Union could be an integrating link between Europe and Asia Pacific. We strive to do our best to overcome obstacles on that way, including the settlement of the Ukraine crisis caused by the coup in Kiev in February 2014, on the basis of the Minsk Agreements.

I'd like to quote wise and politically experienced Henry Kissinger, who, speaking recently in Moscow, said that *"Russia should be perceived as an essential element of any new global equilibrium, not primarily as a threat to the United States... I am here to argue for the possibility of a dialogue that seeks to merge our futures rather than elaborate our conflicts. This requires respect by both sides of the vital values and interest of the other."* We share such an approach. And we will continue to defend the principles of law and justice in international affairs.

Speaking about Russia's role in the world as a great power, Russian philosopher Ivan Ilyin said that *the greatness of a country is not determined by the size of its territory or the number of its inhabitants, but by the capacity of its people and its government to take on the burden of great world problems and to deal with these problems in a creative manner.* A great power is the one which, asserting its existence and its interest ... introduces a creative and meaningful legal idea to the entire assembly of the nations, the entire "concert" of the peoples and states. It is difficult to disagree with these words.

His Excellency Sergey Lavrov is the Foreign Minister of Russian Federation. This article was first appeared at the 'Russia in Global Affairs' Magazine on 3 March, 2016.

Current Status of the Australia-Bangladesh Development Partnership

Professor Selina Mohsin



Development is multifaceted and complex. In providing funding for sustainable development the donor needs extensive experience of the recipient country so that the money can be best utilized to bring about optimal results.

Australia and Bangladesh have over 40 years of diplomatic relations during which Australia has gained understanding and knowledge of Bangladesh. The economy of Bangladesh is growing rapidly with an average annual growth rate of 6% in the last decade. Significant progress has been made in some areas. For instance, the poverty level has been halved. Income has risen almost four times in the last 20 years so that the World Bank in 2015 reclassified Bangladesh as a lower middle income country. Bangladesh's performance in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was the best in South Asia. Its economy flourished despite on-going political instability, decreasing global demand and infrastructural constraints.

Yet the challenges the country still faces are formidable. The political instability of 2013 and 2015 impacted adversely on economic growth including a decrease in private sector investment. This resulted in a lower GDP growth rate than anticipated. Investment also failed to rise due to over regulation and deficits in essential infrastructure. Moreover, the poverty level is still around 43% of the population (World Bank 2015). This means, approximately 47 million people live in poverty, out of which 28 million live below subsistence level.

Even though Bangladesh is on a "positive development trajectory" its challenges are massive. Furthermore, access of women to relevant vocational training and entrepreneurial skills development for self employment remains minimal.

Primary education is a weak area. Although enrollment is high, so is the drop out level due to poverty, early marriage of girls and social insecurity. Furthermore, throughout the system low quality education and inadequate training need to be addressed.

Australia recognises extreme poverty is one of the biggest hurdles that Bangladesh faces. The poor usually lack necessary education to acquire marketable skills to engage in income generating activities. This leads to increasing vulnerability that prevents their inclusion in the growing economy. Women and girls face greater challenges due to traditional constraints and low status.

Australia's development aid to Bangladesh in 2015/16 is an estimated \$42.1 million in bilateral funding. Given this relatively modest amount of funding Australia wisely focuses on areas where it has a comparative advantage and can work in partnership with other donors and NGOs.

Australia's priority target areas are education and poverty reduction. This underscores the priorities of the Government of Bangladesh. They are areas in which Australia can make significant differences to the lives of the people.

Consequently Australia currently focuses on i) increasing access to quality education and ii) empowering the poor and most marginalized sections of society. In these two specific areas gender issues will receive the greatest priority i.e. the empowerment of women and girls to overcome their present disadvantaged status. From experience, Australia has recognized that working in partnership with Government, other donors and NGOs will result in better and wide ranging positive outcomes.

Funding is therefore mainly targeted towards improving efficiency in primary education. In this area Australia works in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh, other key donors and BRAC. This allows Australia to reach larger target groups than if it were to work alone.

The specific focus within education is improving access, retention, efficiency, quality of instruction and better learning outcomes. It also works in collaboration with BRAC and DFID to support relevant skills training.

With BRAC Australia's funding offers a second chance to children at primary level, with particular emphasis on girls from poor families and children with disabilities.

Innovative projects aim to attract the poorest sections of society, both to improve the social safety net and by increasing

the productive capacities of the poor, with cash transfers, training in income generating activities and support to provide employment opportunities to empower poor women and the disadvantaged. This type of support has enhanced earning capability of the poor communities in the Cox's Bazar district. This area also hosts Rohingya refugees from Myanmar who will be supported by better food distribution and training in income generation for reducing vulnerability and economic exclusion.



A flexible partnership with the largest NGO, BRAC, has enabled funding to be utilised in innovative ways including floating latrines, boat schools, and clinics to improve school attendance in areas of the country where Government programmes do not cover the target groups. It highlights the possibility of going beyond immediate results towards developing partnership based on knowledge and research that can promote joint domestic and international advocacy on development issues of shared interests.

Monitoring of programmes can be difficult in a scenario of political instability but partnership with BRAC has also assisted Australia's ODA to gather data and information from grassroots level.

The cross cutting areas of ODA include scholarships and short courses in Australia on governance, resource management, trade, police reform and other subjects. Australian NGOs have delivered a range of projects in collaboration with local partner agencies targeting mainly women and girls. Moreover, Australian volunteers have assisted in strengthening organisations and communities in areas such as food security and nutrition, access to facilities and gender equality. Australia funded OXFAM Australia for water, sanitation and hygiene programmes (WASH) and World Vision Australia for poverty reduction and better quality of life for the disadvantaged. Small grants to Monash University have helped in building links between businesses and officials from Australia with senior officials in Bangladesh's energy and power sector. There are many such initiatives that strengthen the partnership between Bangladesh and Australia.

Evaluation has shown that Australia's funding has been successful in bringing critical benefits to wide range of marginalised groups, children, officials, students and other stakeholders.

The scholarship awards provide opportunities to the recipients not only to visit and study but also to experience the rich cultural variety, linguistic and natural diversity of a uniquely beautiful continent and country- Australia.

What better partnership can you have?

Professor Selina Mohsin, *former Ambassador of Bangladesh*

Egypt's Foreign Policy

H.E. Mahmoud Ezzat



Geopolitics inevitably shaped Egypt's Policy.

Egypt occupies a strategic position as a land bridge between two continents and a link between principal waterways; the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. It must be therefore strong enough to dominate its environment or risk becoming the victim of outside powers. Its security is also linked to control of the Nile River on whose waters its survival depends. It has, therefore, had historical ties with Sudan's southern borders, Uganda, Zaire and rather all countries which lie on Nile. The land bridge to Asia, route of potential conquerors, has also to be secured and Egypt's rulers traditionally tried to project their power into Syria and Arabia, often in contest with other powers in Anstolia (present Turkey) or the Euphrates rivers valley (present day Iraq). In contemporary times, Israel, backed by a super power, located on Egypt's borders and blocking its access to the East, was perceived as the greatest threat to Egyptian National Security.

Egypt was also politically strategic, as late leader president Gamal Abdel Nasser saw it, with considerable justice; Egypt was potentially at the center of four circles:

The African, the Arab, Islamic in addition to non-alignment movement.

Egypt has viewed itself as playing a major role in Africa and beyond that was long a leading mover in the wider third world and a major advocate of neutralism and non-alignment.

The geopolitical importance made the country the object of interest to the great powers and when Egypt is strong enough, as under Nasser, allowed it to play the great powers against each other and win political support and economic and military aid from all sides.

Otherwise Egypt of Mubarak was able to parlay its strategic importance in the Arab-Israeli conflict and as bulwark against Islamic political activism into political support and economic aid from the west and Arab world.

A second constant that shaped Egypt's Foreign policy was its Arab-Islamic character especially since Arabs entered Egypt in the 7th Century. To be sure, Egypt had a long Pre-Islamic heritage that gave it a distinct identity and in periods such as the British occupation it developed apart from the Arab world.

Egypt's national identity was never merged in an undifferentiated Arabian.

Egyptians were shaped by their own distinct geography, history, dialect and customs.

But the content of the Egyptian identity was indisputably religious either Islamic or Christian Coptic.

Egypt was inextricably a part of the Arab world. It was the largest Arabic speaking country and the intellectual and political center to which the whole Arab world looked in modern time; which some call it our soft power. It was also center of Islamic civilization, its Al-Azhar University one of the Islam's major religious institutions and its popular culture profoundly Islamic. Although a portion of the most westernized upper class at times saw Egypt as Mediterranean or pharaonic while for the overwhelming majority, Egypt's identity was Arab Islamic. Indeed Egypt saw itself as the leader of the Arab World, entitled to pre-eminence in proportion to the heavy burdens it bore in defense of the Arab cause.

This Arab-Islamic identity was a great asset for Egyptian leaders.

To extent that Egyptian leadership was acknowledged in the Arab world, this prestige bolstered the stature of the ruler at home, entitled Egypt to a portion of Arab oil wealth and gave credence to Egypt's ability to define a common Arab policy, hence increasing the country's strategic weight in the world affairs. This leadership position also meant that Egypt was a natural part of the Inter-Arab power balance, typically in the rivalries that split the Arab world and a part of the solidarity that united it.

In the 1950s, modernizing nationalist Egypt's rivals were traditional pro-western Iraq and Saudi Arabia and its Main Ally was Syria.

In the 1970s an alliance of Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia led the Arab World in its search for peace with honour, when late president Mohamed Anwar Sadat made his brave historical visit to Jerusalem, Syria became Egypt's main rival.

This country's Arab-Islamic identity also put certain constraints on foreign policy decision to violate it risked the legitimacy of the whole regime.

Finally Egypt's Foreign policy was pulled in the contrary by ideals of anti-imperialists non-alignment and the webs of dependency in which the country was increasingly enmeshed.

Egypt's long history of subordination to foreign rulers, especially European imperialism produced a powerful national pride among Egyptians, an intense anti-imperialism and quest for dignity, particularly under Nasser who has led 23rd of July, 1952 revolution with his colleagues in particular General Mohamed Naguib, Who was the first President of Egypt till 1954.

Egypt's National Ideal was to be independent of both East and West, to be a strong prosperous state, to stand up to Israel and to lead the Arab World. Yet Egypt couldn't without large amounts of economic aid and military assistance from the advanced economies and the super powers.

The problem of dependency could be minimized by diversifying aid sources and Nasser initially pursued a policy of balance between East and West which won aid from both sides and minimized dependency on any power.

United States support for Israel before, during and after the June 1967 made Egypt ever more dependent on the Ex-Soviet Union, for the Military aid and protection but balanced by choosing to rely on America diplomacy after the great victory of the Egyptian army in 6th October 1973 war against Israel which enable Egypt to restore Egypt's land "Sinai" from Israel.



His Excellency Mahmoud Ezzat, Ambassador of Egypt and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Bangladesh.

Discovering France

H.E. Sophie Aubert



France is the 7th biggest country in the world thanks to its metropolitan landscape, its islands and maritime territories all over the world. As an old and refined nation, France has a glorious and well known history worldwide. French literature, paintings, music or science have been recognized for centuries and have influenced many others. However, contemporary French culture does not take a back seat to its rich past. France's artists and performers excel in every facet of culture.

Outstanding examples include Marion Cotillard, who won the Oscar for best actress in 2008; Jean-Marie Le Clezio, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature the same year as François-Barré Sinoussi won the Nobel Prize in medicine and physiology for his work on HIV with Luc Montagné, then in 2011 Jules Hoffman with his work on innate immune system. In 2012, Serge Haroche won the Nobel Prize of physics with his work on experimental methods to measure and manipulate quantum individual systems. In 2014, Artur Avila won the Medal Fields for mathematics and Jean Tirole won the Nobel Prize of economics with his analysis on the regulation and power of the market as Patrick Modiano won the Nobel Prize of literature for his second world war memory

work; and Michel Houellebecq, the best-known living French author, whose works are available in 30 languages.

Who hasn't heard of Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Gabriel Fauré, or Olivier Messiaen? But since the 1980s, with the work of Jean-Michel Jarre, the "French Touch" in electronic music has reached audiences around the world. Artists such as Air, Daft Punk, Justice, Martin Solveig, David Guetta, and Bob Sinclar fill conference halls on every continent. Each year, particularly in Summer, hundreds of cultural festivals take place throughout France, celebrating contemporary music (Vieilles Charrues, Francolies, Jazz in Marciac, Eurockéennes, Route du Vin in Alsace, Arts Scéniques), classical music (opera in Aix en Provence, piano in La Roque d'Anthéron), theater (Festival d'Avignon), photography (Arles) and comics with the Festival d'Angoulême and the Festibulles in Strasbourg.

