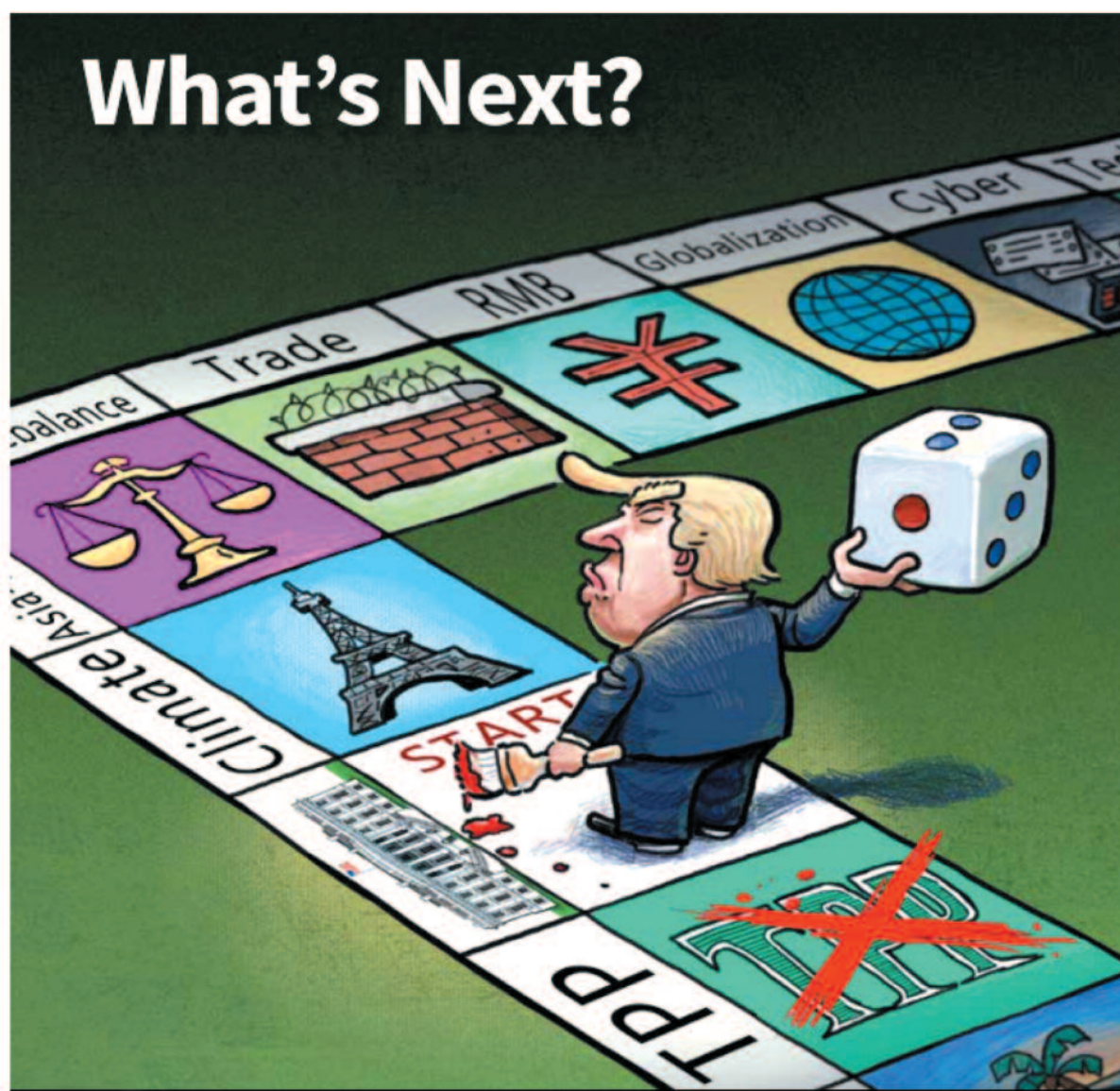


Rising Asia

April - June 2017 Issue 9



Bangladesh: Miracle of The East
The Belt & Road: New Cooperation & Development
Pakistan & China: Don't Fear Chabahar Port
What Does Trump's "America First" Outlook Mean for Sino-US?
Erdogan: Turkey May Have Brexit-Like Referendum on EU

People's Congresses: Democracy Behind China's Success Story
Modi's Massive Mandate Heralds Major Changes
BRICS Plus: The Bloc That Will Dominate The World
South Korea, Japan Condemn Pyongyang's Missile Launches
Russia, Iran Sign Economic Cooperation Deals



Beautiful Bangladesh





Rising Asia

A Quarterly Magazine of CEAF

Issue - 9
April-June, 2017

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



We wish to express our sincere appreciation and thanks to the Honorable Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government for giving Republic of Kosovo official recognition. A cabinet meeting held on February 27, 2017 has approved the recognition of the Republic of Kosovo as a sovereign and independent country. With this approval, Bangladesh has become the 114th country to recognize Kosovo's independence. This would pave the way for a strong bond of friendship between the two countries, the governments and the peoples.

China has said it will give a global push to its ambitious Silk Road initiative after a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution called for its implementation by member states. In the resolution 2344, unanimously adopted by the 15 member UNSC on March 17, the concept of building a community of shared future for mankind was incorporated for the first time, reflecting global consensus over the Silk Road initiative project. The multi-billion dollar 'One Belt, One Road' (OBOR) initiative is the official name of the Silk Road or The Belt and Road Project.

China will host an international summit on 'One Belt, One Road' in Beijing on 14-15 May, 2017. The initiative will organize a closer cooperation between 60 countries from Asia to the Middle East, Africa, East and Central Europe. The summit shall push the energy for the interconnected development to ensure the aim of building a trade infrastructure network along the Silk Road trade routes. We think it's a very important event and occasion, and in some respect, it is becoming as important as the G20 summit.

'The OBOR' is President Xi Jinping's landmark program to invest billions of dollars in infrastructure projects including railways, ports, roads and power grids across Asia, Africa and Europe. Since 2013, The Belt and Road initiative has won support from over 100 countries and international organizations, among which 40 countries including Bangladesh has signed agreements with China. More than 20 heads of state and government, over 50 leaders of international organizations, over 100 ministerial-level officials, as well as over 1200 delegates from various countries and regions will participate in summit in May.

We are hopeful that this mega international summit on the Belt and Road initiative will be a strategic measure to boost the world economy, an important platform to deepen international cooperation and China's innovative practice to implement the concept of win-win cooperation.

Weekly, daily, indeed sometimes hourly, we have trouble believing what we see coming out of the Trump White House. It can be difficult to turn our gaze from the stupefying parade of announcements and events and tweets and leaks – and leaks, and leaks – that show the White House at once wholly undisciplined, while trying to impose an ideological discipline upon the nation's capital that finds no modern precedent in either party.

Trump says that he trusts German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Russian President Vladimir Putin equally. Does that imply that the United States will pursue a policy of equidistance between the EU and the Kremlin? It is not an idle question. Trump has made it obvious that established partnerships, alliances, rules and protocols mean little to him. He rants about the media, attacks independent judges, targets individuals and companies, and belittles international organizations. And What's Next?

God bless Mr. Donald Trump, the President of the United States of America!

Best Regards

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COSMOPOLITAN CITY: A bird's eye view of the sprawling capital, Dhaka.

Bangladesh: Miracle of the East

The country has remained resilient and continues on with its economic growth trajectory

Muhammad Imran



Ibn Battuta, a fourteenth century Moroccan traveller and scholar who visited Bengal in 1346 AD, described this region as a water-soaked garden of immense fertility and opulence with abundance of food grains where most of the people were engaged in agriculture and in weaving textiles.

After almost seven centuries, the description of this renowned globetrotter still somehow fits to this deltaic plain of lush greenery that emerged in 1971 as an independent nation, Bangladesh. Today, this densely populated country of 144,000 sq km produces enough food for its

160 million people and with a booming apparel industry. Bangladesh is the second largest exporter of ready-made garments in the world. Although more than 50 per cent of the GDP is generated through the service sector, almost half of Bangladeshis are employed in the agriculture sector, with rice as the single-most-important product.

The nine-month war of liberation of Bangladesh in 1971 not only ravaged the economy but also completely destroyed the physical infrastructure of the country to such an extent that the country was ridiculed as a 'basket case' by a leading diplomat of that time. But the people of Bangladesh overcame this perilous economic and social condition with enormous courage and determination. They have strived and succeeded to rise from the ashes to bring vibrancy in the economy with continued expansion of infrastructural facilities.

Bangladesh has now become a role model for fighting



poverty, empowering women and disaster management. It had met most targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the areas of health and education. Life expectancy at birth in the country is 71 years, at least five years higher than that of its neighbours.

Bangladesh has made commendable progress over the past 40 years in achieving food security despite frequent natural disasters and population growth. Food grain production increased three and half times between 1972 and 2016, from 10 million tonnes to 35 million tonnes with one of the fastest rates of productivity growth in the world averaging 2.7 per cent per year since 1995. It is the fourth largest producer of rice in the world. Bangladesh's agricultural sector has benefited from a sound and consistent policy framework backed up by substantial public investments in technology, rural infrastructure and human capital.

From an agrarian economy of 1970s, the economy is now increasingly led by export-oriented industrialisation. Bangladesh has become an example of growth, progress and development for the emerging economies. With a continued average economic growth of over 6 per cent during the last 10 years and despite various challenges faced as a developing country, Bangladesh now proudly stands as an emerging trade and investment destination in South Asia. The steady growth in export business, hard-working labour force and committed entrepreneurs supported by the pro-business, pro-investment policies are leading Bangladesh towards the line of global business competency.

Bangladesh's unequivocal position for peace, harmony and regional stability together with the determined policy for economic cooperation and development through international as well as regional trade have helped the country achieve and retain this impressive economic status. Despite all odds at national and international levels, Bangladesh has remained resilient and continued on with its economic growth trajectory, recording an impressive GDP growth rate of 7.1 per cent in 2016.

Garment exports, the backbone of Bangladesh's industrial sector, accounted for more than 80 per cent of total exports of \$34.25 billion and surpassed \$28 billion in 2016. The sector continues to grow. Other key sectors include pharmaceuticals, ceramics, leather goods, and electronics and light and medium industries. It is a major destination of global IT outsourcing and a globally acknowledged builder of ocean-going vessels. Bangladesh is one of the top bicycle exporters to the EU countries. The growth has been nurtured and sustained by adop-

tion of newer technologies keeping pace with outside world. Bangladesh now has 130 million mobile phone users and about 60 million people are connected to the Internet.

Steady export growth combined with increasing flow of remittances from 10 million overseas Bangladeshis living across the world, which totalled about \$15 billion, are the largest contributors to Bangladesh's sustained economic growth. Bangladesh has also attained a satisfactory foreign currency reserve of \$32 billion in recent months.

