

# PAKISTAN

AND THE EVOLVING GEOPOLITICS OF  
THE REGION AND BEYOND

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# **Pakistan and the Evolving Geopolitics of the Region and Beyond**

## **Executive Summary**

NUST Institute of Policy Studies (NIPS) conducted a special session on “Pakistan and the Evolving Geopolitics of the Region and Beyond” on Thursday August 25, 2022. The session focused on the multiple challenges facing Pakistan amidst a rapidly evolving regional and global geopolitical landscape. Multiple domestic challenges as well as key geopolitical challenges with which the country is confronted were discussed in terms of different orders of consequences for the people, state, nation, and society. Development lags, growth bottlenecks, political polarization, increase in the relative power of adversaries and competing states, and climate change-induced catastrophes were amongst the problems that were discussed by the experts.

Following recommendations emerged from the discussion:

1. All political parties and national institutions must work out and pursue in unison the national interests of Pakistan. Clear, sound, and trenchant articulation of core or vital national interests should be undertaken, as it is important for domestic as well as diplomatic reasons.
2. The structural foundations of the economy should be rationalized by means of a series of extensive reforms and corrective actions without succumbing to the biases of any political, social, or sectional interests.
3. Pakistan must restrict its unnecessary imports, and address the energy import issue forthwith. Pakistan should build major dams on priority in order to produce affordable energy.

4. The focus should be on developing world-class multi-domain, multi-sectoral legal and business human resources to negotiate, navigate, and facilitate government-to-government, government-to-business, business-to-business exchanges and deals, together with bilateral, multilateral, and other types of international agreements, treaties, deals, and cases.
5. Building world-class skills in legal diplomacy, commercial diplomacy, and knowledge diplomacy should be one of the priorities of the government for safeguarding and promoting Pakistan's core or vital national interests.
6. Pakistan should actively promote regional interdependence and avail the opportunities for regional integration that exist in Central, South, and West Asia.
7. While not getting bogged down in camp politics, Pakistan should further deepen its multifarious relationship with China, especially in development, trade, technological advancement, agricultural modernization, higher education, and common prosperity. China-Pakistan partnership should display some positive regional manifestation urgently.
8. Pakistan should continue to maintain strong relations with the U.S. and the E.U. as well.
9. A comprehensive nation-building exercise should be led by the state with the broad-based cooperation of people and civil society in order to build up the non-tangible resources of courage, determination, and ethics for long-term national development. This exercise should be based on Quaid-i-Azam's foundational pillars of Unity, Faith and Discipline.
10. All political forces should work collectively toward political stability. The institutions should be strengthened to function



without let and hindrance to restore public trust. Corruption should be rooted out through firm and urgent measures.

11. Pakistan should urgently focus on climate change adaptation, climate mitigation, climate innovation, and climate finance opportunities and raise the issue of climate reparations internationally, considering the country contributes less than one percent of the global greenhouse gases.

## **1. Initiating Remarks**

### **Dr Ashfaqe Hasan Khan**

The global geopolitical landscape is changing rapidly. The world has witnessed extraordinary events during the last two years. The tumultuous transfer of power in the United States in January 2021 was one of its kind in contemporary American history. The speed with which the U.S.-China relations have deteriorated is a portent of the intense geopolitical competition between major powers in future. The formation of AUKUS, the upgradation of QUAD, the rollout of Indo-Pacific Framework, proclamation of a few global infrastructure development plans by G7 states, the recent visit of the U.S. House of Representatives' Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan all unmistakably point to heightened tensions between the two global powers.

Russia-Ukraine conflict is also an ominous reminder of the long-standing rivalry between Russia and the transatlantic set of states. The fall of Kabul in August 2021 and the general erosion of trust in global politics indicate that cooperation would be both difficult and exclusive rather than inclusive in the contemporary international system for the next couple of years or even decades. Pakistan's fateful deal with IMF will continue to make things complicated for the prospects of national growth and development. New alliances seem to be emerging in the region, and Pakistan's domestic challenges, which have been exacerbated by massive destruction caused by the recent floods, should not distract it from the evolving geopolitical dynamics in its greater neighborhood.