France has an uninterrupted cinematic tradition dating back to the creation of the art form by the Lumière brothers in 1895. The annual Cannes film festival is a must for all film professionals. France is a leading film producer. Each year French films receive international attention. The works of Jean-Luc Godard, François Truffaut, Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Luc Besson have played on five continents after being screened in France's 2,000 movie theaters. French photographers Raymond Depardon, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Bettina Rheims, and Yann Arthus-Bertand have earned an international reputation in the 20th century.

Many great modern architects were French. Three of the most prominent are Gustave Eiffel (Eiffel Tower, Statue of Liberty), Le Corbusier, and Jean Nouvel (the Louvre in Abu Dhabi, the Quai Branly Museum in Paris). Charlotte Perriand, Andrée Putman, and Philippe Starck are among today's most celebrated designers.

In addition to the country's famous 20th century artists (Duchamp, Soulages, Klein, Dubuffet and others), France welcomes and exhibits contemporary work from around the world. Prominent examples include Jeff Koons and Murakami (at Versailles).

Studying in France also means joining a society rightly renowned for its practice of the "art of living." Did you know that France is the leading tourist destination in the entire world? France is a country of immense geographic variety. Its health-care and transportation systems are second to none. France is also a safe and tolerant country. In France, you will have access to a vast array of athletic, touristic, and cultural opportunities that your student discount can make very affordable. Many of France's institutions of higher education are found in city centers next to the vibrant social and cultural life of French cities. Museums, bookstores, cinemas, theaters, and cafes are always within reach.

For the past five years, International Living magazine has ranked France among the world's top countries for quality of life. It was number one in 2010! Living in France means enjoying one of the world's best health-care systems, according



Eiffel Tower and Champ de Mars

to the World Health Organization. Upon their enrollment in a French institution, international students are also enrolled in the national health system—at an affordable cost.

Life expectancy in France is among the highest in the world: 80 years for men, and 85 years for women. The country's labor laws provide ample leisure time (35 hour-work-week and 5 weeks' holiday per year for all workers).

France has a pleasant climate and a clean environment. It is one of the safest countries in the world. France is home to 41 UNESCO World Heritage sites. Paris is on the world's top destination for business and international trade fairs, the first country in the world to welcome. The Eiffel Tower is one of the world's most-visited paid-admission sites. Disneyland Paris is Europe's most-popular theme park.

Sharing borders with nine countries, France is truly the crossroads of the continent. Paris's Charles-de-Gaulle airport is the second busiest hub in Europe and the sixth busiest in the world. France has the world's densest road network. High-speed trains connect major cities in France and elsewhere in Europe (including London, Amsterdam, and Geneva). From the heart of Europe one can travel to the 26 countries of the Schengen Area with a single visa. The euro is used in France and in 18 other countries.

And since 2010 UNESCO has classed France's cuisine and extraordinary culinary richness among the world's leading examples of intangible heritage. The country produces more than 1000 types of cheese. Fine wines flow from the vineyards of Bordeaux, Burgundy, Alsace and many other distinctive areas. The highly flavored cooking of the Antilles thrives alongside the masterpieces of celebrity chefs. In cities and on seashores, in mountains and meadows, one finds an endless array of recreational activities—all in close proximity to expressions of culture and the arts.

Her Excellency Sophie Aubert, *Ambassador of France to Bangladesh.*

Denuclearizing North Korea: Revisiting Denuclearization Strategy after the 4th Nuclear Test

Dr. Jung Bong-Geun



The fourth nuclear test conducted by North Korea on January 6, 2016 was a loud wake-up call to both South Koreans and Americans, and warned them of the advancement of North Korea's nuclear weaponization program to the next level. The South Korean government and international society strongly criticized North Korea's nuclear provocations in one voice, and were determined to take firm actions to punish them through the UN Security Council resolutions and tougher sanctions.

The North Korean nuclear problem is already a quarter-century old issue. Since 1991, approximately seven individual nuclear agreements were signed with North Korea. All these agreements, however, were abandoned by North Korea's outright violations and nuclear provocations. Since the early 1990s, it has almost become a predictable pattern that nuclear crises resulting from North Korea's nuclear provocations lead to nuclear negotiations and agreements, only to be violated and abandoned by North Korea before long.

The South Korean and U.S. governments' responses to North Korea's fourth nuclear test were tougher than ever. Military tensions on the Korean Peninsula spiked to an unprecedented level. Then, why do North Korea's fourth nuclear test and the ensuing long-range rocket launch with a missile technology invite such strong responses from South Korea and the United States? The reason is that North Korea's potential nuclear capability is about to develop into actually deployable nuclear weapons, which would tip the military power balance between the two Koreas to North Korea's advantage. The North Korean nuclear threat will no longer be a problem of the future, but one of the present. In the National Security Council meeting held immediately after North Korea's fourth nuclear test, President Park Geun-hye referred to North Korea's nuclear armament as a "serious challenge to not only the survival and future of South Korea, but also to world peace and stability."

In response to the mounting nuclear threats from North Korea after the its fourth nuclear test, the South Korean and U.S. governments, in cooperation with the international society, are determined to sanction and pressure North Korea to change its nuclear armament policy. In doing so, we must remind ourselves of the fact that until now, we have failed to prevent North Korea from going nuclear. The current policy environment is worse than ever, as North Korea has accumulated more nuclear material and possibly, a nuclear arsenal. The Kim Jong-un regime is more adventurous and aggressive than his father's. As we renew and reconfirm our commitments to denuclearize North Korea, we should pay attention to the following four trends and lessons.

First, a vicious cyclical pattern has been observed in the nuclear negotiations process with North Korea. At first, a nuclear crisis is caused by North Korea, which is followed by nuclear negotiations and agreements. Soon after, all these nuclear agreements are violated and abandoned by North Korea. Over the last 25 years, we saw seven such cycles of nuclear crisis, nuclear agreements and their collapse. As a result, the relations between North Korea and other countries have been plagued by mutual distrust and animosity, and chances of peaceful resolution through dialogue have been further degraded. If we plan to conclude a new nuclear agreement with North Korea, we ought to ensure that it full implementation is possible.

Second, the amount of North Korea's nuclear material has been increasing continuously without interruption. What is even more dangerous is that the amount tends to double about every ten years as North Korea's nuclear enrichment facilities are running and being expanded unchecked. In the early 1990s, North Korea had approximately 10 to 12kg of plutonium. Now, the amount of nuclear material in North Korea, including both plutonium and highly enriched uranium, is assessed to have increased up to four to five times the original amount. As North Korea continues to build additional clandestine enrichment facilities, its capacity for nuclear material production also increases further.

Third, our threat perception regarding North Korea's nuclear weapons tends to decrease gradually. Looking back, as all nuclear crises caused by North Korea's nuclear provocations became protracted, we have gradually become accustomed to them and come to accept them as a new reality. This behavior is similar to Koreans' tendency to accept the division

of Korea as a reality, as they became used to bearing such high economic, political, diplomatic costs of the division. South Koreans may soon have to pay the “North Korean nuclear discount” in addition to the so-called “division discount” that they are already paying in every aspect of their lives.

Fourth, the costs of pressuring and/or persuading North Korea to denuclearize will continue to increase as its nuclear arsenal expands. As North Korea’s stockpile of nuclear materials increases, its political, economic, and diplomatic demands toward South Korea and the U.S. will increase as well. The Kim Jong-un regime seems to be determined to develop and deploy its nuclear weapons, with the dual goals of legitimizing its fragile regime and becoming a recognized nuclear weapon state. Therefore, it will take great amount of pressure or incentives to make North Korea give up its nuclear program.

All these four trends inform us of the difficulties and obstacles that we may face in attempting to denuclearize North Korea.

Until now, we have underestimated North Korea’s willingness and capability to develop nuclear weapons. We have also underestimated the durability of the Kim regime and its communist system. With the end of the Cold War and death of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jung-il, North Korea was expected to collapse internally; however, North Korea showed remarkable systematic resilience and strong determination to become a nuclear state.

Then, how should we denuclearize North Korea? For now, we should make North Korea change its strategic calculations on nuclear armament through unilateral and multilateral economic sanctions, and diplomatic pressures. The UN Security Council Resolution 2270 against North Korea, the toughest known economic sanctions imposed by the UNSC, will help pressure North Korea to rethink and change its nuclear development strategy.

As we seek for effective ways to renew our denuclearization efforts against North Korea, we should contemplate on why we could not solve this problem before. Here are some of the lessons from the past:

First, for the time being, we should focus our diplomatic efforts on solving the North Korean nuclear problem. In this regard, we ought to examine the “Joint Statement on North Korea” adopted at the ROK-U.S. Summit held in October 2015. In the Joint Statement, the two countries first agreed to address the North Korean nuclear problem with utmost urgency and firm determination; second, they reaffirmed their commitment to achieve “complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of North Korea in a peaceful manner”; third, they described North Korea’s development of nuclear and ballistic missile programs as an “ongoing violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions,” and warned that it should face additional measures imposed by the UN Security Council if it carries out a ballistic missile launch or nuclear test.

Second, tougher sanctions should be continuously imposed on North Korea until denuclearization process is well under way. The communist state has traditionally considered power politics as its only criterion for action. Therefore, it would be unwise for us rely solely on dialogue and nonproliferation norms to persuade North Korea to denuclearize and act peacefully; it will change its behavior only when it perceives a major threat to its regime and political system. Thus, an effective sanctions regime against North Korea should be established, especially now that it has conducted its fourth nuclear test. However, in order to render sanctions truly effective, we should establish realistic goals—that is, sanctions should be aimed not at generating the collapse of the North Korean regime, but at changing its behavior and nuclear strategy.

Third, we should develop a “Korean Peninsula-type” denuclearization model, hopefully through five-party talks. All participating countries in the Six-Party Talks, except North Korea, have the common goal of denuclearizing North Korea; nevertheless, they disagree on the specific methods and means to achieve this goal, which makes the Six-Party Talks rather an ineffective denuclearization mechanism.

For the last 25 years, we attempted to apply various denuclearization models to the Korean Peninsula, all of which turned out to be unsuccessful. Therefore, we may have to develop a Korean Peninsula-specific denuclearization model that suits the unique situation on the Korean Peninsula. The new “Korean Peninsula-type” model would be a combination of various historical denuclearization models: the ABACC model, in which Argentina and Brazil agreed on the creation of a mutual inspection regime as both of them gave up their nuclear program; Ukraine model, in which Ukraine agreed to denuclearize in exchange for economic and security assurance; Libya model, which requires arbitration and a political big deal; South African model, which presumes changes in security environment and regime; and the Iranian model, illustrated by effective sanctions, high-level political communications, and the EU’s approach of continuous dialogue and trust-building. The new Korean model should be based on the 9.19 Six-Party Joint Statement of 2005, with reinforced details on sanctions and reward system, division of roles among states, implementation schedule, and strategy to guarantee

its implementation. South Korea should take the leading role in developing this new denuclearization model, which could be initially agreed upon among the five countries before negotiating with North Korea at the Six-Party talks.

Fourth, the new denuclearization model should including the following key components: improvement of inter-Korean relations; establishment of a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula; Northeast Asia security cooperation; improvement of U.S.-North Korea and Japan-North Korea relations; and economic and energy assistance to North Korea. These elements are also the key components of the 9.19 Six-Party Joint Statement. If all these areas progress in parallel, they could positively complement each other and create synergy effects. If not, however, the denuclearization process could become stagnated or even reversed. Here, we also need to take into consideration the Park Geun-hye administration's diplomatic initiatives, such as the Korea Peninsula Trust-Building Process and the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI). These initiatives could help build peace and trust on both the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia, thereby creating a favorable environment for denuclearization. They could also be incorporated into the 9.19 Joint Statement.

Dr. JUN Bong-Geun is Professor and Director of the Department of Security and Unification Studies at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS) in the Korean National Diplomatic Academy Professor Jun held several governmental and non-governmental positions: Dr. Jun's research area covers the North Korean nuclear issue, inter-Korean relations, nonproliferation, nuclear security and nuclear energy policies.

Short biography of Her Excellency Alison Blake, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh



Alison Blake, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh presented her credentials to His Excellency the President of Bangladesh on 19 January 2016. She is the UK's first female High Commissioner to Bangladesh.