According to the World Bank and IMF, the Gross Domestic Product (based on current price) of Bangladesh is now \$227 billion. It ranks Bangladesh as 44th in the world economy in terms of GDP. According to the World Bank, that will rise to \$322 billion by 2021. Goldman Sachs had termed Bangladesh's economy as 'the miracle of East'.

In Bangladesh, a strong middle class is gradually forming which according to some estimates is close to 18 per cent of the population. Due to emerging middle class of about 30 million and in general better income level of common people, domestic demand is growing and that becomes an important driver of economic activity.

Bangladesh has been consistent in pursuing a policy of "friendship to all and malice towards none" as enshrined in the constitution. Bangladesh enjoys excellent relations with the member states of the UN. For more than two decades, Bangladesh remains a leading contributor to the UN peacekeeping missions across the globe. Currently, about 10,000 personnel from the armed forces and civil service of Bangladesh are assisting friendly countries under the UN peacekeeping missions.

The present government under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has adopted a long-term perspective plan and has been working hard to transform Bangladesh into a knowledge based middle-income economy (by raising the per capita income to \$2,000 which now stands at \$1,466) by 2021. It also aspires to become a developed country by 2041 and thus realise the dream of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to build a Sonar Bangla or Golden Bengal.

Muhammad Imran is currently the Bangladesh Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This article was first published at the *Khaleej Times* on March 26, 2017.

The Recognition of Kosovo by Bangladesh: New opportunity and dimension for Bangladesh Diplomacy

S.M Rashed Ahmed



I would like to thank Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Government for giving Republic of Kosovo official recognition. This would pave the way for a strong bond of friendship between the two countries, the governments and the peoples. I also wish to express my sincere

appreciation and thanks to Prof Dr Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah Secretary General Bangladesh Kosovo Forum (BKF) along with other colleagues for their tiring effort and support for the recognition of Kosovo by Bangladesh.

We have a shared history with Kosovo. Both the countries have fought for their independence. Like us, they are also victims of genocide and have long history of denial of rights and autonomy that eventually gave birth to an independent Kosovo after long political struggle and bloody war of Independence. Like us they also started their struggle for independence peacefully under the leadership of Ibrahim Rugova who is called the Gandhi of the Balkans. He wanted a non-violent resolution of the Kosovo crisis with Serbian dictator Milosovic and his military responded with bullets. They have freedom fighters like Hashim Thaçi, former prime minister who is now the President of Kosovo, Adam Jeshari one of the the bravest freedom fighters of Kosovo, who was the founder of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and other freedom fighters. Adam Jeshari single handedly fought against the Serbian Security forces and was killed along with his entire family. The birth of KLA was due to disproportionate use of force by Serbian dictator Milosovic. Instead of a negotiated settlement of the Kosovo crisis with the Albanians leadership. He decided to opt for a military solution to the conflict by policy of ethnic and

religious cleansing of Kosovo Albanians. This led to bloody arm struggle including forcible expulsion of million of Albanian men, women and children who fled as refugees into neighboring countries.

All diplomatic efforts by the West failed to persuade Milosovic to cease the policy of brutal repression and force to resolve the crisis peacefully though a negotiated settlement of the crisis acceptable to all parties. NATO decided on humanitarian intervention on 24th March 1999 by air strikes against strategic targets inside Yugoslavia.

Milosovic countered through a coordinated operation of ethnic cleansing of Kosovo Albanians on an unprecedented scale forcing nearly six hundred thousand Kosovo Albanians mostly women, children and elderly to leave Kosovo as refugees while killing, maiming and detaining the Albanians young men. In the ensuing battle between the Serbian security forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) backed by the NATO the Serbian security forces suffered heavy casualties in the hills and village of Kosovo. When NATO threatened to take military action on the ground, Milosovic decided to accept the UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1244 for a cease-fire. Consequently NATO also decided to suspend further military action against Serbian military targets in Kosovo.

UN resolution 1244, inter-alia, placed Kosovo under a UN interim Administration (UNMIK) to oversee administration of Kosovo, holding of local elections, ensuring return of the refugees and displaced persons, withdrawal of Serbian armed forces from Kosovo and disarming of the KLA.

The recognition of Kosovo by Bangladesh is a welcome development. It has added a new dimension to our diplomacy. The implications for the international community are important. Bangladesh has joined other countries which have recognized Kosovo in reaffirming the principle that there would be no reward for ethnic or religious cleansing wherever it takes place. Bangladesh also upholds the principle of humanitarian intervention when a massive violation of human rights takes place in



UN Regional Administrator to Kosovo Ambassador Rashed Ahmed seen with brave freedom fighter Ramush Hardinje.

any country forcing its citizens to flee to other countries for safety and security and become refugees. At this point the plea of the country involved in such massive violation of human rights that the issue is an internal matter for that country is unacceptable under humanitarian international law. In this context the humanitarian intervention by NATO forces in Kosovo, at the initiative of president Clinton in 1999 involving air strikes on the Serbian security forces following decision of Milosovic to embark on massive ethnic cleansing of Kosovo Albanians sets a welcome precedent in international humanitarian law. This paved the way for the return of millions of Kosovo Albanians refugees and displaced person to their homes and setting up of the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) under Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1244. The UN resolution 1244, also eventually led to a negotiated settlement of the Kosovo crisis.

In my capacity as the UN Regional Administrator of Kosovo, the first diplomat from a developing country to hold the post, I was fortunate to be able to make my modest contribution to the process of peaceful resolution of the Kosovo crisis. As the Regional Administrator of Mitrovica I sustained the process of direct negotiations initiated by my predecessor David Mitchels involving the elected presidents of three Albanian municipalities in the south of Mitrovica region and three presidents of the

Serbian municipalities in the north of Mitrovica. Mitrovica was characterized a de facto partition between the Kosovo Albanians in the South and the Kosovo Sarbians in the North separated by river Ibar and connected by a bridge on the river. The bloody Kosovo conflict started from this region. Even after the conflict was over there were frequent interethnic clashes on the bridge between the two ethnic groups. The agonizing negotiations and dialogue took place in the UN Regional head quarters in Mitrovica and lasted for months.

I was ably assisted by the French KFOR General, the Irish police commander and the UNMIK Municipal Administrators of the region, among others. The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) in Kosovo also gave his personal support by visiting Mitrovica region, and participating in the discussions between the Albanian and Serbian municipal elective presidents whenever possible. The fact that the two antagonistic parties involving local elected Albanian and Serbian leaders had begun to talk among themselves with the UN Regional Administrator acting as an honest broker was by it self a diplomatic success considering that there were no direct communication between them after the bloody conflict. There were frequent outburst of violence between the two ethnic communities separated by the bridge dividing the Albanian majority in the South and the Serbian majority in the north. This painstaking process of dialogue and negotiations between Kosovo Albanians and the Serbian leadership in Mitrovica region significantly contributed to the eventual resolution of the complex issue of the status of Kosovo. Though there was continued opposition from Belgrade backed by Russia, Kosovo declared its independence through a vote of the parliament on February 17, 2008.

I wish to place on record that during my tenure with

UNMIK I received invaluable support and guidance from the Deputy Secretary General (DSRG) Mr. Tom Koenig. He is to my mind, one of the finest and dedicated breed of eminent German personalities I had the privilege of interacting and working with him among other distinguish personalities.

The historic process of building a democratic, multi-religious and multi-cultural Kosovo is ongoing. Its success is crucial to building democratic multi cultural, multi religious societies in other states of former Yugoslavia particularly in Serbia dominated by the rise of the radicals and haunted by the ghost of Melosovic. The international community support to the process of ensuring peace and stability in the Balkans is essential for achieving global peace and for success in the fight against the menace of terrorism, militancy and extremism afflicting the world at large.

The recognition of Kosovo by Bangladesh would be mutually benefited. Politically, the vision of two countries is more or less identical. Both Bangladesh and Kosovo are Muslim majority countries with secular orientations. About 90 percent of the Kosovo people are Muslims but they are secular and tolerant like Bangladeshis. They are more proud of their Albanian culture than their religion which they consider as a personal matter. They are culturally rich nation music, dance, art, literature, painting etc. are part of their life like Bangladeshis. Kosovo is an excellent example of multi cultural, religious, tolerant, and democratic society in the heart of Europe. This is significant. Bangladesh is also multi cultural, religious, tolerant, democratic, and secular state. Hence two muslim majority tolerant democratic and secular states would have favorable impact on other emerging nations with muslim majority populations. The aspiration of Kosovo to join European Union. They have scarce resources but with dynamic young population they want to create a modern forward looking nation. Currently their emphasis is on revamping their education sector to lay the basis of an enlightened society, among other priorities. When I asked a gathering of young people as to what kind of university they want to have. They said that, they want first class English medium Universities along with Albanian ones so that they can integrate with modern world and become competitive.

A war ravaged economy needs everything to rebuild their economy for development. Kosovo is seeking economic cooperation involving joint venture projects, investments, banking and need help in agriculture sector etc.

Kosovans see Bangladesh as model of war ravaged country which has achieved remarkable development since its Independence. Kosovo can, therefore, be a promising destination for our businessmen and Private sector investments in particular as the price of goods in Europe are increasingly becoming costlier. Bangladesh would need to tap the opportunity in Kosovo given its needs.

Of the lessons learnt from UN experience in Kosovo is that there is no durable military solution to essentially political, religious, sectarian ethnic and such conflicts. It is time for the world to opt for patient negotiations and diplomacy. The outcome achieved through such peaceful means are generally more lasting as violence, conflicts and wars create perpetual hatred in the hearts and minds of the people. It is said 'If war begins in the hearts and minds of the people, it is in their hearts that defenses of peace should be built'.

It has become clear from the lessons of the past world wars and subsequent wars and conflicts in recent times on the tragic consequences, inhuman sufferings these inflict on civilians particularly aged persons, women and children including flow of refugees fleeing from the holocaust of wars and conflicts. This humanitarian tragedy is too deep for tears. These unfortunate victims of war and conflict which they did not want or initiate have to pay with their tear and blood; they can neither live in their own homeland nor wanted in the country of refuge; specially women and children become victim of human trafficking, gang rape, torture and other forms of abuse and exploitation.

Critically wars, conflicts, unresolved disputes, growing rise of radicalism, anti-semitism, islamophobia and intolerance; lack of respect for diversity and democratic ideals feed into the narratives of ISIS and of the terrorist outfits to sow hatred, divide peoples and nations to further their sinister agenda. It is only in an environment of peace and stability that the menace of global and national terrorism can be effectively fought and eliminated.

In the ultimate analysis nations and peoples, cutting across geographical boundaries, divides and differences will have to work collectively to find non-violent resolution to all problems, disputes and conflicts afflicting humanity for global peace and inclusive development.

S.M. Rashed Ahmed was a former UN Regional Administrator in Kosovo and former Bangladesh Ambassador to Japan.