## **2. Discussion**

### **Ambassador Riaz Hussain Khokhar (Retd)**

Pakistan unfortunately is an extremely polarized country today. It is polarized horizontally and vertically. Pakistan's geographical location

is exceptional, but we seem to be surrounded mostly by resentful friends and outright foes. It goes without saying that India is our arch-rival. Indians have never been able to come to terms with the existence of Pakistan. The current Indian government is aggressively working on many fronts to undermine Pakistan. Pakistan and Afghanistan have had a difficult relationship. Kabul thinks of Islamabad as an adversary. Iran and Pakistan's relationship is also complicated. For whatever reason, Pakistan has not been able to build a fruitful relationship with Iran. Pakistan has suffered a gradual erosion of esteem in the Arab world in the last couple of decades.



On the other hand, India has made good headway with the Arabs. China is our only neighbor with which we have good relations. However, we need to be very careful in order to maintain good relations with China in the next decade, as hairline fractures may have developed in our partnership with China. Things will improve if we learn to remain steadfast. We need to realize that there are a number of routes to stability and security, but, at any given time, one route is

better than all others. Our policymakers need to determine which one is better for Pakistan

U.S.-Pakistan relationship has always been transactional. The United States has never treated Pakistan on par with India. Washington has always had a special regard for New Delhi. Now the two countries have a strategic partnership targeted mainly against China. The United States may even expect Pakistan to play some role in this regard. Perceptions about Pakistan in Washington are not positive.

It seems that India has succeeded in persuading the United States that CPEC is not good for the latter's broader interests or even for the interests of the West as a whole. It would be costly to continue to think that Pakistan's strategic objectives are still aligned with those of the United States.

Pakistan is experiencing turbulence and it is hard to get its direction right. With the rise of QUAD and AUKUS, the turbulence for Pakistan will continue. Pakistan will always be under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The FATF issue is still not settling and it will not be allowed to settle.

Countries like Israel belong to a completely different level of challenges, and we seem to have no means at our disposal to deal with them. Things are aggravated by the fact that Pakistani interlocutors are not highly skilled in the art of negotiating deals and communicating its concerns properly. In a non-altruistic world, our expectations are perilously sentimental.

### **Dr Salman Shah**

The goals of the United States and those of Pakistan are certainly diverging. For this simple reason, their relationship will always be transactional, but this does not mean it cannot be mutually beneficial and productive. It goes without saying that the next couple of decades

will be shaped by the U.S.-China relationship. In this context, Pakistan must learn to navigate its course in its own best interest.

U.S.-China relationship prospered once the Vietnam War came to an end. This is also the same period in which groundwork for the later rise of ASEAN as an economic superpower was done. We need to study closely the role played by the leadership of China and major countries in the region for Southeast Asia to become a massive engine of growth, trade, and development.



Can we replicate that success in our region in the wake of U.S.'s exit from Afghanistan? Can we parlay the current situation in building a "West Asian ASEAN"? We may have gotten the idea right in reiterating in recent past our shift in principle from geopolitics to geoeconomics, but painstaking spadework needs to be done in order to turn this proclamation into an actionable roadmap enjoying domestic and regional consensus and participation.

Pakistan, Iran, Türkiye, and Afghanistan have a major role to play in the formulation of this regional vision of integration and cooperation.