Ms Alison entered the British Civil Service in 1989, and has since served in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Defence, including as Assistant Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Defence. She has served in a number of diplomatic postings at home and overseas. Her previous overseas posting was as Deputy High Commissioner in Islamabad, and she had previously served in the British Embassy in Washington DC and the UK Delegation to NATO in Brussels.

She is a native Londoner, with a keen interest in Ancient and Modern History, which she studied at Oxford University. She worked as an archaeologist in London, and also worked for the Royal National Institute for the Blind and for an economic policy research think tank before entering the British Civil Service.

Brief Profile of His Excellency Mahmoud M. M. Sallabi

Charge d'Affairs, Libyan Embassy, Bangladesh



Nationality : Libyan

Date and place of birth : 24/11/1964, Benghazi, Libya

- ◆ Bachelor of Accounting from Benghazi University (Qaryunus) in 1994
- ◆ Master of Accounting from Ain Shams University, Cairo
- ◆ Diploma in English Language approved in United Kingdom in recognition of Atlas Language Institute in 2006.
- ◆ Obtained & passed a course of standard of international accounting under the care of Libyan Stock Market, and supervised the "Talal Abu Gazala International Co." in Jordan in 2008.
- ◆ Worked at the office of honorable Minister of the Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Tripoli.
- ✦ Member of the Chartered Accountants Association in Libya under number 622.
- ✦ Member of the Arab Accountants Union (1051).
- ✦ Accounts Expert approved by the trial and appellate courts in Libya from 1995 to 2004.
- ✦ Chartered Accountant, approved by the Central Bank of Libya no. 61.
- ✦ Legal auditor approved by the Libyan Stock Market having no. 20.
- ✦ In-charge to conduct, supervise and the sign the Funds, supporting the families of the martyrs, the wounded and the missing and prisoners of the Department of Finance and Oil Affairs of the Interim Transitional Council from 04/2011 to the date of dissolution of the fund.
- ✦ Supervising and preparing of the executive rule of the Funds, supporting the families of the martyrs, the wounded and the missing and prisoners of the Department of Finance & Oil Affairs of the Interim Transitional Council from 04/2011.
- ✦ Chairman of the board of directors and general manager of Al-Khebrah International Co. for business and financial & legal services with limited liability.
- ✦ Tax adviser at the Al-Wahdah Bank, Public Administration, Benghazi.
- ✦ Auditor and Chartered Accountant in-charge to review the statement of the financial center as of 31/12/2012 at Al-Wahda Bank, public administration and all of its branches in Libya.
- ✦ Audited some Foreign and National Companies in the filed of supplying, contracting, real-estate investment, general services and holding companies.
- ✦ Dispatched for working to the Libyan Embassy in Bangladesh as "the Charge d' Affairs."
- ✦ Marital status : Married - having four children.

Bio Note of His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Asim
High Commissioner of Maldives to Bangladesh



His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Asim was appointed as the High Commissioner of Maldives to Bangladesh on 13 September 2015. He presented his credentials to the Hon'ble President of Bangladesh H.E. Mr. Abdul Hamid on 17 November 2015.

Dr Asim is a career public service official with over 30 years of experience in the government of Maldives. He was appointed to the Foreign Service in 2004. His first posting was to Sri Lanka as High Commissioner, with non-resident accreditation to Pakistan and Bangladesh.

He also served as High Commissioner to the UK from 2007-2008 with concurrent accreditation to the EU. He also served in the Maldives Mission to the EU in 2013 as resident head of mission.

In 2014, Dr. Asim was appointed as Ambassador-at-Large at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he served as Head of East, Central and South Asia Divisions, and was responsible for coordinating bilateral matters with countries in this region.

As Ambassador-at-Large, his additional responsibilities included work related to the proposed Foreign Service Act, and related Regulations under the Act. He also lectured at the Foreign Service Institute of Maldives, actively contributing to strengthening the competencies and professionalism of Maldivian diplomats. He also lectured at briefing sessions for new Ambassadors and senior diplomats, specifically on the topic of diplomatic language, communication and public diplomacy.

Dr. Asim has a PhD from the Australian National University in political science and international relations, and an MA in international relations from the California State University, Sacramento. His first degree was obtained in 1983 from the American University of Beirut in the field of Public Administration, and has publications in several international journals.

He is married to Ms. Maryam Ali Manik. They have two children.

Brief Life Sketch of Her Excellency Madam Nur Ashikin Mohd Taib
High Commissioner of Malaysia to the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Presentation of Credentials Ceremony, Bangabhaban, Dhaka, 5 April 2016

Her Excellency Madam Nur Ashikin Mohd Taib was appointed to the Administrative and Diplomatic Service of Malaysia in 1994. Upon completion of the Diploma in Public Administration and compulsory diplomatic training, she joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia or Wisma Putra in 1995.

In her 21 years in the diplomatic service, she served in various capacities at the Ministry and abroad, beginning as Assistant Secretary (Western Europe) followed by a posting as Second Secretary (Political) at the Malaysian Embassy in Paris. Returning from France she spent six years at the Ministry as Assistant Secretary (Multilateral Economics & South-South Cooperation) and Principal Assistant Secretary (Training and Career Development). In 2006, she was posted to the Malaysian Embassy and Malaysian Mission to the European Union in Belgium as Deputy Chief of Mission/ Minister Counsellor. After serving in Brussels for four years, she returned to the Ministry in 2010 and served at the Policy and Strategic Planning Department as Undersecretary/Deputy Director General. In 2016, she assumed the post of High Commissioner of Malaysia to the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

In terms of academic background, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in French & Political Science from Indiana University - Bloomington, USA in 1991, which included a year of studies in Strasbourg, France. In 2012, she went on study leave to pursue post-graduate studies in International Relations at the University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus (UNMC). She speaks Bahasa Malaysia, English and French.

H.E. Madam Nur Ashikin is married to Mr. Abdul Rahim Alias and they are very happy to embark on their next diplomatic journey in Bangladesh.

Brief Profile of His Excellency Ahn Seong-doo
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Bangladesh



Name : Ahn Seong-doo

Date of Birth : April 19, 1961

Education

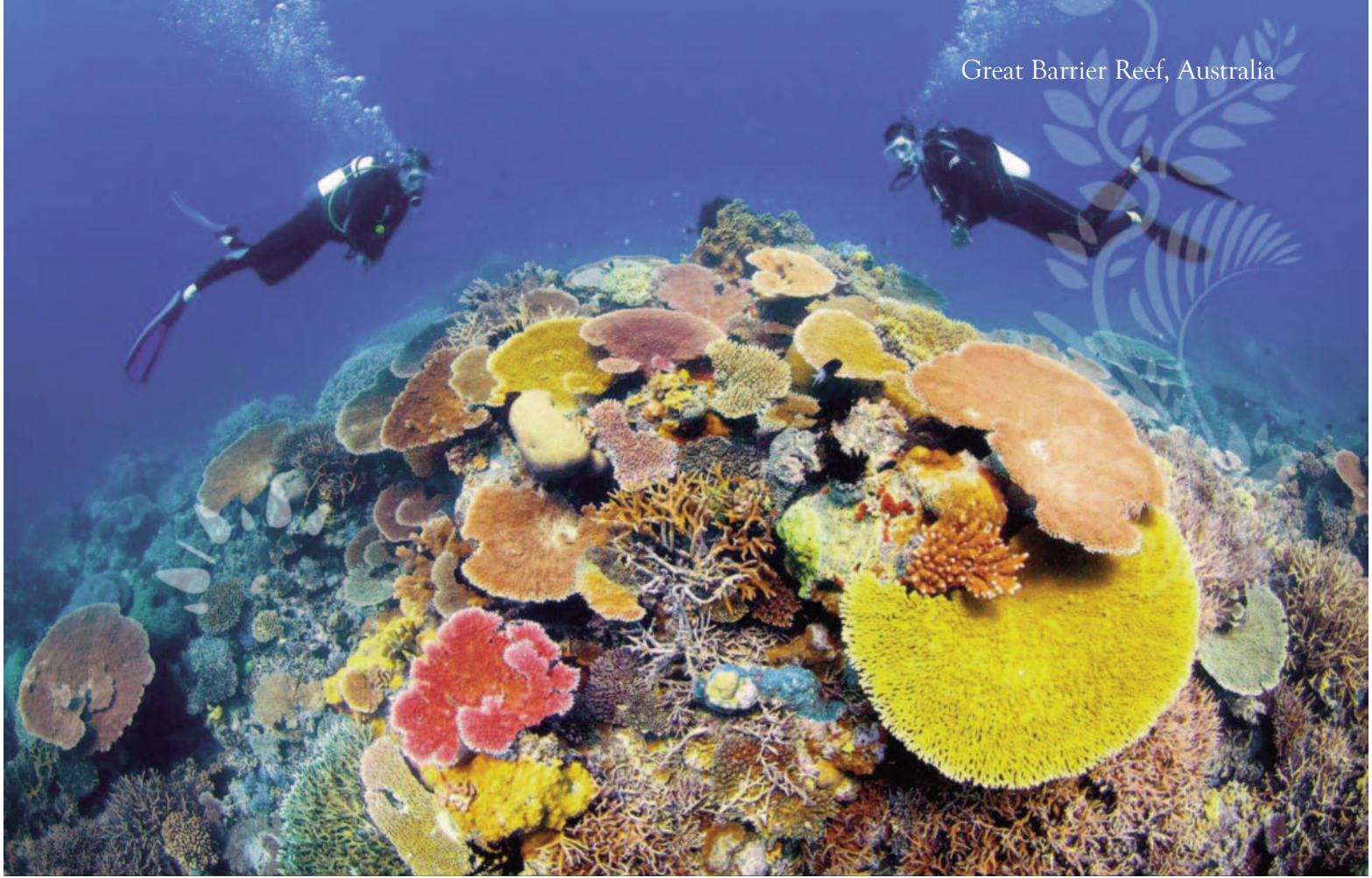
Feb. 1984 : B.A. in International Relations, Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea.

Career:

May 1985 : Passed High Diplomatic Service Examination.
June 1985 : Joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA).
June 1991 : Second Secretary, Korean Embassy in the Republic of Philippines.
December 1993 : Consul, Korean Consulate General in Los Angeles, U.S.A.
June 1998 : First Secretary, Korean Embassy in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
June 2000 : First Secretary, Korean Embassy in the French Republic.
January 2002 : Consellor, Korean Embassy in the Kingdom of Thailand.
July 2003 : Director, North and West Africa Division, Middle East and African Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT).
June 2004 : Director, Middle East Division, Middle East and African Affairs Bureau, MOFAT.
December 2005 : Minister-Counsellor, Korean Embassy in the Arab Republic of Egypt.
January 2009 : Director of the Information Analysis and Evaluation, MOFAT.
February 2010 : Deputy Director-General, South Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau, MOFAT.
March 2011 : Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
October 2013 : Consul-General, Korean Consulate General in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
November 2015 : Presenting credentials to the Hon'ble President of Bangladesh as an Ambassador.

Awards : December 2004, Service Merit Medal

Family : Married with two sons.



Amazing Australia

Shahriar Feroze



The leaves of the bushes danced madly as a mob of kangaroos jumped over them, racing in the distance. The landscape was filled with moving dots of grey kangaroos, some touching and sniffing each other. I took a few snaps and re-entered the car. The car drove past the forest of eucalyptus and acacia trees. Koala bears hugged tree trunks, dozing while their cubs peeped at me curiously from their mothers' pouches. Golden wattles nodded their heads under the trees; green leaves and yellow flowers - the national colours of Australia. I stopped the car near a stream to spot a platypus laying eggs while a herd of large grey feathered emus were striding rapidly towards the western horizon. And then a kookaburra bird screeched behind me as if welcoming me with a deliberate surprise. The sights and sounds were invigorating. Sensing to be alone amid vast expanses this was Australia, a continent of unending diversity and wildlife - literally, a land down under' below' many other countries on the globe

but remains on top with eternal natural blessings.

This writer's final destination was the Great Barrier Reef. He had read about it when he was a school boy and ever since then it had been a dream that was about to come true. After a day's long drive I reached the Queensland coast. The Great Barrier Reef is vast and also even the tiniest that could be seen stretched far into the horizon. The world's largest coral reef comprises over thousands of individual reefs and hundreds of islands stretching over 2,300 km. From where this writer stood he saw scattered islands and coral cays. He sauntered for a time looking around. Vast numbers of sea and land birds were roosting on the reef and a saltwater crocodile was lazily sunning itself in marshy water. I came a little closer. Unexpectedly it opened up its eyes, and then closed them again in apparent disgust as if to suggest 'Why bother my sleep'? This author kept walking away towards the lush mangrove shrubs lining the shore lost in the world of adventure. The thick and attractive leaves of the mangroves were growing in abundance. It was Whitsunday and the area appeared inviting.