BRICS Plus: ‘The Bloc That Will Dominate the World’

The proposed enlargement of BRICS (BRICS Plus) with the inclusion of powerful emerging economies would help fill the void created by US trade protectionism, international analyst Adrian Zelaia told Sputnik.

Having analyzed Beijing’s idea to bring Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Nigeria, South Korea, Mexico, Turkey, Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam into the BRICS group, consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, Zelaia, the president of Ekai Center consulting company, concluded that this could come as a response to Washington’s decision to pull out from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement.

Zelaia said in an interview with Sputnik Mundo “The dissolution of the TPP, established to maintain US domination in Asia, created a void BRICS can now move in to fill and play a bigger role among the emerging economies,”

He added that BRICS, which until now served as “a symbolical counterbalance to the West,” could now become “a leader of the global economic order” and could eventually dominate the global economy.

“The BRICS countries use a development model that, apart from trade, also prioritizes strategic investments into future progress. Most of the new inclusions are part of the New Silk Road project of Eurasian investments in infrastructure and communications,” Adrian Zelaia noted.

He added “This infrastructure would kick-start a Chinese model of development where money lost by one country does not necessarily make the other country richer. Instead, it encourages everyone to come up with new ideas and generate projects that benefit all.”

It looks like the proposed enlargement of the five-nation BRICS will not be an easy ride though. India, for one, is wary of the inclusion of new countries, some of which share common borders with India and have strained relations with New Delhi.

“This could prove a serious hurdle now that China’s economic might makes generating new partnerships easy, while India is virtually unable to look for potential candidates among its allies. Which means that an ideal option will be hard to find,” Adrian Zelaia said in conclusion.

The concept of BRICS Plus within BRICS, the brainchild of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, has put India on the back foot, primarily since the Plus grouping could mean an invite for rival Pakistan into the five-nation group.

Source: SPUTNIK.



Members of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) sing the national anthem during the closing meeting of the fifth session of the 12th CPPCC National Committee at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, March 13, 2017. (Xinhua/Rao Aimin)

People's Congresses: Democracy Behind China's Success Story

China's system of people's congresses is in the spotlight again as the fifth session of the 12th National People's Congress (NPC), the country's top legislature opened on 5 March, 2017.

Rather than creating policy conundrums or delays ~ as is often the case with parliaments in some Western nations when the ruling party or coalition does not hold a majority ~ the people's congress system lends support to and supervises the government to achieve effective governance and rule of law.

The NPC Standing Committee, a permanent body of the NPC, provides oversight and has been active in inspecting whether governments comply with the law. In 2016, it conducted six inspections, covering about 30 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities.

Take the inspection on the enforcement of the

Environmental Protection Law, for instance. The NPC Standing Committee made a report after inspecting factories and holding seminars and organized a Q&A-style meeting with officials from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and other departments about issues in law enforcement.

Additionally, a document was sent to the General Office of the State Council, which is expected to give a follow-up report in April on how the government has handled the issues.

Such a process is conducive to solving problems popping up in law enforcement and safeguarding the authority of laws.

According to the Constitution, the people's congress system is the fundamental political system in China, with about 2.6 million deputies at various levels.

At the pinnacle of the system sits the NPC, which super-



[Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), presides over the closing meeting of the fifth session of the 12th National Committee of the CPPCC at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, March 13, 2017.] (Xinhua/Li Xueren)

development of the big data industry. In August of that year, the promoting big data.

Zhou is only one example of how people's congresses and their deputies contribute to effective decision-making in China.

Zhou's suggestions originated from his study and close contact with local communities. Actually, NPC deputies at various levels are key channels for community voices, reflecting local opinions and problems and enabling people to be masters of the nation. Deputies are both entitled and obliged to stand for the people's interests and express their requests, rather than acting as the voice of money and power.

vises the State Council, China's cabinet, as well as the top court and procuratorate.

With nearly 3,000 deputies, the NPC is different from the legislatures in Western political systems.

In China's political system, the NPC is the supreme organ of state power. The central government, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate answer to the NPC and are supervised by it. In the West, the parliament stands equally with the administration and justice arms, and the three balance and checks each another.

This vertical design has the advantages of uniting different forces in governance and avoiding internal frictions.

The system of people's congresses is designed to include people from various backgrounds and cover a good cross-section of society.

Compared with legislators in the West who make politics their career and usually have a staff and campaign team, NPC deputies are part-time and many of them are ordinary citizens.

A deputy to the NPC can be the country's president or a farmer, a celebrated tycoon or a migrant worker, a lawyer or an official.

As an NPC deputy, Zhou Guohui, director of the Department of Science and Technology of Zhejiang Province, proposed a free trade park in the eastern province's Zhoushan City during the sessions in 2013, 2014 and 2016.

His persistence worked. Last August, the province was approved, together with six other regions, to set up a free trade zone.

Motions and proposals initiated by Zhou also include one in 2015 stressing the need to boost the State Council approved an action framework for

Source: Xinhua.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi

BJP President Amit Shah

Modi's massive mandate heralds major changes

Dr. Rajiv Kumar



Even diehard optimists did not expect the electoral verdict of the recent elections. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won an incredible 406 of the 690 seats on offer (or 59 per cent of the total). Its footprint now extends from Manipur to Gujarat and from Jammu and Kashmir to Andhra Pradesh. It is now the pole around which the Indian political economy will evolve in the foreseeable future.

Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi's most trenchant critics must now recognise that he has charted a new course in Indian politics. He has the credibility, legitima-

cy and trust that no other leader has had in recent times.

The question to ask is whether he, like former Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, will allow this unparalleled leadership status to be squandered away — or even worse, whether he will use it to weaken and destroy India's democratic institutions. Or will he use this historical mandate to steer India down the path of sustained, inclusive and rapid growth until 2046, the centenary of India having overthrown its colonial yoke?

By 2046, India should have successfully generated a sufficient number of jobs for its young population and established a pluralistic society with a truly federal polity — a breathtaking prospect of a successful triple transition. This could well serve as a model for other emerging economies in the coming decades.

The portents are good that Modi will not let this histori-



cal opportunity go to waste. This was best reflected in his clarion call to BJP leaders and workers assembled at the BJP's headquarters to 'bend down' with humility in the wake of this tremendous victory and shun arrogance and hubris.

One sincerely hopes this message will be grasped by the BJP leadership, but this may not be easy – especially now that they see, for the first time in an independent India, the clear prospect of remaining in office for at least a decade.

But this humility is a necessary condition for preventing alienation and disenchantment from setting in. These sentiments do not take long to fester, and BJP president Amit Shah will have to firmly and persistently pass on the Prime Minister's message to his party colleagues.

Modi also reached out to ordinary folk by asking them to take a pledge for India's transformation by 2022 and make development into a people's movement. This is a huge shift from the past feudal attitudes of India's political leaders, whose victory speeches have smacked of patronage to be doled out by a 'mai baap sarkar' to hapless people who would passively wait for the next five years before again exercising their democratic rights and vent their frustrations.

Modi's exhortation to both party members and common citizens for an unrelenting effort towards India's rapid transformation is reminiscent of Mahatma Gandhi's call for not stopping with independence and continuing the struggle until the tear was wiped from every eye. This is also the essence of Deendayal Upadhyaya's Antyodaya – the BJP's guiding principle.

In Modi, India has a leader with a bold vision for the country who backs it with tireless effort, and demands the same from the bureaucracy. This push can be the basis for putting in place a development state in Delhi and the state capitals, which is critical for ensuring an efficient and leak-proof delivery of public goods and services. This alone will guarantee Antyodaya or the lifting of those at the bottom of the pyramid.

Will the bureaucracy, now that it knows that Modi is likely to be in power until 2024, respond more positively to his agenda for efficient, transparent and more accountable governance? Perhaps. It did so in Gujarat once the continuity of his tenure was assured. Nevertheless, gover-

nance in Gujarat has reportedly deteriorated after Modi's departure.

Modi may consider necessary administrative reforms to alter the incentive structure for senior bureaucrats and link it more tightly with performance and merit. Only then will the development state persist beyond his tenure. Having effectively secured the mandate for two terms, Modi would do well to start the process now so that results can accrue in his next term.


This may be a necessary condition for achieving the Vision 2022 goals that he outlined in his victory speech.

Finally, Uttar Pradesh voters have voted for Modi with the hope that their state will catch up with the rest of the country. One important difference between Uttar Pradesh and other states is its humongous size – its geographical spread, extreme regional diversity and large population make for dysfunctional governance.

So the next BJP chief minister of Uttar Pradesh should be the last chief minister of a unified state. The BJP has in the past shown its preference for smaller states. With his majority in the Lok Sabha and now in Lucknow, Modi is best placed to make this much-needed change. Four smaller states will be far more conducive to good governance. As Modi said himself, only when Uttar Pradesh moves will India's progress be assured. Dividing the state into four is perhaps a necessary condition for this critical forward movement.

Dr. Rajiv Kumar is Founding Director of the *Pahle India Foundation*.

QUOTABLE QUOTE



**There is nothing
on this earth more
to be prized than
true friendship.**

Thomas Aquinas

"Belt and Road" initiative



The Belt and Road Initiative: the way forward

Sabena Siddiqi



Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the "Belt and Road" (B&R) initiative in late 2013. It comprises the "Belt," which is a network of roads across the world, and "the Road" which is actually a network of shipping lanes and ports. The project has a geo-strategic component focused on advancing China's economic