Leaders have to step up and work on the integration of this resource-rich region. The regional integration of Central, South, and West Asia can be impelled by the future dynamics of the U.S.-China competition. Massive investment can be channeled into this mega-region. Our state leadership and thought leaders should think of ways to position Pakistan to leverage latent investment opportunities in the region. It goes without saying that Pakistan needs to further deepen and improve its strategic partnership with China. It should extend to every major national domain. It may perhaps be time for the world to see some concrete regional manifestation of the positive potential of China-Pakistan partnership. Our relationship with China should be qualitatively better than Mexico's relationship with the United States and Türkiye's relationship with European Union. We need to enhance people-to-people exchanges, policy coordination, leadership communication, and higher education cooperation with China. Pakistan should put an end to its indecisiveness in its global relations and conduct its interstate relations in a clear-eyed manner.

Our relations with major powers like the United States and other major European countries should never come at the cost of our core or vital interests. We should communicate it clearly in no uncertain terms. Our interstate choices and dealings should be based on a clear understanding of our internal development imperatives and constraints. We also need to leverage our national strengths properly. Consistency and clear communication should be our goal in domestic and foreign relations. There should not be dysfunctional contradiction between our domestic policies and our foreign policy choices.

In the last 50 years, there have been no major reforms in the country. Our poor energy policies have pushed the economy into further debt. The amount of money drained from Pakistan through suboptimal energy policy is phenomenal. Pakistan's economy has virtually collapsed because of its energy policy. China is willing to trade with



Pakistan in any sector, but Pakistan lacks the capacity. Since China is pulling out of its previous agreements on trade with other countries, Pakistan must tap the potential that exists in this global situation.

We need to cultivate the right leadership mindset that favors firmness and decisiveness. Hybrid governance has been around for a while in the country, but it must transition to a functional democracy. We need to focus on our governance system and make it functional and capable of delivering development and prosperity. It should be predictable, reliable, and performance-oriented. Status quo ante is no longer a viable option for us.

### **Dr Shoaib Suddle**

Skill in geopolitics or geoeconomics will not bear fruit as long as Pakistan does not deal effectively with its domestic problems.



Unbridled corruption has eaten away at the core of our national fabric and values. It has hollowed out national institutions, governance

system, and social structure. Our national management capacity has never been so feeble as it is today.

We must learn to live according to our means. Our ends should not exhaust our means, and our means should not run short of our ends. Public extravagance must be reined in and boondoggles must stop. Rule of law seems like too much to ask in the current situation. Economy is stagnant, political affairs are in disarray, and the security situation does not appear to be improving. CPEC seems to have lost its momentum. National financial management is at sixes and sevens. Bureaucratic inefficiency is approaching disastrous proportions.

Sectarianism is still a major challenge even after years of work. Most initiatives in major national domains have become counterproductive due to the absence of long-term planning, ad hoc management, and lack of proper monitoring. Instead of grand geopolitical and geoeconomic schemes, Pakistan should look inward and fix its internal issues.

### **Lieutenant General Muhammad Masood Aslam (Retd)**

Pakistan's problems stem mainly from different types of polarization. Political polarization has led to failure of the political class as a whole to provide credible national leadership. Economic polarization has led to the failure of different economic classes to work together for national prosperity rather than pursue their narrow and selfish interests. Institutional polarization has led to the failure of different institutions to coordinate and cooperate for laying down broadly acceptable rules of the game. Social polarization has led to extremely low levels of social capital and a general inability to cooperate on a long-term basis to achieve major social goals.

Bureaucratic polarization has led to a situation in which different sections and groups of civil servants are chronically jockeying for favors, benefits, and influence. Ethnic polarization has led to the failure



of peaceful inland migration from relatively more developed provinces to less developed regions and provinces to offset the latter's lack of skills and training required for growth and development. Provincial polarization has led to the failure of provincial governments to effectively collaborate with each other on big development projects.



The outcome of these multiple polarizations is low to medium economic growth, sketchy development, poor law and order, deterioration of security, especially, in Balochistan, and low human development. Civil-military relations have taxed the energies of both spheres. The trends of over-centralization and the erosion of authority have occurred together. State institutions have become less rather than more effective with the passage of time. Locus of decision making seems to be getting diffuse.