I went to the tourist company and booked a day of snorkeling and lunch at Longford Spit beach. Having put my snorkeling gear on I dived into the water where corals glistened brightly. Within minutes a fantastic mysterious aqua world stood before me. A school of strikingly coloured angel fish with dark stripes over red and green swam past. Then an army of

known and unknown species from silver, orange to multi-coloured speckled designs swam with me. My camera kept clicking furiously.

The reef water was warm, soothing and unusually transparent. Hundreds of surgeon fish in electric blue and vivid green moved around like a multi-coloured tapestry. I gazed in fascination and gently swam over sea grass meadows of strangely shaped sponges, densely sprinkled with tiny fish of numerous species. I went deeper finding a large variety of green and red algae and swam right into countless trigger fish moving towards a coral cave.



It was a brilliant sight; blended in hues more than the imagination could conceive. A school of angel fish swam towards me and some nibbled my cheek and toes. Colours around me were constantly changing as fishes of different varieties came into view. A greenish sea turtle solemnly and grandly swam by ignoring everything around it. A porpoise appeared suddenly but immediately nosedived as a shoal of small humped back whales streamed past. It was hypnotic.

The plants of the coral reef were equally eye-catching. The seagrass meadows were an enticing green attracting fishes, mammals and marine reptiles. The meadows were another world of their own, where intense feeding was taking place. Some sea grasses had fantastic shapes and the larger plants swayed lazily with the current.

I swam further down and came across a large swarm of coral trout. As I took photographs, to my astonishment, something I had read seemed occurring before me. All the male trout were swiftly quickly changing into eye catching hues to attract females. It was a stunning sight. Men attempt to attract women and vice-versa, but do we go quite this far? Putting on a new suit or dress hardly matches up. The issue is left with you to ponder upon.

Algae of different forms, some red like corals; also curly plants which from what I had read earlier and recognised as sea lettuce. Tiny creatures and fishes were feeding voraciously on them. Their tails and fins jiggled and quivered. Everywhere there was constant movement. Nothing was still. I found it all breathtaking like a fairy tale world, until an unknown fish bit hard on my toes. Ouch! Returning to the reality I moaned and slowly got out of the underwater world after several hours.

Changed back into my clothes I sat on the deck of the launch where I was booked for lunch. A large slice of freshly cooked trout appeared before me, accompanied by green vegetables. As I ate with pleasure I gazed at the part of the great reef still visible to me.

Bright corals shone in the sun, but there were also large patches of white coral, bleached and destroyed by rising sea temperature. Climate change is believed to have adversely affected one of the world's supreme natural wonders. Pollution from fertilizers and pesticides from intensive farming and cattle grazing added to the damage. These must be drastically reduced in areas near the Great Barrier Reef. We must defend the world's largest coral reef, not only so vast that it can be seen from outer space but also the world's largest living body, built by tiny organisms, the coral polyps.

Under the reef I had found a world of amazing enchantment. Over it was another absorbing world of thousands of birds, reptiles, plant species and tiny creatures of immense diversity, all supported and nurtured by the reef itself.

The entrancing under water experience is imprinted in the mind of this traveler. He felt invigorated and extraordinarily moved. It was unforgettable.

Shahriar Feroze is a writer & freelance journalist.

亚洲相互协作与信任措施会议第五次外长会议

THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE CONFERENCE ON INTERACTION AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES IN ASIA

2016年4月27-28日, 北京

Beijing, April 27-28, 2016



CICA's fifth ministerial meeting concludes with pledge to enhance cooperation for Asian security

The fifth ministerial meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia - or CICA - has concluded in Beijing on 29 April, 2016 with the pledge to enhance cooperation for Asian security.

In a speech on 28 April, Chinese President Xi Jinping pointed out that Asia's main focus is to promote peace and stability, but some parts of the region are still in the midst of turmoil and the rising threat of terrorism. Xi urged Asian countries to strengthen their cooperation on security.

Xi said, "We should uphold and implement the Asian security concept, collect consensus and facilitate dialogue, strengthen coordination, push forward the construction of a security government model with Asian features, jointly create Asia's future with peace and prosperity."

Xi stressed China's firm position regarding the unrest on the Korean peninsula, saying China would not allow turmoil or war to happen there. He also urged countries to establish a security architecture that fits Asia's characteristics, and resolve disputes through dialogue and negotiation.

Xi said, "The related parties need to stay calm and use peaceful action to avoid escalation. We should establish a governing mechanism to control risk, and enhance mutual trust to ease tension. By this way, we can resolve problems step by step."

To help realize this vision, member countries reached a declaration. They propose building Asia's security, stability and sustainable development through dialogue and negotiation.

Chinese Foreign minister Wang Yi said, "All parties are committed to abiding by UN charters, the basic norms of international law, and CICA's mission and principle. All parties will cooperate to realize sustainable security."

China's chairmanship of CICA has been extended by two years until 2018. Wang Yi announced it will hold its fifth summit in 2018. CICA will also hold an unofficial foreign ministers meeting during the UN General Assembly next year, so member countries can build on their strong inter-relationships.

Source: CEAF Desk Report.

Malaysia's political crisis: can Najib survive?

Donald Greenlees



[Malaysian PM Najib Razak (L) is accompanied by his wife Rosmah Mansor (R) at the inauguration of Indonesian President Joko Widodo in Jakarta on October 20, 2014.] - Photo: Bagus Indahono/EPA

In the court of domestic and international public opinion, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak is guilty of a level of corruption and abuse of office not seen in Southeast Asia since the days of the dictators. Najib's rule evokes memories of Marcos' Philippines and Suharto's Indonesia. The parallels include a family bent on amassing vast wealth.

There is now enough evidence in the public domain to warrant the removal of Najib from office. But will he go? Najib did consider resigning last year when the scandals over the plundered sovereign wealth fund, 1 Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), split his cabinet according to a source familiar with discussions at the time. The condition Najib set was that he and his wife were granted immunity from prosecution.

But talk of an early departure has now dissipated. It appears likely Najib will try to stay in office and fight for re-election in 2018.

The Najib government has another trait in common with the region's old authoritarian regimes. It is resilience. One verity of politics in Asia persists: the moral outrage felt at a leader's conduct will amount to little as long as he retains the support of a relatively small community of political and business elites.

Like those leaders from the authoritarian era, Najib has proved adept at survival by the liberal use of money and patronage to shore up allies and the effective use of the state's coercive powers to divide, silence and jail opponents in politics, civil society and the media.

There are several factors that will bear on Najib's fate between now and the next elections. Most of them suggest it will be hard to remove him from office and that the longer he stays the harder that outcome will be to achieve.

First, there's the attitude of the ruling party. Najib retains control of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the political party that is the core of the Barisan National coalition government. As president of UMNO, he can count on the support of its central leadership and is estimated to have the allegiance of the overwhelming majority of regional chiefs.

One reason for the anger former prime minister Mahathir Mohamad now aims at Najib is that he can no longer treat the party as a personal fiefdom. In 2013, Najib blocked the election of Mahathir's son, Mukhriz, for an UMNO vice presidency. It's commonly believed Mahathir wants his son to become prime minister.

The UMNO elites are conscious of ensuring their own survival; with that in mind, they could desert Najib. But that will only happen if they sense a groundswell from the party's Malay Muslim base. There is no evidence of a shift yet.

Second, there's the state of the economy. Growth is slowing and the trend will continue—it could fall to 4.2% this year from 6% in 2014. The loss of state revenue from the slowdown is constraining public investment, which has been one of the drivers of growth. It has forced Najib to cut spending and find new sources of income. Last year, he introduced a GST, which contributed to dampening consumption.

There is unhappiness in the Malay heartland over tightening economic conditions. But, conversely, Malaysia will probably achieve high-income status before the next elections. Despite the softening economy and the 1MDB scandal, the International Monetary Fund credits the government with achieving macroeconomic and financial stability and setting up sustained medium term growth. It is unlikely the economy will be a sufficient source of grievance to bring out Malay voters in open opposition to the government.

Third, there's the course of international investigations into the 1MDB money trail. Following a series of disclosures in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Sarawak Report* of money flowing into Najib's private accounts, he faces the near certainty of further embarrassing revelations about 1MDB money that could touch members of his family.

While Najib can't influence foreign investigations, he has shown a capacity to effectively shutdown investigations in Malaysia. In doing so, he has reduced the potential for cooperation between domestic and international agencies. Without access to information from within Malaysia, there is less international investigators can prove.

Najib has also tamed the domestic media and clouded the 1MDB issues in a mass of claim and counterclaim. Although many Malaysians are angry, there are probably more who are confused and fatigued by the scandal. He has probably been helped domestically by Saudi Arabia's confirmation last week that it was the source of a \$681 million "donation" to Najib, although there are still those who believe the money came from 1MDB.

Finally, there's the political opposition and question of succession. Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim is in jail and unable to run in 2018; most commentators agree his leadership days are over. But the opposition is divided by personality and political outlook. Without Anwar there is no obvious candidate able to rally its diverse membership.

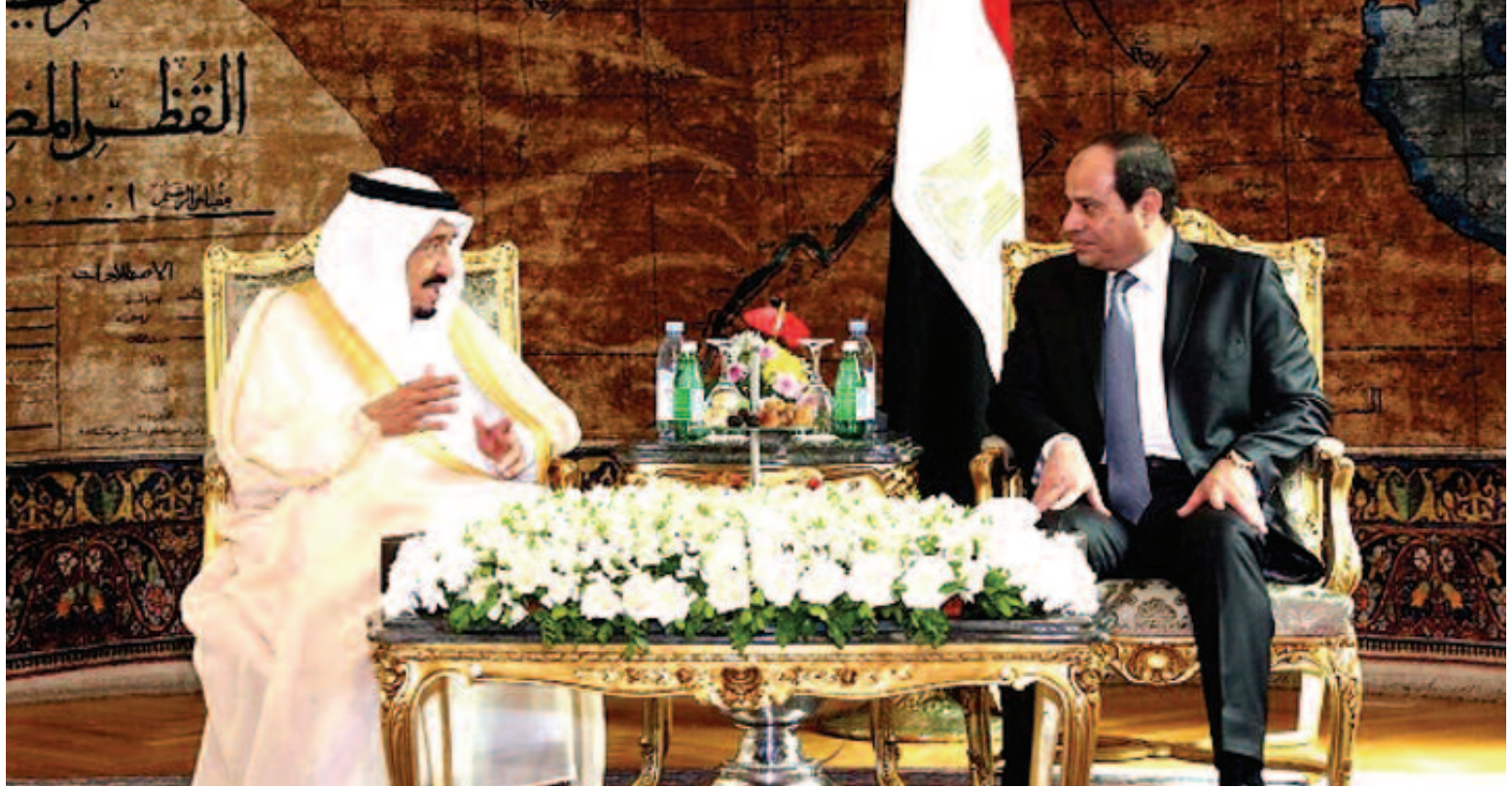
A perverse alliance between Anwar and Mahathir—it was Mahathir who first had Anwar jailed—might produce a compromise. One possibility for the post is the elderly former Finance Minister and UMNO veteran Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

Other scenarios within UMNO make Malaysian politics look like *Game of Thrones*. Najib, the son of Malaysia's second prime minister, could hand over to his cousin, Defence Minister, Hishammuddin Hussein, the son of its third prime minister. Another man with ambition is the Minister for Youth and Sports and UMNO vice president, Khairy Jamaluddin, who is the son-in-law of Najib's predecessor, Abdullah Badawi.