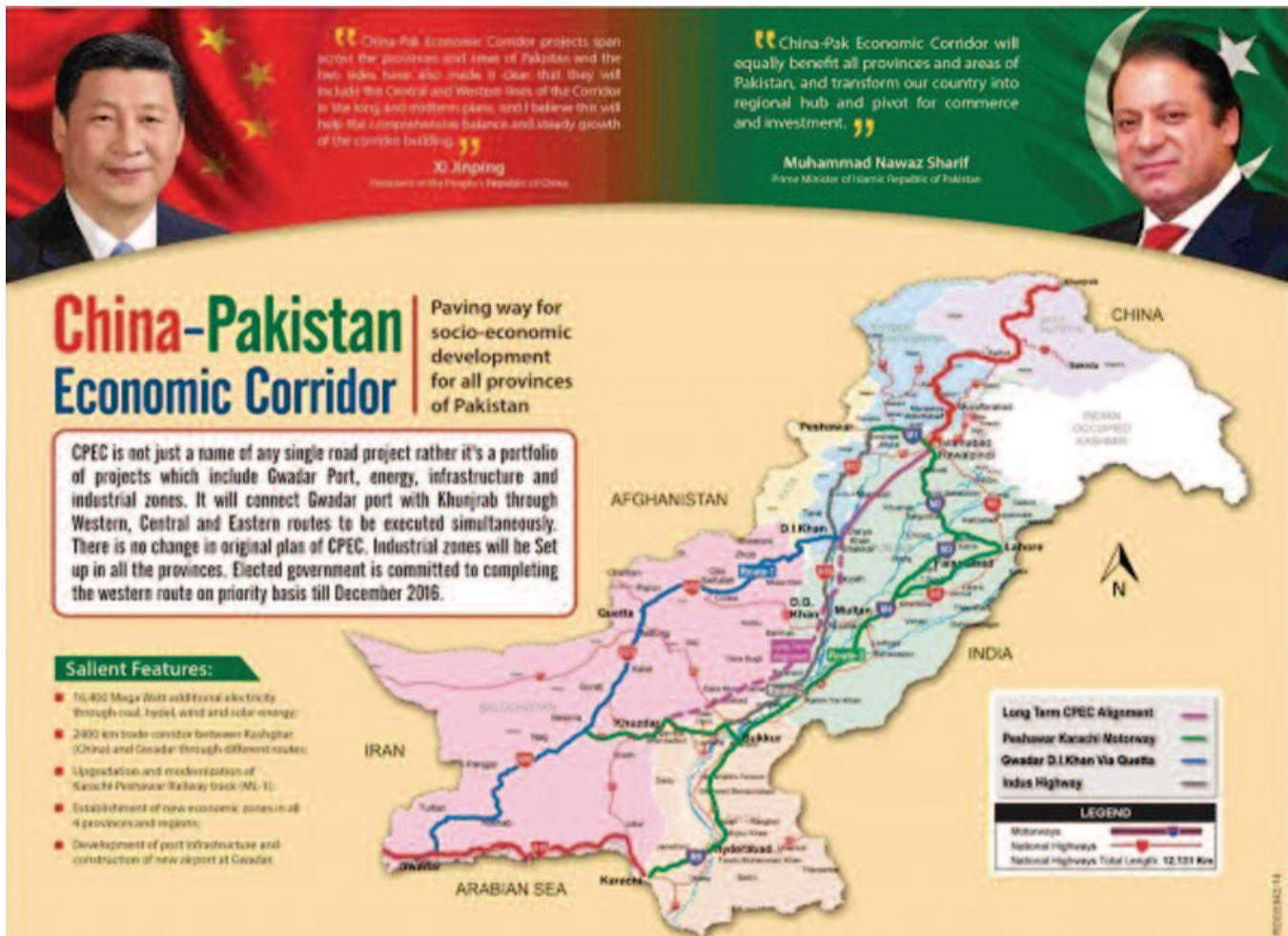
goals and utilizing its industrial potential. It serves to remove China's dependence on the Malacca Strait for oil imports, improves trade connectivity, furthers China's foreign policy and minimizes conflicts as it reconnects the world.

The B&R is an innovative paradigm of global integration involving 65 countries, including one-third of the world's GDP, impacting 65 percent of the world's population and a quarter of all the goods and services. It kicked off with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the first of its six corridors and the linchpin of the B&R

strategy, as it unlocks Central Asia, connects to Xinjiang, leads down to Gwadar port and then onwards to Africa, Iran and the Middle East. With related major energy and infrastructure projects being in full swing, CPEC becomes the center-point where transit trade routes converge linking Russia with Central Asia. Pakistan has also provided a special security division to secure CPEC from all dangers.

All this economic activity has also brought about a major geopolitical realignment in the form of the China-Russia-Pakistan power troika, an equation which provides economic benefit while it addresses mutual security concerns regarding ISIS in Afghanistan. It also consolidates the entire region vis-a-vis the new dimension of U.S.-India ties. The B&R initiative is a vital combination of geo-economics and geo-strategy.

This project of the century has kept the world economy afloat since 2013 by withstanding the crash of the trans-Atlantic banking systems. As PricewaterhouseCoopers reports, the "real value" in China's economy and its investments in countries along its Belt and Road initiative is shifting to infrastructure projects and rising at a



rapid pace. The B&R is to be financed mainly by the Silk Road Fund and the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank. Additionally, the collapse of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) provides Beijing with the perfect opportunity to re-integrate Asian investment that used to find its way to American banks.

As China's top legislature (NPC) and political advisory body (CPPCC) has just finished their annual "two sessions" in Beijing, the world keeps track of the event to detect the direction of the economic superpower. Premier Li Keqiang said in his government work report, "We will ensure order in the financial sector and build a firewall against financial risks." Eleven million more jobs have been planned, and the growth rate has been fixed at around 6.5 percent to ease risk and ensure stability. Flexibility is necessary as it would facilitate any new reforms required by the new central committee due to be elected at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China this autumn.

Further prospects and direction of the B&R initiative will be determined at the "two sessions" as the project is an integral part of China's new reforms and an intrinsic part of its foreign policy. The project's progress will be taken into account and discussed. Consequently, this year's "two sessions" are the key to China's imminent strategy and bear great relevance for global markets.

China is going to hold the Belt and Road summit this May and it would be a masterstroke by China if more countries like U.S. and India announce their participation or signal their approval with their presence at this summit; the great game is never really over and there is much more scope in Chinese wisdom and peaceful globalization in the Eurasian Century.

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What Does Trump's "America First" Outlook Mean for Sino-US Ties?

Wu Zhenglong



The real estate mogul Donald Trump used the slogans "America first" and "make America great again" to meet the public's expectation for change and thus won the 2016 election, becoming the first "CEO President" in the history of the United States.

The phrase "America first" has nothing new in its literal sense, for no country would fail to prioritize its own interests. However, Trump had a particular implication in the words, given the country's current social context. Obviously Trump has made it the creed of his "Americanism" replacing globalization, which he thinks has "caused loss of jobs and wealth in the US".

Before and after he won the election, Trump made a

plethora of remarks on domestic and foreign policies, preaching the idea of "America first". The following four points sum up his thoughts.

First, "America first" will be the new standard for US foreign policy. Trump may shake off such ideological shackles as human rights and democracy to make "America first" the only criteria in handling foreign relations. Any country, be it an ally, a cooperation partner or a rival, will be brushed off if it gets in the way of American interests.

Second, with "America first" in mind, the White House will attach more importance to domestic affairs. What Trump is most eager to do right now is to revise the North America Free Trade Agreement and scrap the Trans-Pacific Partnership to make good his election promise of reinvigorating the American economy, which will be vital for his re-election four years later.

Third, by putting America first, Trump wants to maintain the US's status as the world's top military power. He will continue armaments expansion and improve the nuclear arsenal. To preserve the US's strength, Trump



will moderately readjust his country's interference in global affairs and ask its allies to shoulder more responsibility for their own safety rather than totally rely on the US. He will let the US to maintain a strong military presence in Asia-Pacific but may not act rashly to sharpen contradictions in the region as has been done by Barack Obama.

Fourth, "America first" can serve as the fig leaf to cover up the practice of forsaking the good for the sake of gold. To fulfill his pre-election promise of promoting economic growth, Trump is ready to use previous administrations' international commitments only as bargaining chips to maximize American interests in economic relations with other countries. His telephone conversation with Taiwan leader Tsai Ing-wen was actually a trick of using the "One China" principle as a bargaining chip to extort concessions from China in trade deals.

It is foreseeable that the "America first" policy will undermine the present global economic and geopolitical patterns, bringing uncertainty to the world as to where it will head – to peace or unrest? That's also why the election of Trump as the US's next president has made the whole world fidgety.

After Trump takes office, China and the US will see more trade frictions between them. The new president is likely to take harsher moves against China on such issues as tariffs and exchange rates. Bilateral relations may get rocky to a certain degree.

China is surely not afraid of the possible scenario. It will not swallow the bitter pill in front of any attempt to harm its interests; instead, it will definitely hit back to protect its own interests. Meanwhile, it is confident and capable enough to handle any twists and turns in Sino-US relations.

After decades of joint efforts, the two countries have laid a solid foundation for a steady development of their relationship.

First, the Chinese and American economies are highly complementary to each other. A trade war could only result in both sides wearing each other out. **Second**, the public in the US are strongly in favor of a good bilateral relationship and fully aware of the importance of the "one China" principle. They have expressed opposition to Trump's various abnormal behaviors on the Taiwan, trade and South China Sea issues. Last, the Sino-US relationship has become one with global implications. The two countries have achieved significant progress in cooperation on such issues as climate change, nuclear non-proliferation and global epidemic prevention and begun

coordination in the cyber world, polar areas, deep sea and outer space.

All these constitute the basis and general trend of the Sino-US relations, which will not be disrupted simply because of the appearance of a new boss in the White House.

What's more, China is gaining greater initiative in its relations with the US, thanks to its growing strength. For the bilateral relationship, Trump's idea of "America first" has both pros and cons. China can study the characteristics of his way of governing and take corresponding measures. The negative may thus be changed into a positive for better cooperation.

In his telephone conversation with Trump, President Xi Jinping pointed out that "cooperation is the only right option for China and the US." This remark best encapsulates the history of the bilateral relationship and charts the orientation of its development. One has reason to believe that so long as both sides give up the mentality of zero-sum rivalry and persist in cooperation, the Sino-US relationship will come through the current period of uncertainty and maintain the momentum of steady and healthy development.

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QUOTABLE QUOTE

**Whoever kills
an innocent
life it is as if
he has killed
all of humanity..**

| Surat Al-Ma'idah 5:32 |

THE ISLAM POST

The Belt and Road: New Cooperation and Development

Today, the Belt and Road Initiative has become far more than just a proposal calling for regional cooperation. In a broader context, it is an innovative cooperation concept and a platform embracing the whole world.

Zhang Yunling

Since the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed by China in 2013, it has continued to attract increasing attention both domestically and internationally for two major reasons: **First**, the Initiative introduced a new concept for development and cooperation that has been widely accepted. **Second**, it emphasizes action rather than empty talk and has yielded tangible early results. Today, the Initiative has become far more than just a proposal calling for regional cooperation. In a broader context, it is an innovative cooperation concept and a platform embracing the whole world.

Overcoming the Geographical Restrictions of Western China

By promoting the connectivity of the Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas, the Initiative of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road ("Belt and Road") places special focus on infrastructure, industrial parks, port economic zones, and port logistics networks. It aims to connect several major continents and promote the free flow of investment, commodities, services, capital, technology, and personnel to create new development momentum.

Of course, China has its own strategic considerations in proposing the Initiative. Among them, the most important is the exploration of new development space for China's economic transformation. Since China began to implement the reform and opening-up policy in the late 1970s, its eastern coastal areas have experienced the majority of the country's economic development due to their geographical advantages. While eastern China has attracted increasing inflow of resources and labor, western China remains in stark contrast, with its vitality dwindling, exacerbating China's regional disparities. In turn, unbalanced regional development has become a key roadblock hindering China's social and economic stability and sustainable development.