Things are equally abysmal in the realm of interstate relations. Diplomatic diversification has not taken place properly. Undue importance accorded to the U.S.-Pakistan relationship may have negatively affected Pakistan's overall diplomacy. The potential of

China-Pakistan relationship does not seem to be fully actualized. Pakistan seems to be falling behind the curve with respect to new trends of regional cooperation and integration.

### **Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi (Retd)**

Pakistan's problems stem from the fundamental fact that the country is directionless. In ideological as well as geopolitical terms, we have not been able to determine a clear direction in which we want to go.



The questions of which development path to take, which political system to establish, and which diplomatic course to chart have never been posed in an inclusive manner. We have continued to totter between the proverbial two stools. To put it mildly, the resulting confusion has proven debilitating. We continue to debate the correct discursive order of Quaid-i-Azam's trio of principles instead of imbibing them and organizing our lives and society so that they could reflect unity, faith, and discipline.

Our options with regard to India have become remarkably limited. Our Kashmir policy is hazy and does not provide clarity to people. There is nothing like a long-term strategy on this crucial point, as in other key national domains.

Traditionally, relations with the United States, the European Union, China, and the Muslim world have been four key pillars of Pakistan's foreign policy and diplomacy. Some of these pillars have crumbled and some seem to be shaky. China-Pakistan relations are luckily strong but not free of their share of cares. The problem stems perhaps from Pakistan's classic lack of purpose and clarity.

We seem to be laboring under the delusion that China needs Pakistan. Such indispensability does not exist in interstate relations. The distinguishing quality of Chinese diplomacy is its subtlety. Such subtlety seems to have been lost on Pakistani interlocutors. Once, one of the Chinese diplomats shared an ancient Chinese maxim – that “it is not wise to waste a precious pearl to kill a sparrow flying high in the sky” – to help illustrate the importance of knowing one's priorities. Though the cap fits, it does not appear that it has been worn.

Pakistan's strategic compass must be directed at China, but that does not mean shunning other countries. Pakistan-China ties go back seven decades. Strong relations with China formed one of the priorities of Pakistan's foreign policy in the estimation of Quaid-i-Azam even before 1947. Pakistan was clear in its orientation once, but down the road, it seems to have lost it. Relations with the United States will be inevitable. However, relations with China should be a key focus for Pakistan. The last four years were not good for Pakistan-China relations. These years also saw China shift its trust from political leadership to military leadership.

The promise of Pan-Islamism is gone. Different Muslim countries are pursuing their own national interests, and Pakistan must also pursue its own goals. E.U. seems to be disoriented, but still remains a major

economic and technological power. Pakistan will, therefore, need to maintain good relations with the Western countries.

Pakistan wants a compliant Afghanistan, which is unlikely to happen. There is a need for a reset in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. Afghanistan's importance as transit to Central Asia should not be underestimated.

Pakistan's leadership should also pay attention to the making of the national ethos. This comes about with the combination of virtue and courage in leadership. The two are complementary in nature. Moreover, Pakistan is not a civilizational state like China or India. Pakistan has been the land of Sufis. Rig Veda was written on the banks of Indus, not Ganges. Buddhism flourished in this region as well. Pakistan has been a melting pot of civilizations and should leverage this original diversity, which is a part of its civilizational DNA, to craft an inspiring national ethos.

### **Air Marshal Farhat Hussain Khan (Retd)**

The last forty years of Pakistan's history were turbulent. The demise of the Soviet Union was celebrated by everyone as well as Pakistan. However, in hindsight it is not difficult to say that Pakistan turned out to be the only loser in terms of the fallout of that conflict, considering that it gave birth to religious extremism, gun culture, and narcotics in the country.

We can say the same for the consequences of Pakistan's participation in the war on terror. The impact of the war on terror will diminish in Afghanistan and other countries, but for Pakistan, it will continue to make itself felt. Pakistan seems to have lost its discipline and direction.