The same nepotistic instincts afflict the opposition—Anwar's wife and daughter want to keep the leadership of his People's Justice Party in the family. And then there are Mahathir's ambitions for his son.

But talk of a new leadership is highly speculative. The absence of serious challengers aids Najib's chances of survival. Even if he were to go, the stranglehold of UMNO and the small-club politics is likely to stay. For those Malaysians anxious to see real change, there's little hope to be found in the way the current scandal is playing out.

Donald Greenlees is a former Asia correspondent for several international and Australian publications. He is currently with the Australian National University pursuing a PhD in Indonesia.



“King Salman Bridge” to connect Egypt and Saudi Arabia Over the Red Sea

The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia, who is on a rare five-day trip to Egypt from April 7 to April 11, has announced that a bridge will be built over the Red Sea to link Egypt and Saudi Arabia. There has been long held suggestions of the construction of a 30 mile bridge, stretching from Ras Nasrani, close to the Egyptian resort of Sharmet Sheikh to Ras Hamid in Northwestern Saudi Arabia. The Bridge is aimed at boosting trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

After the meeting with the Egyptian President Sisi at the President’s Ittahiya Palace King Salman said, “I agreed with my brother His Excellency President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi to build a bridge connecting the two countries. This historic step to connect the two continents, Africa and Asia, is a qualitative transformation that will increase trade between the two continents to unprecedented levels”.

Meanwhile, Egypt’s President announced that the bridge will be named after “King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Bridge”.

At the same announcement held at the Ittiahidiya Presidential palace in Cairo, Egypt’s President granted the visiting Saudi King the ‘Order of the Nile’ medal, Egypt’s highest state honor. Earlier, Cairo University also granted an honorary degree to the Saudi King in the light of Kingdom’s pledge of USD120 million to renovate Cairo’s Qasr El-Aini hospital. The King has also pledged up to USD 21.5 billion investments and loans to Egypt for financing its oil needs for the next five years and to develop Sinai region.



Courtesy: EGYPTIAN STREETS.

THE SILK ROAD ECONOMIC BELT AND 21ST CENTURY MARITIME SILK ROAD INITIATIVE OF CHINA

Kaveri R Deshmukh

Using the historical concept of the Silk Road or Silk Route, the Chinese government emphasises on what it calls the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road or the 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR) Strategy, also known as the Belt and Road Initiative. The planned Belt and Road run through the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa, connecting East Asian economies at one end and European economies at the other. The Belt connects China, Central Asia, Russia and Europe (the Baltic) – it links China with the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean Sea through Central and West Asia, and also links China with Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean. The Road comprises two routes wherein: i) China is connected to Europe through the South

China Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Horn of Africa; and ii) China is connected to the South Pacific through the South China Sea. The Belt and Road meet at Venice, in Europe, and thus form an integrated route. The document 'Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road' released by the government of the People's Republic of China in March 2015 (hereinafter referred to as the Vision Document) suggests that OBOR aims to open up new space for enhancing international economic and technological cooperation.

It aspires to enhance trade and investment potential across the Belt and Road area through the creation of infrastructure facilities, trade facilitation and financial integration.

Enhancing trade and the sphere of influence are the basic intents of China behind the Initiative. It has kept the Initiative open for participation and investment to all countries and investors across the globe.

Extent and Coverage of the Belt and Road



* China Daily, April 29, 2015: The Chinese government is yet to identify all nations included under the Belt and Road Initiative

** Investment Guide to the Silk Road, UNCTAD, 2009

*** http://wiki.china.org.cn/wiki/index.php/The_%22Belt_and_Road%22_initiatives

The Proposed Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road



Source: Xinhua Finance Agency

Links

Silk Road Economic Belt

- China–Central Asia–Russia–Europe (the Baltic)
- China–Central Asia–West Asia–Persian Gulf
- China–Central Asia–West Asia–Mediterranean Sea
- China–Southeast Asia–South Asia–Indian Ocean

By Country:

Xi'an, Northwest China– Ürümqi–Central Asia–Northern Iran–Iraq–Syria–Istanbul, Turkey–Bosporus Strait–Europe, including Germany and the Netherlands–Venice, Italy

21st Century Maritime Silk Road

- Route 1: China's coast–South China Sea–Indian Ocean–Horn of Africa–Europe
- Route 2: China's coast–South China Sea–South Pacific

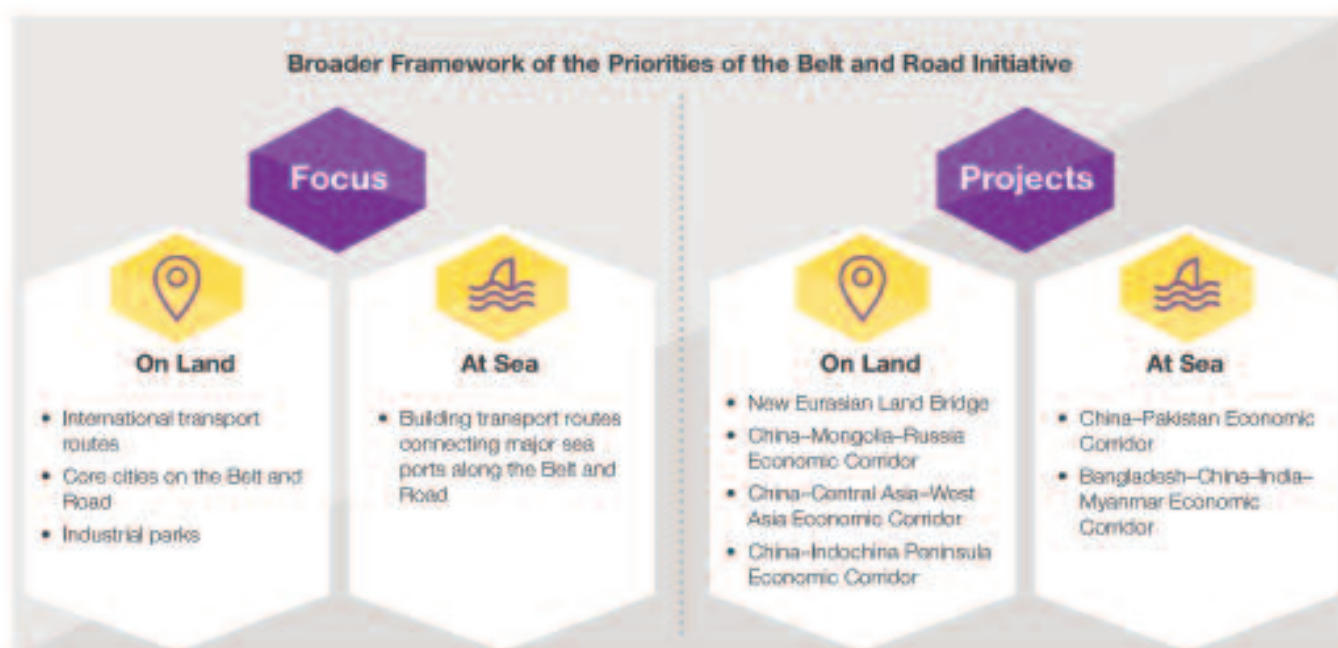
By Country:

- Route 1: Kunming, China–South China Sea–Myanmar–Bangladesh–Calcutta, India–Colombo, Sri Lanka–Indian Ocean–Nairobi, Kenya–Ethiopia–Red Sea–Mediterranean–Venice, Italy
- Route 2: Fuzhou, China–South China Sea–Malaysia–Indonesia–South Pacific Ocean

Principles, Priorities and Sectoral Implications



The Vision Document, March 2015 speaks of "relying on core cities along the Belt and Road and using key economic industrial parks as cooperation platforms".



Source: Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road, Government of China, March 2015 (The Vision Document)

The priorities of the Belt and Road Initiative extend beyond linking countries and continents. At a special meeting in February 2015, the Chinese government chalked out the following priorities of the OBOR strategy:

1. Infrastructure Building



Transport infrastructure, ports, civil aviation, cross-border communication infrastructure based on optical cables, trunk line networks leading to the creation of an Information Silk Road among the countries

2. Trade Facilitation



Trade facilitation agreements, investment facilitation, promoting emerging industries and establishing research and development capabilities

3. Financial Integration



Building a currency stability system, investment and financing system and a credit information system in Asia, opening and developing the bond market in Asia

4. Cultural and Educational Exchanges



Improving people-to-people connect, promoting Silk Road tourism, cooperation in science and technology, etc.

5. China-Specific Priorities



Enhancing communication and co-operation with Central, South and West Asian countries, opening up of cities, promoting border trade, tourism and cultural cooperation, constructing transport (road and rail) infrastructure, ports and civil aviation infrastructure, promoting regional interaction and industrialisation

The Belt and Road Initiative has immense implications along its coverage area. Given the priorities of the initiative, several sectors of the economy are likely to witness a boost:

Logistics and warehousing

The initiative aims at enhancing trade and business by creating free trade areas, lower non-tariff barriers, cross-border e-commerce, enhanced logistics and trading activities, and developing warehousing facilities. China expects its annual trade with the countries involved in the initiative to surpass \$2.5 trillion in a decade.

Tourism and hospitality

The Vision Document and timely announcements by the Chinese government clearly spell out their objective to promote tourism. The immense focus on people-to-people contact, interaction and cultural exchanges, and streamlining application processes for tourist visas emphasises this goal.

Infrastructure and real estate

The core of the initiative lies in the creation of infrastructure facilities and enhancing the existing ones. With 60 countries participating in the initiative and around 900 expected projects, the infrastructure and real estate sector is expected to reap the lion's share of opportunities and benefits. The emphasis on urbanisation and industrialisation—reliance on core cities and economic industrial parks as 'co-operation platforms'—is likely to trigger construction activities in cities across the Belt and Road. The objective of promoting tourism would give a major boost to the infrastructure and real estate sector.

Transport and communication

The initiative has identified several projects to enhance transport and communication, including an optical fibre network.

Financial

Efforts at currency stabilisation, deepening of financial markets and institutional provisions to finance development needs are expected to boost the financial sector.

Financing the Initiative

The financing strategy for the initiative relies on long-term options spanning five to twenty years, wherein the returns could be deferred to a long term horizon. The Chinese government adopted measures such as initiating specific funds for this purpose and rendering the participation in funding the initiative open to all. Major roles have been given to China's policy banks.

The Chinese government has also exhibited a tendency to reform policy banks to enhance their ability to finance projects on the Belt and Road that require long-term financing and may yield late returns. Accordingly, the State Council of the People's Republic of China approved a plan to reform policy banks to enhance their lending and risk handling capability and to enable them to help accomplish the other policy goals of the government. The Chinese government is keen on the reforms exercise, as policy banks are best adapted to handle a subsidised lending strategy compared to private banks and hence, it is apt to use the policy banks' experience in export lending and policy loans. The exercise is also expected to help in renminbi internationalisation.

Infrastructure development is the core of the Initiative. It also focuses on trade facilitation, financial integration, cultural and educational exchanges along with China specific priorities.

The Initiative relies on a long term financing strategy. Chinese policy banks have been assigned a major role in the exercise while all countries are welcome to participate in the funding process.