The Chinese government has been making major efforts to alleviate this imbalance. The biggest and most influential policy is the Western China Development Strategy, which was launched in the early 21st Century. Covering a total of 12 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities, the strategy provides substantial support for infrastructure construction including highways, railways, power grids and natural gas projects and encourages resources to flow from eastern to western China through preferential policies. However, years after the strategy went into effect, the western part of the country still hadn't witnessed impressive progress in terms of competitive strength, and unbalanced regional development hadn't seen substantial change. It became clear that a major reason for the slow progress was the geographical





restrictions of western China.

Compared with the more domestically-focused Western China Development Strategy, the Belt and Road Initiative emphasizes that participation from both domestic and international players will create an even more open market for the western China region. On land, the Silk Road Economic Belt focuses on linking China, Central Asia, West Asia, Russia and Europe and connects China directly to Southeast and South Asia to construct a new and open development belt. At sea, the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road is designed to stretch from China's coast to Europe through Southeast Asia, the Indian Ocean, and Africa. It also connects China and Oceania to establish cooperation zones across seas and realize mutual development. Connecting China with countries along the Belt and Road will help create new space for economic development, which will benefit not only western China, but also the whole country.

Today, global economic development is undergoing adjustments that call for new ideas and initiatives. The Belt and Road Initiative proposes cooperation and development through innovation, construction of a new environment for comprehensive development and the fostering of new economic growth engines driven by shared experiences, resources, and interests, to realize sustainable, inclusive, and balanced development. The Belt and Road Initiative is one of the most influential programs in the world today.

Birth of an Integrated Market

The Belt and Road Initiative places top priority on coordination. Countries along the Belt and Road are urged to coordinate their economic development strategies and policies and design plans and measures to enhance regional cooperation to provide policy support for imple-

mentation. The second priority is achieving connectivity among countries along the Belt and Road through building a wide-reaching infrastructure network that includes both planned infrastructure projects and relevant technical standards. The third priority is improving investment and trade conditions and removing investment and trade barriers to create a sound business environment within the region and in all affected countries. Fourth, the construction of a currency stability system, investment and financing system and credit information system aims to expand the scope and scale of bilateral currency swap and settlement with other countries along the Belt and Road, develop a bond market and found new financial institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the New Development Bank (NDB), and the Interbank Consortium of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Fifth, the Initiative promotes cultural and academic exchanges, personnel exchanges and cooperation, media cooperation, youth and women exchanges and volunteer services to win public support and deepen bilateral and multilateral cooperation. As a large developing country, China, the designer and key driver of the Initiative, will provide key capital input and technical support for the aforementioned cooperation and development.

Facility connectivity is a priority area for implementing the Initiative. Connectivity involves infrastructure construction, legal alignment, rules and technical standards, as well as personnel exchanges and flow among countries along the Belt and Road. Focus on infrastructure demands the construction of modern transportation networks. The key aim of enacted policies, rules and technical standards on connectivity is to significantly reduce or eliminate restrictions on transportation, trade, and investment. Focus is placed on personnel flow to facilitate engineering technology exchange, corporate cooperation, educational and cultural personnel exchange, and cross-border tourism. China has accumulated abundant management experience on infrastructure network construction and owns the necessary equipment as well as technical skills, enabling it to play an important role in improving infrastructure in countries along the Belt and Road.

Investment and trade cooperation is a major pillar of the Belt and Road. The Initiative strives to improve investment and trade facilitation and remove investment and trade barriers to create a sound business environment within the region and in all related countries. The Initiative advocates cooperation that will expand trade and investment and upgrade related structures. Via vari-

ous measures like improving infrastructure, founding industrial parks and port networks, raising funds and increasing capacity, the Initiative aims to create greater space for development.

Financial integration is an important backing for the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. Financial integration covers a long international financial agenda including monetary stability, project financing, bilateral currency swap and settlement, bond market, and RMB-denominated bonds. Various financial agencies including AIIB, NDB, Silk Road Fund, China-ASEAN Interbank Association and SCO Interbank Consortium should play supportive roles in multilateral financial cooperation. Cooperation on financial regulation and supervision will be strengthened under the Initiative. An efficient regulation coordination mechanism will be established to improve the risk response and crisis management systems. A regional financial risk early-warning system will emerge, and a communication and cooperation mechanism to address cross-border risk will be created. These joint efforts will help promote currency stability, enhance the capability of the credit system and encourage commercial equity investment funds and private funds to participate in the construction of key projects of the Initiative.

People-to-people bonds will facilitate public support for implementation of the Initiative. Building the Belt and Road not only involves economic cooperation, but also features extensive cultural and academic exchanges, personnel exchanges and cooperation, media cooperation, youth and women exchanges and volunteer services, all of which will help win public support for deepening bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Through various cooperation mechanisms, the Initiative aims to promote personnel, tourism, and sports exchanges, epidemic information sharing, exchanges of prevention and treatment technologies and training of medical professionals. Additionally, the Initiative will integrate existing resources to expand and advance practical cooperation between countries along the Belt and Road on science and technology, youth employment, entrepreneurship training, vocational skill development, social security management, non-governmental exchanges, and city-to-city cooperation.

Considering countries along the Belt and Road feature contrasting development levels, the Belt and Road Initiative would be impossible to implement if it adopted a unified plan. China's construction in various fields should coordinate the development strategies of other countries



along the Belt and Road for win-win results that benefit every participating party. The economic development of many countries along the Belt and Road lags behind due to a lack of infrastructure investment. By participating in construction of the Belt and Road, these countries can merge their own development into the bigger regional cooperation network and break through their own limitations on transnational links and logistics networks.

In the future, construction of the Belt and Road will gradually improve the connectivity of Asia, Europe and Africa. By constructing an infrastructure network, the Belt and Road will provide a new environment for developing new industrial zones, financial centers, free trade zones, and investment zones as well as some other comprehensive projects such as oil and gas pipelines, power grids, internet infrastructure, power lines, and telecommunication networks. These moves are bound to create a huge market fusing Asia, Europe and Africa.

“Open Regionalism”

In contrast with traditional development aid, construction of the Belt and Road will adopt cooperation requiring joint participation, planning and construction, after which any fruits will be shared by all participants. Every participant is an equal partner. Geopolitically, since the construction of the Belt and Road involves more than 60 countries, it requires active participation and close cooperation from all relevant parties. The Initiative always follows the principle of mutual consultation with all affected parties before any joint construction commences. Great efforts will be made to coordinate the development strategies of all participating countries.

After more than three decades of rapid economic growth, China has reached a “new normal” in terms of



economic development. The country is now experiencing slower but higher quality growth. China's manufacturing industry needs to find new places with lower costs and improve technology to maintain its competitiveness. The cooperation mechanism proposed by the Initiative will integrate the massive space for development and cost advantages of developing countries in Asia and Africa, but contrast previous practices such as relocating outdated and high-polluting productions to other countries. The Initiative emphasizes that investors need to design and build new industries alongside locals through mutual consultation. From this perspective, it helps expand and upgrade industry.

Most countries and regions along the Belt and Road are developing economies with per capita GDP measuring less than half of the world's average. No single country can establish a quality infrastructure network on its own. Since infrastructure development requires long-term investment, support and cooperation from public funds and financial institutions are tremendously important. AIIB created a new model for infrastructure development and cooperation financing, which will help break bottlenecks restricting long-term investments. AIIB membership is open to all countries that are willing to contribute to Asian development and global economic development. Operation of the institution strictly follows international rules, and decisions are jointly made by all members.

The global economy is facing great challenges and undergoing painful adjustments. Because of the widening income gap and the exacerbation of unbalanced development, trade and investment growth has slowed, and protectionism is prevailing. Construction of the Belt and Road will foster a new mode of openness, cooperation, and development. With governmental support and the participation of international organizations, the Initiative is sure to attract abundant public and private capital, which will help improve both the internal and

external environment for trade and investment, and unleash further potential for economic development.

Of course, because countries along the Belt and Road feature diverse national conditions and interests, pulling them together to build the Belt and Road is not an easy task. Various risks, including political instability, investment barriers and the threat of terrorism, do threaten the process. Avoiding them requires in-depth research, comprehensive understanding of the situation, and a balance of benefits with risks. At the same time, the construction of the Belt and Road aims for long-term development rather than short-term gains. Priorities must be defined when promoting construction, and proceeding too quickly should be avoided. China, as the advocate of the Belt and Road Initiative, must coordinate the interests of various parties, assess the risk of various commercial projects, strengthen bilateral economic and trade agreements and regulations, promote successful modes of cooperation, establish key entrepreneurial projects and seek aligning interests on economic development, political cooperation, security, and personnel exchanges among the countries. In terms of the priorities in implementing the Initiative, an effective coordination mechanism is necessary to ensure that first things happen first, the interests of different countries are balanced and every participant benefits.

The Belt and Road Initiative will help establish a new, cooperative and win-win regional and international order. In particular, against the backdrop of profound global economic changes, the Initiative provides a new concept and path to improving the comprehensive development environment for developing economies and creates new development momentum by unleashing participation enthusiasm and mobilizing resource input. The Initiative will help the world economy get rid of recession and enter a new phase of development. Today, a variety of answers and solutions should be ready to address development problems. While the Trump administration advocates an "America first" protectionist doctrine, China's Belt and Road Initiative aims for open cooperation and common development, making it even more important today. A call for cooperation rather than strategic competition, the Initiative promotes awareness of a community of shared destiny and fosters regional and international peace and cooperation.

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Russia, Iran sign economic cooperation deals

On March 28, 2017 Russia and Iran signed a string of cooperation agreements in various fields including the energy sector as President Vladimir Putin hosted his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani for his official visit to Moscow.

The two leaders discussed during the meeting prospects for expanding bilateral trade, economic and investment ties and agreed to deepen Russian-Iranian cooperation in various areas, primarily the economy.

Putin said, "We noted with satisfaction that trade between Russia and Iran grew by more than 70 percent in 2016. This is a truly good result, since we managed to achieve it amid an unstable global economy and persisting volatility on the commodity and currency markets."

According to a joint statement published by the Kremlin, with a consensus of accelerating the implementation of the Roadmap for Cooperation in Trade and Industry, both sides expressed their support for facilitating bilateral product deliveries and developing interbank ties, as well as welcomed an early completion of the preparation work for signing an interim agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and Iran with regard to the formation of a free trade zone.

In a statement, "The two countries are set to expand cooperation in multiple energy sectors and continue coordinated efforts to stabilize international markets, with particular attention being paid to bilateral projects in the nuclear power industry." Russia's Rosatom state nuclear corpora-



Russian President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani at the Kremlin in Moscow on March 28, 2017. (AFP PHOTO)

tion and the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) signed a memorandum of understanding on transport of nuclear materials following the meeting between the two leaders. Other agreements signed on the day include documents on cooperation in railway transport, oil and gas, information technologies and communications, construction, sport, tourism and the legal sphere.