The US has shifted its focus to the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific. This shift in focus has led to new pressure on Pakistan. All the countries in AUKUS and QUAD can do trade with Russia and China, but it appears

that there are strong global reservations against Pakistan's trade with Russia.



It is understood well now that the United States considers CPEC against its vital interests. As a result, progress on CPEC is being affected. The current state of Pakistan's internal affairs also seems to have begun to slow the development of CPEC. This should not be allowed to happen because CPEC is vital for the economy of Pakistan.

Pakistan cannot have a good foreign policy without a strong economy, and for a strong economy, political stability is very important. Pakistan must focus on governance to build itself. There is a disconnect between the elites, government, and the people. The social contract between the people and the government is already frayed. Lack of clear articulation of national interests is equally confusing for the people and the world at large. The coherence between social contract and national interests is also vital to establish and preserve. Without this coherence, no meaningful large-scale collective undertaking can be embarked upon.



## **Engineer Suleman Najib Khan**

Pakistan needs to bear a fair share of responsibility for difficult relations with the United States. It is but natural that the United States will prefer good relations with India, considering the latter's economic strength and its rivalrous relations with China. Even in the 1960s, the United States made friendly overtures to India. Notable in this regard is the American military aid to India during the Sino-Indian War of 1962. In a way, the foundations of QUAD were laid back then. Currently, Pakistan has no real friends in the West. Pakistan must, therefore, focus on its relationship with China. Pakistan must fully develop CPEC and strongly promote the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

We tend to forget Pakistan's and India's reliance on the Tibetan region for their waters. Climate change will cause these glaciers to melt in the coming years, which will eventually lead to the end of the Indus River system as the major water source in the region. India has been more proactive in dealing with the water crisis than Pakistan. Having spent billions of dollars, Indians have built 32 major dams during the last couple of decades, and have interlinked their reservoirs. We have been woefully tardy in building major dams. Pakistan has not built any new dams on Indus which has served Indian interests rather than Pakistan's.

Pakistan must work on the Kalabagh Dam urgently, not only to save water but also to save people from floods. Pakistan is not acting prudently in the water, energy, and other major sectors. Moreover, international organizations are not funding projects in Gilgit-Baltistan because of its connection with the Kashmir dispute.

## **Mr Kamal Uddin Tipu**

Pakistan has not been able to consistently follow any particular development model. As a result, we have been a developing country for a long time. Development eclecticism has culminated in

development fatigue eventually without development outcomes. Countries that were at an analogous level of development, or even behind us, a few decades ago have now raced ahead of us. While South Korea comes readily to mind when we think of such countries, we also need to consider countries like Türkiye, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Bangladesh that have made remarkable progress in the last couple of decades, starting, like us, from initial conditions characterized by low levels of development and growth.



If we take the case of Bangladesh, we can see that they have achieved a number of startling milestones. They have successfully controlled their population growth; they have achieved good economic growth; their financial discipline is strict and sound; their industrial development has been remarkable with a number of functional and successful special economic zones; they have checked religious extremism well and have achieved social stability. On the other hand, a progressive deterioration can be observed in many domains in the case of Pakistan. We have struggled through a pernicious security

complex that has vitiated the dynamics and drivers of socioeconomic development.

### **Ambassador Fauzia Nasreen (Retd)**

Pakistan is constantly facing internal and external problems. Balancing foreign factors and internal problems requires good vision and management. Pakistan has to manage its relations with the United States and China simultaneously. In fact, good diplomacy is the art of sound simultaneous management of multiple relationships and factors. The relationship between Pakistan and the United States has had many dividends for Pakistan. The collaboration between the two countries is diverse and runs across many international platforms and forums.



In Pakistan, foreign relations have gradually become part of domestic politics instead of remaining an autonomous realm of action unencumbered by domestic affairs. This interpenetration should be of concern. Relations with major powers have further intensified this



trend. Public opinion is frequently rallied on the basis of relations with this or that major power. Pakistan's fractious relations with Afghanistan are at the root of many problems.