The Belt and Road Initiative will be financed in various ways and several institutions will contribute:

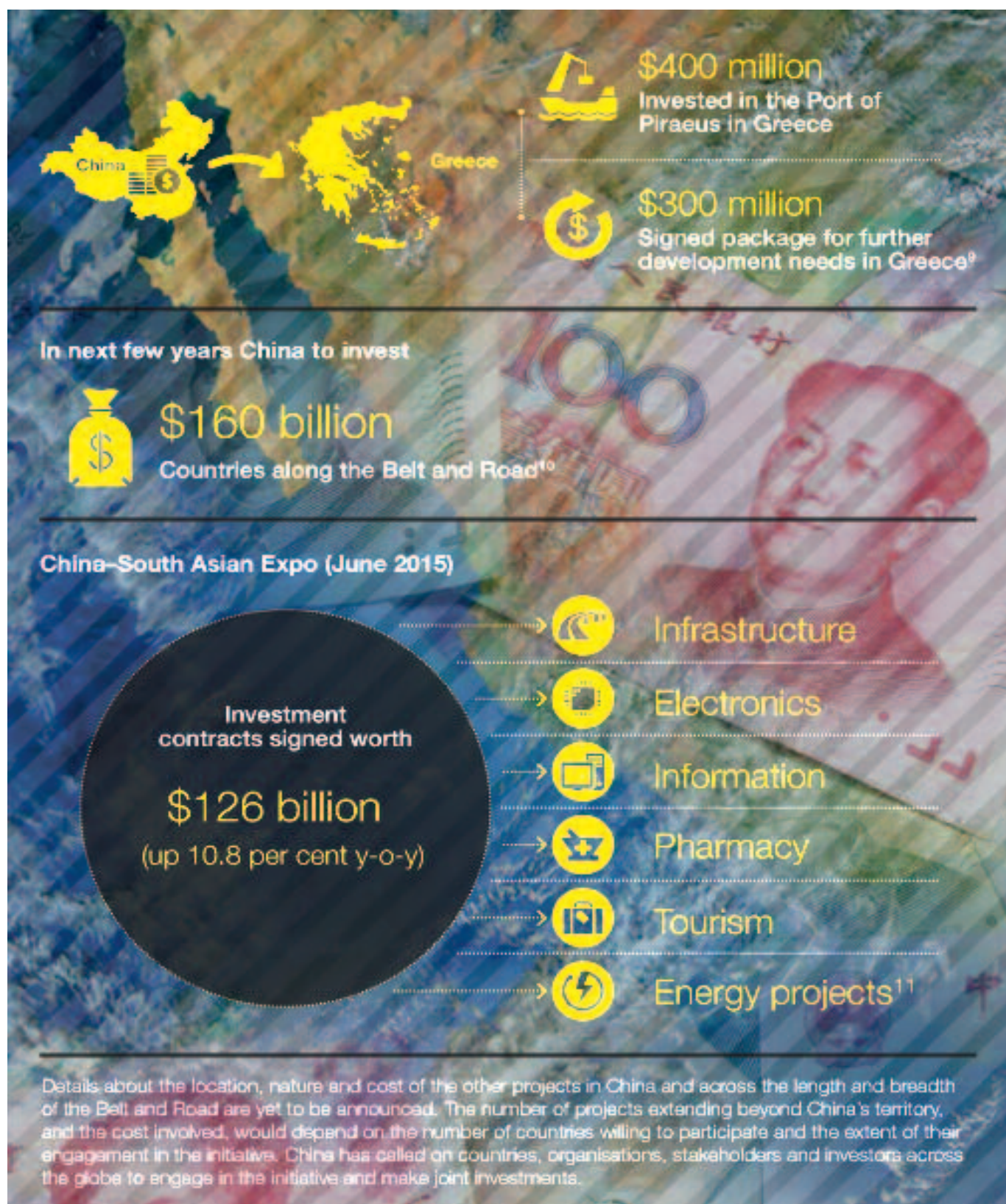


5. <http://atimes.com/2015/05/china-to-invest-900-billion-in-new-silk-road/>

6. http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-04/05/c_134126390.htm

7. Mizuho Securities Asia Limited, 2 April 2015

8. Julius Baer, Investment Ideas, China endeavouring to develop a new silk road, 12 January 2015



9. A. Duquennoy and R. Zielonka, *Bridging Asia and Europe Through Maritime Connectivity*, European Institute for Asian Studies, April 2015

10. Beijing Review.com.cn, 16 May 2015, NO. 15

11. Xinhuanet, 19 June, 2015

Some of the measures taken by China to fund the Belt and Road Initiative are:

i) Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

In October 2014, 21 Asian countries agreed to establish the AIIB, to which China will contribute up to 50 percent of initial capital. The bank will finance infrastructure projects across Asia, with a focus on the Association of Southeast Asian Nation (ASEAN) members. The bank aspires to raise \$100 billion for projects on the Belt and Road.

ii) China-Mexico Investment Fund

In November 2014, the Chinese and Mexican governments agreed to set up a cooperation fund with a corpus of \$2.4 billion, seeking mutual benefits in infrastructure, mining, tourism and energy projects. The two countries plan to double the fund corpus eventually.

iii) Silk Road Infrastructure Fund

In November 2014, the Chinese government announced that it would set up the Silk Road Infrastructure Fund and will contribute \$40 billion to it. The Chinese Government clarified that the fund would focus on providing investment and financial support for infrastructure, industrial cooperation, financial co-operation and other projects in countries along the Belt and Road. The Fund has been operational since February 2015 and has started functioning along the lines of a private equity (PE) venture. The fund is a limited liability company (LLC) based on market-oriented principles and the international order of finance.

China has taken immense efforts to the fund the gigantic initiative. It has led the formation of some international funds. The Silk Road Infrastructure Fund is one such prominent initiative by China to which it has contributed to the tune of \$40 billion through its financial institutions and forex reserves. Additionally, It has also considered several outbound investment mechanisms.

Contributions to the Silk Road Infrastructure Fund (\$40 billion*)



* Future injections could be expected if the investment demand warrants it, and other institutions too can invest with a long-term commitment

Source: Xinhuanet, 16 February 2015

12. China File, 9 December 2014

13. <http://thebricspost.com/china-mexico-launch-2.4bn-investment-fund/#.VZpiKfmqko>

Several other outbound investment mechanisms are also under consideration by the Chinese government:

i) Green Ecological Silk Road Investment Fund

In March 2015, private investors created the \$4.8-billion Green Ecological Silk Road Investment Fund¹⁴. This is a private equity fund, with investments by eight Chinese enterprises. The fund will focus on solar panel construction, clean energy and ecological remediation projects.

ii) Gold Fund

As a part of its initiatives to finance trade and transport infrastructure on the Belt and Road, China established the Gold Fund in May 2015. The fund is expected to raise about \$16 billion in three phases for gold-related investments. The Fund will be run by a new company to be set

up by gold producers and financial institutions.

The two leading gold producers—Shandong Gold Group and Shaanxi Gold Group Incorporation Limited—will take 35% and 25% stakes in the Fund, respectively, while the rest will be owned by financial institutions¹⁵.

iii) BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) Bank

In July 2014, China and the other BRICS nations agreed to create the BRICS Development Bank (now referred to as the New Development Bank [NDB]), which would have an initial capital of \$50 billion, eventually increasing to \$100 billion. The establishment of the Bank is expected to help in mobilising funds for

Projects identified along the Belt and Road

Currently, the Belt and Road focuses on building six prominent corridors, viz.

1. China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor
2. New Eurasian Land Bridge
3. China-Central and West Asia Economic Corridor
4. China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor
5. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and
6. Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC)

Around 900¹⁶ projects are anticipated at present. Several key infrastructure projects have been proposed as a part of these corridors – transportation and energy under-

takings being the major ventures. More projects in infrastructure and financial cooperation are in the pipeline, and are already launched in 2015.



14. China Money Network, 20 March 2015

15. Reuters, 25 May 2015

16. <http://atimes.com/2015/05/china-to-invest-900-billion-in-new-silk-road/>

Select Projects Identified along the Belt and Road

Corridor	Timeline	Projects	Status
1. China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor	2015	Moscow-Kazan High-Speed Rail Project (770 km)	The Russian-Chinese consortium has won the bid and will carry out the engineering, planning, area demarcation and project documentation design in 2015-2016
2. New Eurasian Land Bridge	Nov 2014	Upgrade of Greece's Piraeus Port	Under Construction
	2015	Hungary-Serbian High-Speed Railway	Expected
3. China Central and West Asia Economic Corridor	Oct 2013	Constructing a logistics centre for Kazakhstan at the Lianyungang Port of China	Completed
	2015	Upgrade of Kazakhstan's logistics centre at Lianyungang Port in China	Expected
	2015	Building a China-Kazakhstan border cooperation centre and additional cooperation projects	Expected
	Dec 2014	Goku railway (Golmud-Korla Railway), linking Korla in Xinjiang province and Golmud in Qinghai province to facilitate transportation from eastern China to Central Asia	Under Construction
	2008 onwards	Central Asia-China gas pipeline	Three lines are completed and expected to be operational in Q1 2015. The fourth line is planned
4. China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor	2015	China and Thailand agreed to link the two countries with high-speed railways (connecting Thailand to China's Yunnan province)	Expected
5. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor	May 2015	1,320 megawatt coal plant at Sahiwal, Pakistan	Work started
	2015	720 megawatt hydropower project at Karot, Pakistan	Expected to start by the end of 2015 and take about six years to build
	2015	Enhancing facilities and creating new infrastructure at Gwadar Port	Under construction
6. Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor	Sept 2014	Building a modern port city with a business centre at Colombo	Under Construction
7. Internal connectivity in China	2014	Karamay-Tacheng railway*	Expected to be finalised by 2016

* The Karamay-Tacheng railway will be connected with Kazakhstan, forming a part of the land bridge between China and Europe

Source: Zinhua News Agency & Mizuho; AzerNews, 2 March 2015; Source Watch, 23 April 2015; Livemint, 28 April 2015; Times of India, 14 April 2015; Investment Ideas, 12 January 2015

Kaveri R Deshmukh, Vice President (Research), Knight Frank, India.

When Australia stood up for Bangladesh

Ifti Rashid



On March 26, Bangladesh celebrated its forty-fifth Independence Day. As Bengalis pay homage to our Founding Father, Liberation War heroes, and the freedom fighters on this day, it is also a time for us to offer homage to the world leaders who stood by our side during our independence movement and the early years of our nationhood.

Amongst the world leaders who championed our cause for liberation, Australian Labour Party (ALP) Leader, leader of the opposition, and Prime Minister Edward Gough Whitlam's name stands tall in our history.

Whitlam, the twelfth ALP Leader and 21st Australian Prime Minister, is widely recognised as a far-sighted reformer who was well ahead of his time in ushering Australia into an era of international engagement and multiculturalism. He believed in Australia adopting a moral and principled position in foreign policy matters, even if it was at the risk of attracting the ire of big powers.

This was evident when Whitlam played a leading role in building a bi-partisan consensus about Bangladesh as the leader of the opposition in the Australian Federal Parliament in 1971. He had also raised the plight of our humanitarian sufferings at the hands of the Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators at that time.

Australia was eventually the first Western country and fourth in the world to officially recognise Bangladesh on January 31, 1972. In a speech delivered in June 1973 after being elected as PM, Whitlam recollected the bi-partisan and popular support for Bangladesh: "The previous government's prompt recognition of Bangladesh was warmly supported by the whole of Australian people."

Moreover, Whitlam served an invaluable role in lobbying with the international community for Bangladesh to be recognised by the Commonwealth and other countries. On January 20, 1972, the Sydney Morning Herald reported in a news item headlined "Whitlam Talks on Bangladesh: Recognition Urged" that leader of the opposition Whitlam will call for Bangladesh to be recognised by the Commonwealth during his meeting with British PM Edward Heath in London.

Whitlam ranked Bangladesh as one of his most important topics of discussion in London. According to him: "Since Australia is one of the nearest Commonwealth countries to Bangladesh, it should be giving some leadership to other Commonwealth nations over recognition."

As PM, Whitlam continued to hold a strong interest in Bangladesh and South Asia, while supporting all countries in the region to improve relations with each other. He welcomed the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Declaration by India and Bangladesh in 1973 as a "positive initiative." Similarly, he called for friendly relations between India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan after the Simla Agreement in 1973. He also supported Bangladesh's entry into the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) during this period.