Iranian President said, "We are at a new stage in our economic relations, and our overall links have graduated from ordinary to major long-term projects, we are making the right decisions serving the long-term strategy of our relations."

In addition to enhancing bilateral cooperation, Putin and Rouhani also toughed upon important current issues on the global and regional agenda, underling the importance of fighting international terrorism. The two leaders pledged to further strengthen cooperation in pushing forward a peaceful political settlement in Syria and the national reconciliation in Afghanistan.

Rouhani's two-day official trip to Moscow, which started on March 27-28 at the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin, was considered as one of his important and historical official visits to Russia, as bilateral ties in



Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, reviews an honor guard shortly after his arrival at Vnukovo airport just outside in Moscow, Russia, March 27, 2017. (AP Photo)

various fields have been flourishing over the past years. The Middle East conflicts, particularly the Syrian issue, have recently brought the tow neighbors closer for cooperation, experts say.

Source: CEAF Desk Report.

QUOTABLE QUOTE

The only person you are destined to become ***is the person you decide to be.***

Ralph Waldo Emerson – 1803-1882, Essayist, Lecturer, and Poet



Pakistan and China: Don't Fear Chabahar Port

A closer look at what Iran's Chabahar port deal with India and Afghanistan really means for China and Pakistan's CPEC.

Ahmad Bilal Khalil



Recently, on the sidelines of the sixth Heart of Asia Conference-Istanbul Process in Amritsar, India, Afghanistan and India planned to start air cargo transportation over Pakistan. The move will help greatly in exporting Afghan goods, such as fruits and carpets, to India and allowing Indian

medicines to be imported to Afghanistan. According to Afghan official sources, both sides will soon sign a memorandum of understanding in this regard.

This air cargo deal comes after Afghanistan and India, along with Iran, signed the Chabahar transport and transit agreement in Tehran. That trilateral agreement, centered on the Chabahar port, provoked suspicions in the region and negatively influenced hawkish views in both Pakistan and India. Strategists in both India and Pakistan are overestimating the potential of the Chabahar port and often frame it as the main rival to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is anchored by Gwadar port in Pakistan.

For Kabul, the Chabahar agreement was a sigh of relief. The Afghan ambassador to India, Shaida Mohammad Abdali, praised the deal as “heralding a new era in regional integration,” fulfilling “a billion hopes” and “a billion dreams.” The Chabahar deal means that Afghanistan is no longer dependent on Pakistan for its transit and trade with India and the rest of the world. It has diversified transit routes options for Kabul, giving an end to use the Pakistani transit routes.

The Chabahar Dilemma?

Given the importance of Chabahar in the current strategic milieu, observers might be surprised to know a simi-

lar arrangement was proposed by Afghanistan all the way back in the 1950s. At the beginning of the Cold War, Afghanistan-Pakistan relations were soured and even severed due to “Pashtunistanism” and the issue of the Durand line border between the two countries. Cold bilateral ties also damaged Afghan trade through Pakistan. Therefore, in the 1950s, Kabul asked Washington for assistance in carving out a new transit route through Iran to the Chabahar port, thus bypassing Pakistan completely. However, both the United States and Iran rejected the Afghan proposal regarding Chabahar port as being economically “impractical.”

Today, the signing of the Chabahar transit agreement in Tehran has left Pakistan in a quandary. This transit trade agreement, seen with both suspicious and hopeful eyes in Islamabad, has since become a dilemma for Pakistanis. The reactions of the Pakistani media (particularly the Urdu media) have been uneasy; some retired army generals (and former defense secretaries) even referred to the Chabahar agreement as a “security threat” to Pakistan. Though these views can’t officially represent governmental policies, they surely shed some light on what Pakistan’s power center (the army) might be thinking regarding Chabahar.

In this vein, it is interesting to note that the former spokesman of the Pakistan Army, Asim Bajwa, recently shared an article titled “The New Great Game” on his Twitter account, saying it was “worth the weekend read.” The article, written by Munir Akram, a former Pakistani ambassador to UN, spoke of a “new Great Game” taking place in regional geopolitics, particularly against the backdrop of the Chabahar agreement, One Belt, One Road (OBOR), and CPEC. According to this article, a new Great Game is under way this time between China and the United States (and to a lesser extent between the U.S. and Russia) with Pakistan, India, Iran, and others in “subsidiary” roles. The main motivation behind this new Great Game, according to Akram, is China’s twin projects of OBOR and CPEC; the Indians and Americans are considered to be rivals to these Chinese mega-proj-



Indian PM Narendra Modi with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani to attend trilateral meeting at Talar building, Saadabad palace in Tehran, Iran on 23 May, 2016. Photo: PTI

over Chabahar and rarely expressed their views publicly. However, some news sites have cited Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang as saying that Chabahar and CPEC (including Gwadar port) are complementary projects and will benefit China. The argument is that the geopolitical and economic importance of the Chinese projects mainly depends on the health of regional infrastructure as a whole; Chabahar will improve infrastructure in Iran and Afghanistan, which will then indirectly boost Chinese projects.

ects. The author recommends that Pakistan should further strengthen its ties with China, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey in order to balance a growing Indo-Iranian and Indo-American nexus.

These suspicions are due to typical Pakistani strategic thinking about being strategically “encircled” by India, along with a rising concern about being bypassed in regional transit routes. Some Pakistani analysts argue that Chabahar, in the context of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s foreign policy, is a step to “isolate” Pakistan at the regional level. Most importantly, some even view the agreement as an Indian reply to CPEC, a view reflected in Indian media as well. Overall, Islamabad’s concerns over Chabahar are apparently due to the “Indian factor” and the possibility of losing transit customers such in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Despite open concerns voiced in Pakistani media, and by former and current officials, the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) of PML(N) government’s top officials have expressed their support for Chabahar and labeled Chabahar and Gwadar as “sister ports.” Moreover, Sartaj Aziz, advisor to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on foreign affairs, and Tareq Fatemi, special assistant to Sharif on foreign affairs, have also spoken about the chances to link Gwadar with Chabahar and build a motorway between Peshawar and Chabahar.

The Chinese, on the other hand, have been mostly silent

I heard a similar views when I had an opportunity to discuss Chabahar with the top Chinese diplomat at the Chinese Embassy in Kabul. I asked about Beijing’s stance on the Chabahar agreement, the diplomat said that “China welcomes interconnectivity in the region and hence it welcomes Chabahar port.” Regarding some countries’ concerns over OBOR and CPEC and the debate over “Chabahar versus CPEC (and Gawadar),” he diplomatically answered that OBOR is “inclusive,” not “exclusive.” He further explained that Chabahar will also help China because the region is infrastructure poor and any improvement in infrastructures in the region will automatically boost OBOR.

Chabahar and Gwadar Are Not ‘Rivals’

Despite both being transit and deep sea ports, there is a big difference between Gwadar and Chabahar that must be taken into consideration. The underlying goal behind CPEC is to develop China’s western provinces. Accordingly, it was economically logical to have a transit route via Pakistan to not only import energy to western Chinese regions but also export western Chinese products to the Middle East and to the rest of world through Pakistan. By doing so, Beijing will cut the time and cost needed to reach the sea (China’s western provinces are farther from the Chinese coast lines than Pakistani ports such as Gwadar and Karachi). This Chinese initiative to

develop its western provinces is a step toward balanced growth, which is seen as a necessary step in fighting against terrorism, separatism, and extremism in the country.

CPEC is a part of the larger OBOR initiative. The main motives are threefold: economics, geopolitics and energy security. It is expected that these projects will lift Chinese trade to \$2.5 trillion within a decade at a time when Chinese GDP is growing at its lowest rates since the 1990s. OBOR will pass through Central Asia, the Middle East, and the European Union, with whom Beijing has very strong trade relations. According to Chinese statistics quoted in Ma Yuan's *New Silk Road: A Journey Restarts*, the EU has been China's largest trade partner since 2004, with bilateral trade touching \$559.1 billion in 2013. China had bilateral trade of \$50.2 billion with Central Asia republics, up from \$460 million in 1992, when Central Asian republics declared independence from the former Soviet Union. Meanwhile Beijing's bilateral trade with Gulf Cooperation Council states (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman) in 2012 was \$155 billion and will further increase if a free trade agreement between these two partners is signed. China also is dependent on the Middle East, Central Asia, and Russia for its energy resources. OBOR will further enhance energy and trade relations with these regions.

Chabahar will not affect China's ability to achieve these goals, and so will not derail CPEC. As of now, the sole purpose of Chabahar port is "transit trade" with Central Asian republics and Afghanistan. It is neither an alternative route to Chinese transit through Pakistan and nor a substitute for Chinese investments in Pakistan.

Afghanistan wisely welcomed these big Chinese projects and signed an MoU with Beijing to become a part of OBOR during Afghan Chief Executive Officer Dr. Abdullah Abdullah's visit to China in 2016. Regarding



Chinese President's first visit to Pakistan on April 2015 was received by Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain and PM Nawaz Sharif. (Dawn News)

CPEC, the former Afghan ambassador to Pakistan and the new Afghan ambassador to China, Janan Mosazai, has said in an interview that Kabul "supports[the] China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. We would like to link up with it." Mosazai added that Kabul is ready to "facilitate the linking of Central Asian countries with the corridor."

Iran is also expected to be an active part of the Chinese OBOR at a time when Tehran is just becoming open to the world. Iran also wants to connect CPEC (and Gwadar) and Chabahar. Given that both Afghanistan and Iran have embraced OBOR, it seems unlikely that Chabahar will line up in direct competition with the Chinese project.

The rivalry between Chabahar and Gwadar mostly hinges on two factors. **First**, analysts posit that the probability of a Chinese and Indian military (especially navy) presence in these ports will increase Sino-Indian rivalry in the Indian Ocean. **Second**, there is an expectation that Chabahar port will diminish the importance of Gwadar port (the end of CPEC) as a transit hub and route for Central Asian republics and Afghanistan.

Strategically, though Pakistan may give permission to China to use Gwadar militarily, it will definitely be on Pakistani terms. Moreover, Pakistan might also use the port for its own military purposes. However, Iran, for her part, may not agree to allow India to use Chabahar for



military purposes. Iran may not want to enter into the Sino-Indian strategic rivalry at a time when Sino-Iranian economic, political, and strategic relations far outweigh Indo-Iranian relations. Bilateral trade between India-Iran is \$14 billion, compared to \$51.8 billion between China and Iran. Moreover, Iran and China agreed in January 2016 to increase bilateral trade to \$600 billion in the next 10 years. Moreover, it was China (along with Russia) that vetoed United Nations Security Council resolutions against Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria, a strategic ally of Tehran.