Our productive industrial capacity is seriously stunted and demands renewal. The danger is its becoming irretrievably non-competitive, if technological modernization and industrial upgradation are not made urgent national priorities. The issue of youth bulge is another problem with no plan in sight for the gainful utilization of our young population in national development.

The recent floods have demonstrated the vicious potential of climate change to seriously impair livelihoods and reverse development gains. This has further weakened Pakistan's already meagre capacity to manage its socioeconomic issues. The people want the leaders to first of all focus on internal issues as well provide a clear sense of direction. All stakeholders must sit and work together on the challenges before the country. Without such a national consensus, the country will find it extremely difficult to move forward.

### **Dr Asma Shakir Khawaja**

Different countries work together on a case-to-case basis to avoid conflict and resolve problems peacefully. Therefore, coordination between Russia, Iran, and Türkiye should not surprise us. Even, Iran, India, and Russia have worked together in the Caspian region. A prudent country always keeps its options open and is never averse to working with different countries as long as doing so promotes its national interests. It is only Pakistan where the debate is framed in such a manner that relations with China and the United States are seen in exclusive terms. Why does Pakistan find it challenging to plan wisely to safeguard its own interests? This is a basic perceptual lock indicating the impoverishment and stultification of strategic imagination.

Pakistan must define its friends and foes realistically and objectively. Henry Kissinger said that America did not have friends or enemies, only interests. I think there is much that Pakistan can take away from this statement. Pakistan must create a compatibility of interest with other countries where it does not exist, and leverage opportunities where such correspondence does exist. National security can be understood to be a sum of many factors. Regional security is also not the burden of any single state. All countries in the region should work toward that goal. Security also comes from the cultivation of diverse relations. India has managed to keep its relations with Russia, despite its membership in QUAD. Pakistan should also cultivate the capacity to move in multiple directions at the same time, without compromising its national interests and without suffering from disorientation.



Pakistan must learn from its mistakes and those of others. It must not pick on every issue, but instead focus on more relevant issues. Responding to every issue is not diplomatically prudent. Pakistan is trying to recoup its international reputation through different actions

like providing security to the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar. Such steps should be welcomed. A narrative of reverses is defeatist and counterproductive.

Domestic affairs and security are interlinked spheres. Domestic instability serves only Pakistan's enemies. All stakeholders must build a consensus on domestic policy and foreign policy. What will reinforce such a narrative is the fact that Pakistan is a civilizational state.

After the Russia-Ukraine conflict, China and Russia are on the same side now. The partnership of China, Russia, and India at some future date is also not an impossibility. Pakistan must think of different strategies to build its relations with different countries. Pakistan must be seen in its own right, not through the perceptual lens constructed by India. There has to be regard in the West for Pakistan's regional goals reciprocating the regard that Pakistan shows for their interests.

### **Mr Ali Shah**

Civilizational consciousness is low in Pakistan. This is a perpetual risk, because a state that thinks in civilizational terms almost always trumps a state that thinks in narrow national terms. One can go to the extent of even saying that development and civilizational consciousness may be directly proportional, if development is not an accidental attribute of the actions of the state.

An attempt can be made to argue that Pakistan is a civilizational state. The fact that different civilizations flourished in a place at different points across time does not mean that it couldn't or didn't belong to a single civilization at other points across time, or even that a single civilization cannot be, or was never, dominant in that place even while it co-existed with other civilizations in the same place. Civilizational diversity is mostly a diachronic rather than a synchronic quality. Based on the history of the last couple of centuries of the region of which Pakistan is a part, a strong case can be made that Pakistan is a state that

squarely belongs to the Islamic civilization, and is therefore a civilizational state, even if most of its people and almost all of its thoughts leaders have poor consciousness or low awareness of this fact.