Whitlam maintained his support for Bangladesh during our early years and his time in government. Given the importance he attached to Australia's international relations, Whitlam simultaneously held the portfolio of foreign minister for most of his term. He extended a helping hand to Bangladesh's prime minister, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in rebuilding the infrastructure of war-ravaged Bangladesh.

In February 1973, Whitlam announced that Australia would provide 190 Land Rover jeeps worth \$750,000 to Bangladesh as part of the Australian Aid Program. He also announced additional food aid to Bangladesh in June 1973, bringing the total value to almost a million dollars in that financial year.

Under Whitlam, Australia also supported the growth of our national airways – Biman Bangladesh Airlines – during those early years. In June 1973, Australia provided two Fokker F27 200-seat passenger aircrafts worth \$950,000 allowing Biman to expand its domestic and regional routes. In fact, Bangladesh named one of the airplanes "City of Canberra" as a testament to the friendship between both countries under Whitlam and Bangabandhu.

During the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in August 1973 in Canada, Whitlam's efforts paid off, and Bangladesh was formally welcomed to the organisation. Whitlam met Bangabandhu during this meeting, developing a friendship between both countries and leaders that was later followed by an Australian state visit to Bangladesh in January 1975.

Whitlam was accompanied by a high-powered delegation comprising of the Special Minister of State, Secretary of the Department of Minerals and Energy, Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade, and other senior government officials during the state visit on the invitation of Bangabandhu. This was the first (and last, so far) trip by an Australian prime minister to Bangladesh.

During his official talks, Whitlam told Bangabandhu, “Australia is willing to do as much as we can for his country,” and reiterated that “the great sympathy which the Australian government and people felt for the people of Bangladesh.” Whitlam also announced increased Australian aid to Bangladesh, in particular for developing a dairy cattle industry, the establishment of a bakery and expansion of broadcasting facilities. He also recommended international arrangements under which developed countries may use a portion of their petrodollars to finance wheat purchase on credit for Bangladesh.



Photo: Gough and Margaret Whitlam at the opening of Australian Parliament, February 12, 2008. (AAP image/Alan Porritt)

In standing by Bangladesh during its liberation and early years, Whitlam and Australia defied the geopolitical polarisation of that era. No doubt Whitlam showed extraordinary political will, courage, and conviction to support Bangladesh. He had also shown the same foresight and boldness in granting independence to Papua New Guinea, opposing apartheid in South Africa, establishing diplomatic ties with China, and strengthening relationships with Asia. Many of his policies may have appeared to be unorthodox back then, but time has proven his decisions to be farsighted and correct.

Former Australian ambassador Richard Woolcott recently quoted Whitlam in his inimitable manner learning about Bangladesh, Guinea-Bissau and Grenada joining the United Nations and quipping: “Have you seen this, comrade? They are creating these countries faster than I can visit them.” Whitlam was a visionary statesman who believed in a greater role and broader engagement, principled standing, and a compassionate position of Australia in the international community.

This was the foundation of his relationship with Bangladesh. Whitlam, with Bangabandhu, laid the stone for close bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Australia, that encompasses trade, development, environment, security, education, culture, and sports collaboration today. For instance, Bangladesh signed its first bilateral counter-terrorism memorandum-of-understanding (MOU) with Australia in 2008. In cricket, Australia also signed an MOU with the Bangladesh Cricket Board in 2000 for young players to train in Australia.

Whitlam’s legacy is of course his vision of an inclusive, diverse, and multicultural Australia that has paved the way for many Bangladeshi-Australians to make Australia their home. The 2011 Census recorded 27,808 people from Bangladesh living in Australia. This figure does not include first and second generation Australians of Bangladeshi origin, that would add up to a total figure of over 50,000 across Australia.

Australian-Bangladeshis comprise a growing diaspora community group of mostly highly-skilled professional migrants contributing to various fields, including education, science, technology, agriculture, business, etc, today.

Whitlam transformed Australia and its foreign policy positions for the long-run. On the forty-fifth Independence Day of Bangladesh, we remember the contributions of labour leader, leader of the opposition, and Prime Minister Whitlam for his unwavering commitment to our people and country during our liberation and early years.

Whitlam passed away at the age of 98 in 21 October, 2014. Bangladesh lost a great friend who stood by Bengalis in a challenging yet glorious time of our history. May his eternal soul rest in peace.

Ifti Rashid is a political and security analyst, currently a PhD Candidate in the National Centre for South Asian Studies, Monash University, Australia.



Why UAE ministers for happiness, tolerance, youth and the future?

Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum

Over the past few weeks, I have heard and read many questions, comments, and news stories regarding recent changes to the government of the United Arab Emirates. Why, everyone seems to want to know, did we establish a Ministry of Happiness, Tolerance, and the Future, and why did we appoint a 22-year-old Minister of Youth?

The changes reflect what we have learned from events in our region over the past five years. In particular, we have learned that failure to respond effectively to the aspirations of young people, who represent more than half of the population in Arab countries, is like swimming against the tide. Without the energy and optimism of youth, societies cannot develop and grow; indeed, such societies are doomed.

When governments spurn their youth and block their path to a better life, they slam the door in the face of the entire society. We do not forget that the genesis of the tension in our region, the events dubbed the “Arab Spring,” was squarely rooted in the lack of opportunities for young people to achieve their dreams and ambitions.

We are proud that the UAE is a young country. And we are proud of our youth. We invest in them and empower them precisely because they are our future. We believe that they are faster than us in acquiring and processing knowledge, because they have grown up with tools and techniques that we lacked at their age. We entrust them with driving our country to new levels of growth and development, which is why we have now appointed a cabinet minister of their age and created a special council of youth.

We have also learned from hundreds of thousands of dead and millions of refugees in our region that sectarian, ideological, cultural and religious bigotry only fuel the fires of rage. We cannot and will not allow this in our country. We need to study, teach, and practice tolerance and to instill it in our children, both through education and our own example.

That is why we have appointed a Minister of State for Tolerance. We believe that a legal framework should formalize the tolerance our society already displays, and that our policies and initiatives will provide an outstanding example to our neighbors.

When the Arab world was tolerant and accepting of others, it led the world: From Baghdad to Damascus to Andalusia and farther afield, we provided beacons of science, knowledge, and civilization, because humane values were the basis of our relationships with all civilizations, cultures, and religions. Even when our ancestors left Andalusia, people of other faiths went with them.

Tolerance is no catchphrase, but a quality we must cherish and practice. It must be woven into the fabric of our society to safeguard our future and maintain the progress we have made. There can be no bright future for the Middle East

without an intellectual reconstruction that re-establishes the values of ideological openness, diversity, and acceptance of others' viewpoints, whether intellectual, cultural, or religious.

With every lesson we learn comes a decision that will shape our future. But we also know that we can learn by looking to the future, not just the past or present. Simply put, we must think of what life will be like in a post-oil economy. That is why we have invested heavily – more than 300 billion dirhams (\$81.5 billion) – in establishing a focus for the UAE's path ahead, with the aim of preparing for a diverse economy that frees future generations from dependence on the ever-fluctuating oil market.

Achieving that goal requires reconsidering our legislative, administrative, and economic system fully to move away from dependence on oil. We need a strong and appropriate regulatory infrastructure to build a sustainable and diverse national economy for our children and their children.

In writing this commentary, I want to send a clear message to others in our region that change happens by our hands only. Our region does not need a super-strong external power to stop its decline; we need the power from within that can overcome the hatred and intolerance that has blighted life in many neighboring countries.

I am writing to send a message that governments in our region and elsewhere need to revise their roles. The role of government is to create an environment in which people can achieve their dreams and ambitions, not to create an environment that government can control. The point is to empower people, not hold power over them. Government, in short, should nurture an environment in which people create and enjoy their own happiness.

We are not new to this talk about the government's role in promoting happiness. Since the dawn of history, happiness is all that humanity has sought. Aristotle said the state is a living being which develops in seeking the achievement of moral perfection and happiness for individuals. Ibn Khaldun said the same thing. Likewise, the United States Declaration of Independence upholds the pursuit of happiness as every person's right.

In our own time, the United Nations is now calling for changes in the criteria used to measure governmental success from economic indicators to measures related to human happiness and wellbeing. It has dedicated a UN World Day for Happiness to emphasize the importance of this shift.

Focusing on happiness is both feasible and fully justified. Happiness can be measured, and its evaluation is already the subject of many programs and studies. Moreover, it can be developed and its achievement linked to material objectives. Studies have shown that happy people produce more, live longer, and drive better economic development in their communities and countries.

The happiness of individuals, families, and employees, their satisfaction with their lives and optimism for the future, are crucial to our work, which cuts across every sector of government. That is why there must be a minister to guide and follow up with all government institutions (as well as provide leadership to the private sector).

Ours is no empty promise. We will seek to create a society where our people's happiness is paramount, by sustaining an environment in which they can truly flourish. And we hope our formula benefits others in the region. The formula is straightforward: national development based on core values, led by youth and focused on a future in which everyone achieves happiness.



Ohood Al Roumi (22) as Minister of State for Happiness. She remains responsible as DG the Prime Minister's Office.

His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

The State of Kuwait



Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Emir of Kuwait



State of Kuwait | Dawlat al Kuwayt

Background:

Nominally a province of the Ottoman Empire, ruled from Constantinople from the 16th century until the latter part of the 19th century. In that time Sheikh Mubarak Al Sabah or "Mubarak the Great" (r.1896-1915) enters into an agreement with Great Britain, which effectively established Kuwait as an autonomous British protectorate with a semi-autonomous position for the country. Mid-1930s Kuwait began the development of its petroleum industry, the basis of the country's modern prosperity. On June 19, 1961 Kuwait gained full independence from Britain and in 1963 it became a member of the United Nations. Kuwait's sovereignty were critically threatened when Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait on August 2, 1990, claiming that Kuwait was harming Iraq economically by refusing to reduce its oil production. Many Kuwaitis were forced to flee to Saudi Arabia and other countries. Following several weeks of aerial bombardment, an international coalition of 30 states, led by the United States began a ground assault on 23 February 1991 that completely liberated Kuwait in four days. Kuwait has spent more than \$5 billion to repair oil infrastructure damaged during 1990-91.

Country Profile



Official Name:

Dawlat al Kuwayt
 Local short form: Al Kuwayt
 Int'l long form: State of Kuwait
 Int'l short form: Kuwait
 formerly: Qurain (before the 17th century).

Capital City: Kuwait (pop. about 238 000)

Other Towns:

Ahmadi, Jahra, Fahaheel.

Government:

Type: Constitutional Hereditary Amirate (Constitutional monarchy)
 Independence: 19 June 1961
 Constitution: approved and promulgated 11 November 1962.

Border countries: Iraq, Saudi Arabia

Other Gulf States: Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates

Kuwait is a member state of the League of Arab States.

Environment & Nature: Environment Public Authority (EPA)
Prepares and applies public policy for the protection of environment and prepare strategies and action plans to achieve sustainable development.

Arts & Culture: Hala February Festival
Kuwait's celebrations of the National and Independence Days.
Kuwait Society for Formative Arts
Non-profit institution for the art and artists of Kuwait.
National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters
Arts and culture. (in Arabic)
Tareq Rajab Museum
Collection of Islamic arts: calligraphy, pottery, metal-work, glass, wood, ivory and jade carvings as well as textiles, embroideries and jewellery of the Islamic world.

Kuwait News: Kuwait News Agency - KUNA
Only for registered users.
Kuwait Times Newspaper
National and international news.
Radio Kuwait
Kuwait Multimedia Center Daily News from Radio Kuwait. (in Arabic)
Al Qabas
Kuwait News. (in Arabic)
AlWatan
Daily News from Kuwait. (in Arabic)



Kuwait City, Kuwait Towers © Kuwait Information Office

Geography:

Location: Middle East, in the northwestern corner of the Arabian, or Persian Gulf.

Area: 17.820 km² (about 6.880 sq. mi.)

Terrain: Flat sandy desert; no rivers or mountains.

Climate: Intensely hot and dry in summers; short, cool winters with limited rain.

People:

Nationality: Kuwaiti(s)

Population: 3.3 million, including non-Kuwaiti citizens (2008).

GNI per capita PPP: \$ 16,297 (year)

Ethnic groups: Kuwaitis 1 million (30% of total), Arab, South Asian, Iranian, Southeast Asian.

Religion: Islam 85% (most Kuwaiti citizens are Muslim).

Languages: Arabic (official); English widely spoken.

Literacy: male 82%, female 75%.

Natural resources: Petroleum, fish, shrimp, natural gas.

Agriculture products: Practically no crops; fish.