In addition, the close ties between the United States and India will influence Iranian strategic thinkers. Its unlikely that Iran will allow its ports to be used militarily by Indians against China as Tehran considers the Indo-U.S. alliance in the Indian Ocean as against its own interests. In order to avoid Chinese and Pakistani misconceptions, the Iranian envoy to Pakistan has already invited both Pakistan and China to be a part of the Chabahar accord. Given the opportunities among Pakistan's lengthy coastline and ports, both China and Pakistan may be reluctant to take part in developing Chabahar. But the chances for Chinese investment in Chabahar are not negligible. The Chinese envoy to Iran expressed earlier that Chinese firms are ready to invest in Chabahar port. A technical team from Beijing had even visited the port in April 2016. According to Iranian sources, both sides signed an MoU on the construction of an industrial town in Chabahar in 2015.

Regarding the question of Afghanistan-Pakistan transit, problems were in place long before the Chabahar deal was signed. Afghanistan's deputy minister of commerce and industries, Muzamil Shinwari, said in an interview that due to the transit and trade problems with Pakistan, Afghan traders have diverted their attentions to Bandar-e-Abbas in Iran. He explained that "in 2008-2009 nearly 60 percent of Afghan imports were transited from Pakistan, but now, in 2016, it is not even 30 percent." On the other hand, "nearly 15-20 percent Afghan imports were transited from Iran in 2008-2009 but it is now 37-40 percent."

However, the increase in transit from Iran and decrease in transit from Pakistan is not due to the Chabahar port. The change is driven by the state of bilateral relations between Kabul and Islamabad and Pakistan's reluctance to give Afghan goods a path to enter into India. The distrust works both ways. A Pakistani minister told Pakistani media that Islamabad will soon enter into a quadrilateral transit agreement with Central Asian republics and

China. Thus Pakistan will bypass Afghanistan and reach Central Asian republics through China and CPEC.

Why Afghanistan Needs Chabahar

Chabahar has helped the landlocked Afghanistan to overcome its transit dilemma. Many Afghans believe that Islamabad is using the right of a landlocked country to transit as a pressure point against Kabul. Thus, Afghan transit is linked with Kabul-Islamabad ties; the worse bilateral relations are, the worse the transit situation becomes for Kabul.

Afghanistan's top 10 trading partners through the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement are, in order of trade volume: China, the United States, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, UAE, Kenya, Vietnam, Hong Kong, and South Korea. In 2012, 2013 and 2014, 33 percent of total Afghan imports through APTTA were solely Chinese imports to Afghanistan, which made China Afghanistan's top trading partner through APTTA. In the absence of a direct trading route with China through Wakhan pass and with technical problems in the newly established railway link between Afghanistan and China, Afghanistan's trade with China will continue to mostly depend on Pakistan and CPEC.

That is to say, despite Kabul's love affair with Chabahar, the port deal with Iran and India may not represent a paradigm shift in Afghan transit in the short run. But, in the long run, factors such as the persistence of transit and trade problems faced by Afghans on Pakistani soil, Islamabad's reluctance to make India a part of a transit trade agreement between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the opening of alternate routes for Afghan imports from China via Pakistan (the five-nations railway line linking China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Iran, along with a smoothly-functioning China-Afghanistan rail link) will further decrease the importance of Pakistani transit route.

However, the Pakistani route could still be of importance for both Afghanistan and India. But this will depend on whether Pakistan agrees to make India a part of APTTA, allowing for the smooth movement of Indian goods from Pakistan to Afghanistan and beyond, and Afghan goods through Pakistan to India and beyond.

Ahmad Bilal Khalil is a researcher at the Center for Strategic and Regional Studies, Kabul, Afghanistan.

South Korea, Japan condemn Pyongyang's missile launches

Deng Junfang



[South Korea's Prime Minister and acting president Hwang Kyo-ahn speaks during the National Security Council meeting at the Presidential Blue House in Seoul, South Korea, in this handout picture provided by the Presidential Blue House and released by Yonhap on March 6, 2017./CFP Photo]

South Korea on 6 March, 2017 condemned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) for firing missiles into the sea waters off its eastern coast earlier in the day, saying the "provocation" cannot be "justified".

Meanwhile, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said three of the four missiles launched by the DPRK on 6 March morning fell into Japanese-controlled waters.

Abe said in the parliament that "The DPRK today fired four ballistic missiles almost simultaneously and they flew some 1,000 kilometers (620 miles). Three of them landed in our country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)."

He added that "strong protests" had been lodged with the nuclear-armed DPRK.

In response to the launch, South Korea's acting president Hwang Kyo-ahn convened an emergency National Security Council (NSC) meeting in Seoul.

The US said it has seen no indications the DPRK's launch involved an intercontinental ballistic missile. The US added that the launch did not pose a threat to North America.

The DPRK's missile launches came after Seoul and Washington kicked off the Foal Eagle field training exercise on March 1. The joint military exercises are believed to infuriate Pyongyang, which condemns them as provocative rehearsals for invasion.

Deng Junfang is a senior columnist at the CGTN.

Erdoğan: Turkey may have Brexit-like referendum on EU

We can ask the people on the EU accession process after constitutional referendum, Turkish president says

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said on 25 March that Turkey may have a Brexit-style referendum on whether to continue European Union membership process or not after the April 16 constitutional referendum.

Speaking during the Turkish-British Tatlıdil Forum in southern Antalya province, Erdoğan said Turkey would likely review its ties with the bloc after its April 16 referendum on sweeping constitutional changes.

"You [Britain] have made a decision with Brexit, there may be different things after April 16."

"We have a referendum on April 16. After it, we may hold a Brexit-like referendum on the [EU] negotiations. No matter what our nation decides, we will obey it," Erdogan said.

In June 2016, more than half of British voters voted in favor of ending the U.K.'s 46-year long membership.

Turkey applied for membership of the EU in 1987; accession talks began in 2005.

However, negotiations hit a stalemate in 2007 because of Turkey's position on the Cyprus issue. Also, the German and French governments opposed the country's full EU membership.

Criticism of EU states

Erdogan also said the European Union had turned into a playground of fascist political parties, criticizing the Swiss government over terrorist organization PKK sympathizers' rally targeting the Turkish president in Bern.

"Here is the Swiss Parliament, extreme terrorist organizations put my photo there - pay attention, it is the parliament - with a gun on my head."

"There is no such an understanding. How does something like that happen? It is Switzerland. There are many like it," Erdoğan said.

On Saturday, supporters of the terrorist PKK, DHKP-C, YPG took part in a rally in front of the Federal Parliament building, located in Parliament Square in Bern, targeting Turkey and President Erdoğan.

The Swiss police did not intervene against the banner, which had a photo of Erdogan, a gun pointed to his head and said "Kill Erdoğan" on it.

The Swiss Green Party also supported the rally, which was attended by approximately 250 PKK supporters who



shouted slogans against Turkey and Erdogan.

Erdoğan said the European politicians should leave their "bad manners" towards Turkey as soon as possible.

"It must be known that there is a limit to [Turkey's] patience with the attitude that European countries show us," Erdoğan added.

His comments come amid acrimonious relations between Turkey and Europe, particularly Germany and the Netherlands.

Ankara has heavily criticized European states after the authorities in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands banned some campaign rallies ahead of Turkey's April 16 referendum on sweeping constitutional changes.

President Erdoğan compared the bans with Nazi-era practices and also accused European governments of taking sides in Turkey's referendum by favoring the No campaign.

The constitutional changes have been discussed since Erdoğan was voted president in August 2014. The 18-article bill was passed by parliament in January, with 339 votes in favor ~ nine more than needed to put the proposal to a referendum.

The reforms would hand wide-ranging executive powers to the president and the post of prime minister would be abolished. The president would also be allowed to retain ties to a political party.

Other changes would see the minimum age for parliamentary candidates reduced to 18 and the number of deputies rise to 600. Simultaneous parliamentary and presidential elections for a five-year term would be held in November 2019 under the new constitution.

Source: *Yenisafak News*.



Mikael HemnitiWinther

Sidsel Bleken

Johan Frisell

A tale of solidarity and partnership

The 4th of February marks the 45th anniversary of the recognition of the People's Republic of Bangladesh by the Nordic countries. This is a day for celebration!

The victory by the Bangladeshi freedom fighters and the Indian troops on 16 December 1971 set in motion an intensive policy process in the capitals of the Nordic countries. There was a strong argument to recognize the just-born People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Nordic countries had supported de-colonization of African and Asian nations in the 1950's and 1960's on the basis of people's right to self-determination. The fact that Bangladesh liberated itself not from a European colonial power but from another developing country initially obscured the legal analysis. The return of President Sheikh Mujib to Dhaka and the clear statement that the Indian Armed Forces were in Bangladesh upon invitation straightened out the last question marks – it was clear that all criteria for legal recognition of the newly independent state were being met.

In January 1972, the Nordic capitals started to consult on the timing and mode of recognition. It was a common preference to take this important step together. Diplomatic telegrams and phone calls were exchanged between Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo, Reykjavik and

Stockholm, as well as with London and Bonn. A week before the end of January, the five countries had made individual, but coordinated decisions to recognize Bangladesh and these decisions were made public. On the timing, they opted to do the actual recognition on the same day as United Kingdom would, the 4 February 1972. This date has become a landmark date in our countries' relations to Bangladesh.

The three Nordic countries that we represent – Denmark, Norway and Sweden – have embraced Bangladesh on the basis of peoples' friendship and solidarity. The fundamentals of the Bangladeshi nationhood – democracy, secularism, human rights and tolerance – are core values of our own societies. They are still the essentials for an inclusive and prosperous Bangladesh.

We have been consistent development cooperation partners since a few weeks after the birth of Bangladesh. When we travel around the country, we are proud to see traces of our small, but often catalytic aid projects in such wide areas as education, micro finance, employment, rural infrastructure, health, agriculture, gender equality and human rights.

Over 45 years, the relations between Bangladesh and the Nordic countries have matured and broadened. The



impressive poverty eradication results, including on the Millennium Development Goals, have led to shifting priorities of development cooperation. The commercial relations have grown significantly and are now as important as our development relations. To promote growth in trade and investment, in both directions, is the top priority in the further development of our bonds.

One and a half years ago, the common Nordic commitment to Bangladesh found its expression in the opening of a joint Nordic Embassy in Dhaka. Our cooperation today expands into culture, science, technology, academia and tourism. We are united in the fight against cor-

ruption. The Nordic countries are pleased to cooperate with an ever more active Bangladesh in the United Nations and other international fora on important global challenges such as migration, climate change and women's empowerment.

Looking back at 45 years of steadfast progress in our relations, we are confident that the ties between Bangladesh and the Nordic countries will continue to strengthen!

The writers are Ambassador of Denmark, Ambassador of Norway and Ambassador of Sweden in Dhaka respectively.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“What really struck me was when old men started to break down in tears in front of me and sob...[They were] telling me they've seen their whole family killed in front of their eyes.”

Yanghee Lee

UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar



The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity. Without it, no real success is possible, no matter whether it is on a section gang, a football field, in an army, or in an office.