This assertion cannot be appreciated if one's thinking is dominated by the perspectives of Orientalism. Civilizational diversity does not prevent a state from being a civilizational state, nor should it be confused with cultural diversity. Most states have experienced different civilizations across time. Türkiye and Iran are two civilizational states, now belonging to the Islamic civilization, though earlier they were sites of other civilizations.

It is interesting to think about why so many people, especially Muslims, have ceased believing in the concept of the Islamic community of nations. In psychology, there is a concept called affordance, which basically means that human beings look at objects in terms of the use to which they can put them.

When applied to circumstances human being face and capabilities they have, affordance means that people interpret their circumstances in terms of what they can do in those circumstances. A situation is seen as bad or hopeless when people think there is not much they can do to help that situation and vice versa.

When applied to Muslims' perceptions, especially the perceptions of leaders, statesmen, opinion makers, thought leaders, etc., of the Islamic community of nations, affordance means that they think such a global community is meaningless, precisely because they don't think they have the capacity to do anything about it in this day and age.

Unless the elites and thought leaders of Pakistan stop thinking from within the strategic imagination of other civilizations, they will continue to suffer from cynicism and a poor understanding of Pakistan's problems, leading to poor choices for their resolution.

## Dr Farah Naz

It seems that Pakistan is confused about which side to choose in the U.S.-China competition. CPEC and BRI must be critically analyzed to maximize their potential benefits for Pakistan. China is trying to draw its own circle of global influence within the Western circle of global influence. It is not trying to displace the United States so much as it is trying to establish a credible concomitant presence.

The reason for China's global appeal is its essentially non-confrontational and non-interventionist development model that likes to coexist with, not dislocate, other models of development and thinking. In this sense, China's global development methodology is positive because it is based on contributing its own vision of development to the community of other development visions.



The United States is trying to thwart China's global development instead of focusing on the improvement and renewal of its own global development vision. In this sense, it is negative, because, rather than offer its own vision of global development, the United States is focused



more on discrediting the Chinese model of global development. However, there are serious challenges acting as barriers for China's global development model. First, the United States is continuously monitoring it and opposing it.

Therefore, the grand strategy of China will be confronted with the grand strategy of the United States and that of the West as a whole at every turn.

It remains to be seen which of the two conflicting grand strategies will emerge victorious in the end.

China's non-intervention policy, even when countries face serious crises like the recent turmoil in Sri Lanka, will undermine China's global aspirations, as they may result in low trust. China will need to be very careful in the face of groupings like AUKUS and QUAD.

Overall, things will become more challenging for Pakistan, especially considering the recent promotion of India as the strategic partner in the grand strategy of the United States.



### 3. Concluding Remarks

#### Dr Ashfaqe Hasan Khan

Pakistan must work on its relations with other countries sincerely. Pakistan's policymakers need to undertake a general equilibrium analysis to gain a true idea of the scale of our problems. Almost everyone in Pakistan is doing partial equilibrium analysis without taking into account the general equilibrium, and hence failing to identifying the true magnitude of both domestic problems and geopolitical challenges. Pakistan must formulate a comprehensive policy.

The current situation is alarming. Pakistan's IMF deal is proving extremely costly and counterproductive. The economy seems to have been deliberately mismanaged to make the progress on CPEC vulnerable. Pakistan must regionalize the development of CPEC. SAARC is non-functional. There is a need for an alternative regional organization with the inclusion of China.



## Mr Amir Yaqub

Nation-building should be the top-most priority of Pakistan's policymakers. Without comprehensive nation-building Pakistan will continue to blunder from one domestic crisis to another, and from one geopolitical challenge to another. Our response to problems will stay half-baked and half-hearted. The state has to play a leading role in the development of a unified national vision, signposted with concrete objectives and a widely-shared verifiable methodology for the realization of these objectives. Social media and traditional mass media should be leveraged for this nation-building. Moral resources of a nation reflected in its national values prove to be as crucial as material and technological resources in dealing with problems and challenges.







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**NUST INSTITUTE OF POLICY STUDIES**