Industries: Petroleum, petrochemicals, desalination, food processing, construction materials.

Exports partners: Japan 21.3%, South Korea 14.9%, USA 11.5%, Singapore 9.8%, Taiwan 9.3% (2003)

Imports partners: USA 14.7%, Japan 10.3%, Germany 9.6%, China 6.6%, UK 6.1%, Saudi Arabia 5.5%, Italy 5%, France 4.2% (2003)

Currency: Kuwaiti Dinar (KWD)

Education: The Public Authority for Applied Education & Training

Kuwait University

Kuwait higher education since 1966.

Transportation: Kuwait Airways

Kuwait Airways Corporation, serves destinations in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, Asia and USA.

Kuwait International Airport.

CEAF Desk Report

Brexit and British National Security

Nick Fishwick



The UK will vote on 23 June to determine whether it remains in or leaves the European Union. Political discourse in Britain is dominated by the subject. What would a vote to leave mean for British national security?

Let's put the issue in perspective. The key pillar of UK national security, globally, is British membership of NATO. That is not at issue on 23 June, nor are the other key pillars of national security – the British nuclear deterrent; professional, flexible and responsive armed forces; world-class security and intelligence services; an influential diplomatic service; a joined-up CT strategy and a coherent cyber plan; etc. No one reading last year's National Security Strategy would think that British membership of the EU was a key part of it.

And the British security and intelligence agencies will be very careful not to get their ties caught in the shredder of the EU debate. They have some critically important relationships with sister agencies in EU countries. But these relationships are essentially country to country, and as with security relationships with non-EU allies, they are not dependent on or facilitated by the EU as an institution. The job of the British agencies will be to keep Britain as safe as they can by keeping these relationships in good shape, regardless of the referendum outcome.

But the vote will still have implications for UK national security. Of course there is a whole set of arguments to be had about whether British exit from the EU ("Brexit") would damage the British economy and so to the UK's ability to fund the key pillars of its National Security Strategy. A vitally important issue, but one perhaps better left to economists and politicians than to security specialists.

However, while NATO is not being voted on, that does not mean the attitudes of the UK's NATO allies to a possible Brexit are not relevant. Central of course is the attitude of the U.S., which has given out pretty unambiguous and bold messages about the undesirability of Brexit. The U.S. fear is that Brexit must weaken the UK's influence over European security, for example the UK's stiffening of European attitudes toward Russian interference with its near neighbours and elsewhere. I think there is also an American respect for the influence that the British security agencies and police have on their European counterparts: the British understand their European counterparts more intimately than the Americans do, and British proposals to enhance EU partners' security capabilities play better with European allies.

The attitude of competitors like Russia doubtless mirrors the anxieties of our allies. Russia would welcome Brexit precisely because of the belief that it would damage the coherence of European responses to Russian actions. Brexit would not just mean that Britain was out of the EU club. It would be a further, and massive, boost to anti-EU nationalists across Europe. The EU's potential loss of coherence would present all sorts of opportunities to its difficult eastern neighbour.

One needs also to remember that European security is not just about security and intelligence agencies. Policing is vital, and here the EU has had a more crucial role. An example here is the Prum system by which EU countries automatically share fingerprint and DNA data. The UK originally opted out of this but had to think again in the light of the ISIS attacks on Paris last year. Clearly, this is an example of where the EU helps European policing and that is a matter not just of containing serious criminality but terrorism too. Incidentally, having a Brit in charge of Europol for the last few years has only been good for European security and could not have happened, presumably, if Britain were not in the EU.

And mention of "European security" should remind us that if Brexit degrades European security, that becomes a threat to British security too. To state the obvious, British people are all over the continent, in numbers: some have settled down to retire in Spain, others permanently or temporarily live across the EU to work, still more prowl the tourist attractions of Rome, Paris, Prague, etc. Even if – a big if – Britain were considered too tough a target by ISIS, British people will still get killed in ISIS attacks on the continent – as happened in Paris. So British people, like British business, in Europe will be more at risk if Brexit damages the security of EU countries.

If Brexit happens, we in Britain will not all wake up the next day to a suddenly more dangerous world. The cornerstones of western security will remain. But our key allies will feel a bit less comfortable, and our enemies and competitors a bit more confident. European policing will be harder. The trust upon which informal, going-the-extra-mile security cooperation depends will be a little weaker. Do we need this, now?

Nick Fishwick CMG is a former member of the British Foreign Office.



40 Interesting Facts about Australia

Ask the question of what Australia is known for to Aussies and foreigners and you'll get answers like Hugh Jackman, Nicole Kidman, Kylie Minogue, kangaroos, koalas, cricket, swimming, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Opera House, Bondi Beach, Aborigines, Minerals, wine and vegemite. Australia is much more than these. Here are 40 interesting facts to share with family, friends and visitors about Australia.

- 1) It is the 6th largest country in the world, occupying an entire continent of some 7.6 million square kilometres.
- 2) It has the world's 3rd largest ocean territory, spanning three oceans and covering around 12 million square kilometres.
- 3) Vegetation covers nearly 7 million square kilometres or 91 percent of Australia.
- 4) The largest Greek population in the world beside Athens in Greece can be found in Melbourne Victoria.
- 5) Most of Australia's exotic flora and fauna cannot be found anywhere else in the world.
- 6) The Indigenous 'Dream Time' is the foundation for tens of thousands of years of spiritual aboriginal art, traditions, legends, myths, folklore and culture.
- 7) The only nation-continent of 20 million people in the world.
- 8) The wattle was adopted as the national floral emblem in 1912.
- 9) The first Australian Friendly Society with the motto of 'Advance Australia' was the Australian Natives' Association (ANA) formed in Victoria in 1871.
- 10) More than 80 percent of Australians live within 100 kilometres of the coast making Australia one of the world's most urbanised coastal dwelling populations.
- 11) Over 200 different languages and dialects are spoken in Australia including 45 Indigenous languages. The most common non-English spoken languages are Italian, Greek, Cantonese, Arabic, Vietnamese and Mandarin.
- 12) The world's highest proportion of migrant settlers in a developed nation with over 25% of Australians born in another country.
- 13) Today's Australia is very multicultural with Indigenous peoples and migrants from some 200 countries.
- 14) Australia's first small step to a fully multicultural Australia was the result of immigrants from Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean after 1945.
- 15) It contains an amazing ecosystem with unique flora and fauna including pristine rainforest, ancient rock formations and beautiful beaches.

- 16) The first Australian of the Year award was awarded to Professor Macfarlane Burnet who had won the Nobel Prize in the same year of 1960 for his groundbreaking physiology research.
- 17) Debate continues today on the calls to change the Australian flag because of the prominence of the British Union Jack, which does not reflect contemporary Australian society.
- 18) It has 16 world heritage listed sites including historic townships, cities and landscapes.
- 19) While 1988 was named a 'Year of Mourning' for Aboriginals, it was also regarded as a celebration of survival where the Aboriginal community staged a 5 kilometre march for "Freedom, Justice and Hope" in Sydney.
- 20) Australia used to be a beer-drinking nation but its quaffing plunged to a 65-year low in 2010-2011 with only 4.23 litres consumed per person.
- 21) Aboriginal leader, Lowitja O'Donoghue, a recipient of the Order of Australia in 1976 and Australian of the Year in 1984 delivered the first milestone national Australia Day address on 26 January 2000.
- 22) It is believed that the Aboriginal game of Mangrook inspired the rules for Australian Football, while invented in Sydney became popular in Victoria.
- 23) Australia was the second country in the world to give women the right to vote in 1902.
- 24) The largest cattle station in the world is Anna Creek Station in South Australia at over 34,000 square kilometres is the world's largest cattle station. It is even larger than Belgium.
- 25) It has the highest rate of gambling in the world with over 80 percent of Australian adults engaging in gambling of some kind and 20 percent of the pokie machines in the world are found in Australia.
- 26) Australia Day today is a celebration of diversity and tolerance in Australian society, embracing all ethnic backgrounds, racial differences and political viewpoints.
- 27) Kangaroo meat can be purchased from the supermarket, butcher and available on restaurant menus as a leaner and healthier alternative to beef or lamb with a 1-2 percent fat content.
- 28) Surprisingly Australia is the most obese country in the world as of 2012 with a 26 percent obesity rate despite being a sport loving nation.
- 29) Approximately 1.35 trillion bottles of wine are produced by Australia.
- 30) Former Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd's national apology to Indigenous Australians in 2007 is viewed by many as a major milestone in reconciliation.
- 31) The hold of the old White Australia Policy was broken by Gough Whitlam's Labor Government which adopted a broader approach to citizenship and opening migration to Asia and the Middle East.
- 32) Australian TV networks love cooking shows, airing one after another upon viewership success of My Kitchen Rules and MasterChef.
- 33) Canberra was selected as the capital because Sydney and Melbourne could not stop arguing which city should be the capital of Australia.
- 34) Australians refer to English people as Pome, which is actually the acronym for Prisoners of Mother England.
- 35) Ugg boots or as local call them 'very ugly boots' are an Australian design where a sheepskin has been turned inside out and made into a boot.
- 36) Melbourne topped 140 rivals to be crowned the world's most liveable city 2 years in a row since 2011.
- 37) The only place in the world where you can still find the lung fish which is a living fossil from the Triassic period 350 million years ago.
- 38) The sports capital of the world has 70 percent of its total population participating at least once a week in a particular recreational activity or sport.
- 39) Despite having a convict colony history, Australia's homicide rate is 1.2 per 100,000 population compared to the 6.3 per 100,000 in the United States.
- 40) 80 percent of Australians believe Australia has a strong culture and identity characterised by being down to earth, mateship, honesty, sports and multiculturalism based on research organised by the Australia Day Council of NSW in 2008.

Holi celebrated in Ottawa's Parliament for first time



Canadian MPs join members of the Indo-Canadian community to celebrate Holi in Ottawa

With Indo-Canadians growing in prominence in the country, the first Holi celebrations were held at the parliament complex on 24 March, 2016 with MPs joining members of the community to play the festival of colour.

The event, an initiative of Chandra Arya, a liberal MP with his roots in Karnataka, India was organised with the support of the High Commission of India and was attended by over 300 people, according to Times of India.

The venue was decorated with Indian motifs and Holi visuals and the guests were adorned with Holi colours upon their arrival. A message of spreading friendship and love from Canada PM Justin Trudeau was read by MP Ramesh Sangha, shortly after a peace-incantation by a priest from the local Durga temple here. "(Holi is)... an opportunity to renew friendships and celebrate peace, but it is also a time to reflect on traditional notions of good and evil, and the ultimate triumph of light over darkness," read the message from PM Trudeau.

Indian High Commissioner Vishnu Prakash also spoke of friendship, love and harmony, while explaining how Holi is played by 1.3 billion Indians regardless of age, gender, caste and religion.

The evening's highlight was a dance-drama based on the origin of the festival and it was followed by a reception where guests enjoyed popular Indian dishes.

Melanie Joly, Minister of Heritage, was also amongst the guests here and took the opportunity to commend the contribution of the Indo-Canadian community in enriching the socio-economic vitality of multi-cultural Canada.

There are now four cabinet ministers of Indian descent in the Trudeau cabinet, including Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan, and their leadership in public affairs, science, academics, business and even entertainment is widely recognised.

Source: *The Indian Diaspora, Canada.*

AUSTRALIA | Factsheet

Country Name: Conventional long form: Commonwealth of Australia Conventional short form: Australia			Area (sq km)	
			Total: 7,686,850	Land: 7,617,930 Territory sea: 68,920
Government type: Democratic, federal-state system recognizing the British monarch as sovereign			Social Indicator*	
			Founding: 1 January 1901 (federation of UK colonies)	
			Capital: Canberra	
			Population: 23,630 (est., 000)	
			Population growth rate - average annual % - 2010-2015: 1.3	
			Sex ratio - total pop; males per 100 females; 2014: 99.0	
			Life expectancy at birth – f & m, 2010-2015: 84.7/80.2	
			Literacy (total pop): 100%	
			Economic Indicators (2013)*	
			Labour force participation, adult female pop. (%): 58.8	
			Labour force participation, adult male pop. (%): 71.8	
			GDP (million current US\$): 1,531,282	
			GDP Growth rate at constant 2005 prices (annual %): 2.9	
			GDP per capita (current US\$): 65,600.5	
			GDP (million current US\$): 1,531,282	
			GDP (million current US\$): 1531282	

Source: <http://geography.about.com> * UN Data

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Happiness, Tolerance, Youth and the Future



Rising Asia

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