(Dwight D. Eisenhower)

The Epic Long March Victory of China

Prof. Sarwar Md. Saifullah Khaled



Deng Xiaoping, vice curator of China's Central Red Army Long March departure museum would have named his second child Changzheng (Long March) if she had been a boy. While some 3,000 people gathered to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the

Long March victory in Beijing on October 21, 2016, Deng was celebrating the first birthday of his second daughter in Yudu County in east China's Jiangxi Province. Yudu is where around 86,000 Red Army officers and soldiers left for the Long March in October 1934. Forty-seven-year old Deng has spent almost three decades collecting and preserving Yudu's memories of the Long March. Deng said "Initially it was a request from my father, who believed I would not be jobless because any society at any time would need curators. As my knowledge about the epic Long March has grown, I've become addicted".

A decade earlier in his career, Deng and his colleague searched for Long March veterans and witnesses almost every weekend. They once visited a veteran named Yi Shijia who was almost in his 90s. Deng recalled "He asked us what we think the happiest thing was for Long Marchers". "We said winning a battle, being honoured, or even jumping into a pit of Moutai liquor to cure their wounds". To their surprise, Yi's reply was this: crushing fleas they found on their clothes during a break on a sunny day. He said "We never ever imagined that. The Red Army's optimism has impressed me so deeply that it changed my attitude toward life and work". As October 22, 2016, marks the 80th anniversary of the Long March victory, China is hoping to pass on the epic expedition's legacy from generation to generation.

Deng has asked young visitors for feedback. He said "Today's younger generation is fragile under pressure and gives up more easily. However, their worries sound like nothing compared to what the Red Army soldiers suffered and overcame". Yi Tongjun, vice curator of Liping Meeting Museum, asked applicants to talk about their understanding of the spirit of the Long March during a job interview earlier this year - 2016. The 53-year-old said "Some were stuck. Even some applicants with college





education did not know what to say". He said "Many young people take today's prosperity for granted. They don't understand how hard-won it is".

The Liping Meeting occurred in Liping County of south-west China's Guizhou Province on December 18, 1934. It was the first meeting by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee during the Long March, following a heavy loss in battle along Xiangjiang River in today's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. The number of Red Army soldiers had fallen sharply from 86,000 to around 30,000. An introduction in the Liping Meeting Museum, which described the meeting as the starting point of the Long March's triumph read "After heated debate, the Political Bureau adopted Mao Zedong's correct proposal of marching for Zunyi in northern Guizhou". Yi said "If there had been no Liping Meeting, there would have been no Zunyi Meeting, to say nothing of the leadership of Chairman Mao".

To Yi, the spirit of the Long March was a fortune and a source of strength. He said "It has helped enhance our economy and opening up to the outside world". The spirit of the Long March, as summarized during the commemoration, includes seeking truth from the facts, strict self-discipline, acknowledgement of the overall interests of the people, solidarity, and involving people from all walks of life. Chen Yunkun, a volunteer researcher of the Long March history, interpreted "strict self-discipline" and "acknowledgement of the overall interests of the people" based on his findings over the years. Chen, also a publicity office employee at Xishui County of Zunyi City

said "Red Army soldiers were strictly forbidden from entering local people's bedrooms and kitchen, because the bedroom was also where all valuable things were kept, and the kitchen stored food".

Chen said "The Red Army won the war by winning people's hearts. They always put people's interest first". He said this is one of the reasons for commemorating the Long March today. The 47-year-old researcher said "If all the officials would bear this in mind, many so-called problems or headaches would no longer exist". On October 24, 2016, 8-episode TV documentary on China's latest anti-corruption campaign began airing nationwide. Some former high-ranking officials gave their confessions and reflections for the first time in public. The documentary, masterminded by the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), sent a strong signal of the CPC's determination to strictly govern itself and fight corruption.

The theme of the documentary echoed with what Chinese President Xi Jinping said about the Long March on October 21, 2016. Xi said "No matter which stage our undertaking has developed to and how great the achievements we've made, we should carry forth the Long March spirit and advance in 'a new long march'". According to Xi, each generation has its own "long march", and they should proceed in their own way. "We can never forget the Long March no matter how many achievements we've made", said Chen Yunkun about his impressions of Xi's speech.

Sarwar Md. Saifullah Khaled is a retired Professor of Economics, Bangladesh Civil Service (General Education) Cadre.

QUOTABLE QUOTE

If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.

Nelson Mandela



Out of time in North Korea

Dr. Richard N. Haass



There is a growing consensus that the first genuine crisis of Donald Trump's presidency could involve North Korea and, more specifically, its ability to place a nuclear warhead on one or more ballistic missiles possessing sufficient range and accuracy to reach the continental United States. A crisis could stem from

other factors as well: a large increase in the number of nuclear warheads that North Korea produces, evidence that it is selling nuclear materials to terrorist groups, or some use of its conventional military forces against South Korea or US forces stationed there.

There is no time to lose: any of these developments could occur in a matter of months or at most years. Strategic patience, the approach toward North Korea that has characterised successive US administrations since the early 1990s, has run its course.

One option would be simply to accept as inevitable continued increases in the quantity and quality of North Korea's nuclear and missile inventories. The US, South Korea, and Japan would fall back on a combination of missile defence and deterrence.

The problem is that missile defence is imperfect, and deterrence is uncertain. The only certainty is that the failure of either would result in unimaginable costs. In these circumstances, Japan and South Korea might reconsider whether they, too, require nuclear weapons, raising the risk of a new and potentially destabilising arms race in the region.

A second set of options would employ military force, either against a gathering North Korean threat or one judged to be imminent. One problem with this approach is uncertainty as to whether military strikes could destroy all of the North's missiles and warheads. But even if they could, North Korea would probably retaliate with conventional military forces against South Korea. Given that Seoul and US troops stationed in South Korea are well within range of thousands of artillery pieces, the toll in lives and physi-

cal damage would be immense. The new South Korean government (which will take office in one month) is sure to resist any action that could trigger such a scenario.

Some therefore opt for regime change, hoping that a different North Korean leadership might prove to be more reasonable. It probably would; but, given how closed North Korea is, bringing about such an outcome remains more wish than serious policy.

This brings us to diplomacy. The US could offer (following close consultations with the governments in South Korea and Japan, and ideally against the backdrop of additional United Nations resolutions and economic sanctions) direct negotiations with North Korea. Once talks commenced, the US side could advance a deal: North Korea would have to agree to freeze its nuclear and missile capabilities, which would require cessation of all testing of both warheads and missiles, along with access to international inspectors to verify compliance. The North would also have to commit not to sell any nuclear materials to any other country or organisation.

In exchange, the US and its partners would offer, besides direct talks, the easing of sanctions. The US and others could also agree to sign—more than 60 years after the end of the Korean War—a peace agreement with the North.

North Korea (in some ways like Iran) could keep its nuclear option but be barred from translating it into a reality. Concerns over North Korea's many human-rights violations would not be pressed at this time, although the country's leaders would understand that there could be





no normalisation of relations (or end of sanctions) so long as repression remained the norm. Full normalisation of ties would also require North Korea giving up its nuclear weapons program.

At the same time, the US should limit how far it is willing to go. There can be no end to regular US-South Korean military exercises, which are a necessary component of deterrence and potential defence, given the military threat posed by the North. For the same reason, any limits on US forces in the country or region would be unacceptable. And any negotiation must take place within a fixed time period, lest North Korea use that time to create new military facts.

Could such an approach succeed? The short answer is 'maybe.' China's stance would likely prove critical. Chinese leaders have no love for Kim Jong-un's regime or its nuclear weapons, but it dislikes even more the prospect of North Korea's collapse and the unification of the Korean Peninsula with Seoul as the capital.

The question is whether China could be persuaded to use its considerable influence with its neighbor. The US should offer some reassurances that it would not exploit Korea's reunification for strategic advantage, while warning China of the dangers North Korea's current path poses to its own interests. Continued conversations with China about how best to respond to possible scenarios on the peninsula clearly make sense.

Again, there is no guarantee that diplomacy would succeed. But it might. And even if it failed, demonstrating that a good-faith effort had been made would make it less difficult to contemplate, carry out, and subsequently explain to domestic and international audiences why an alternative policy, one that included the use of military force, was embraced.

Dr. Richard N. Haass is president of the Council on Foreign Relations, USA. He is an expert on the US Foreign Policy, International Security and Globalization.

QUOTABLE QUOTE



KOSOVO | Factsheet

Country Name: conventional long form: Republic of Kosovo conventional short form: Kosovo local long form: Republika e Kosoves (Republika Kosovo) local short form: Kosova (Kosovo)			Area: 10,887 sq km	Population: 1,883,018 (July 2016 est.)
			Population Growth Rate: 0.9% annual change (2013)	
			Sex Ratio: 1.06 male(s)/female (2016 est.)	
			Life expectancy: 70.50 years (2012)	
Government type: Parliamentary Republic	Capital: Pristina	Founding: 17 February 2008 (from Serbia)	Labour Force: 483,200 (2013 est.)	
Nationality: Kosovar (Albanian), Kosovac (Serbian)	Administrative Divisions: The administrative divisions are defined as 38 municipalities.		GDP (PPP): \$18.49 billion (2016 est.)	
			GDP (real growth rate): 4.1% (2016 est.)	
GDP Per Capita (PPP): \$10,000 (2016 est.)				
Unemployment Rate: 35.3% (2014 est.)				
Population Below Poverty Line: 30% (2013 est.)				
Currency: Euro				
Border countries: Albania 112 km, Macedonia 160 km, Montenegro 76 km, Serbia 366 km.				
Geography: The 41-km long Nerodimka River divides into two branches each of which flows into a different sea: the northern branch flows into the Sitnica River, which via the Ibar, Morava, and Danube Rivers ultimately flows into the Black Sea; the southern branch flows via the Lepenac and Vardar Rivers into the Aegean Sea.				
Climate: Influenced by continental air masses resulting in relatively cold winters with heavy snowfall and hot, dry summers and autumns; Mediterranean and alpine influences create regional variation; maximum rainfall between October and December.				
Major Religions: Muslim 95.6%, Roman Catholic 2.2%, Orthodox 1.5%, other 0.07%, none 0.07%, unspecified 0.6% (2011 est.)				
Major Language: Albanian, Serbian				
Ethnic Makeup: Albanians 92.9%, Bosniaks 1.6%, Serbs 1.5%, Turk 1.1%, Ashkali 0.9%, Egyptian 0.7%, Gorani 0.6%, Roma 0.5%, other/unspecified 0.2%.				
Agriculture – products: Wheat, corn, berries, potatoes, peppers, fruit; dairy, livestock; fish.				
Industries: Mineral mining, construction materials, base metals, leather, machinery, appliances, foodstuffs and beverages, textiles.				

Source: The World Factbook, CIA (January 2017), The World Bank.

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