

The SCO Summit and Pakistan-India Relations

written by Saddam Tahir | October 15, 2024



Introduction

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which has six member countries and was founded in June 2001, is a pan-continental organisation that is quickly growing. Its main focus is on the political, economic, and security problems of Central Asia. In its early years, the SCO was made up of China, Russia, and four Central Asian countries. Since then, it has grown into an organisation with full members India and Pakistan in 2017. Even though there were already competing geopolitical forces, this addition was a step towards making a bigger map of regional cooperation.

The 23rd Meeting of the Council of the Heads of Government of the SCO is set to take place in Islamabad in October 2024. This meeting has gotten a lot of attention because it is supposed to be a typical one with a lot of leaders attending. The foreign minister of India, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, will be visiting Pakistan for the first time in five years next month. This meeting is not just another diplomatic contact; it is an important one. Before this meeting, there hadn't been any contact between the two countries since 2012, and things got worse after the Pulwama attack in Indian-controlled Kashmir in 2019. Because of this, Jaishankar's physical presence in Islamabad is not only important, but it could also have diplomatic value in the complicated politics of South Asia. India and Pakistan are two members of the SCO that have had a complicated and sometimes hostile relationship in the past. As their cooperation grows, this could be both a challenge and a chance for the organisation. The recent summit in Islamabad allowed people to talk about the most important issues, such as security and economic cooperation. It was also important for people who wanted to see peace in an area that has a history of conflicts and confrontations.

Bilateral Challenges

The next SCO summit in Islamabad seems like it would be a good idea because of the current diplomatic problems between SCO countries, especially between India and Pakistan, and the fact that India's Foreign Minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, has taken very firm stances. Before his planned trip to Israel next month—the first one by an Indian foreign minister in almost ten years—Jaishankar made it clear that the summit would not include a separate meeting with the Pakistani group. In interviews with the media, he has said that he really wants to be a part of the SCO's diplomatic forum as a multilateral organisation. This kind of organisation tends to keep things diplomatic and not bring up the two-way problems that have been a part of India-Pakistan ties for decades.

This diplomatic move comes at a time when tensions between the two neighbours have been rising since 2019 when terrorists attacked a part of Kashmir that India controlled, and then India attacked inside Pakistani territory. When these things happen, they sometimes make it impossible for two countries to get along because they blame the other of supporting and hosting insurgencies. Pakistan and India are both nuclear powers, and they have a history of wars and disagreements with each other, mostly over Kashmir, which both countries claim as their own but only control parts of.

SCO's Role and Future Prospects

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) has been a good way to talk about security and economic issues in Central Asia. Over the past 15 years, the SCO has slowly gotten better at resolving border disputes between its member states. This is especially true among the Central Asian states, where it has been able to negotiate and settle more than 90% of the disputes. The success story shows how this group can bring about stability by working together on security and diplomacy. Aside from that, the SCO has been very important in fostering economic partnership and integration. Its members are working hard to improve trade and transport infrastructure in the area. But there are many things that will have to work together for this to happen in the SCO framework and with India and Pakistan. ICA to be mediated by SCO is a tough nut to crack because of the many times that politics and territory issues have gotten in the way of the relationship between India and Pakistan. Because of these tensions, the next meeting in Islamabad will not be like the others, even though they happen often. It's a tough test of the SCO's ability to provide a place for people to talk, even if the conversation isn't directly about the two countries' problems.



But even now, the attention on this multilateral format can be very important: At the SCO meeting, India's foreign minister made it clear that the country was not ready for bilateral talks. Increasing security and cooperation in the area can help India and Pakistan get over their mutual suspicions and start to work together again, which is also good for both countries. There's a chance that the fact that both countries are working together will lead to CBMs that will help focus future talks. Finally, it's important to note that the SCO meeting we've been talking about has effects that go beyond the short term. It tests the organization's ability to handle complex member state relationships like the ones between India and Pakistan. A good result at this meeting that only affects multilateral issues could be seen as the SCO slowly becoming a major regional organisation that can promote and protect peace. So, the SCO's future depends on both how well it continues to play the role of a regional peacemaker in disputes between its traditional member states and how well it adapts its methods to deal with new, more serious, politically sensitive conflicts that are important to world politics.

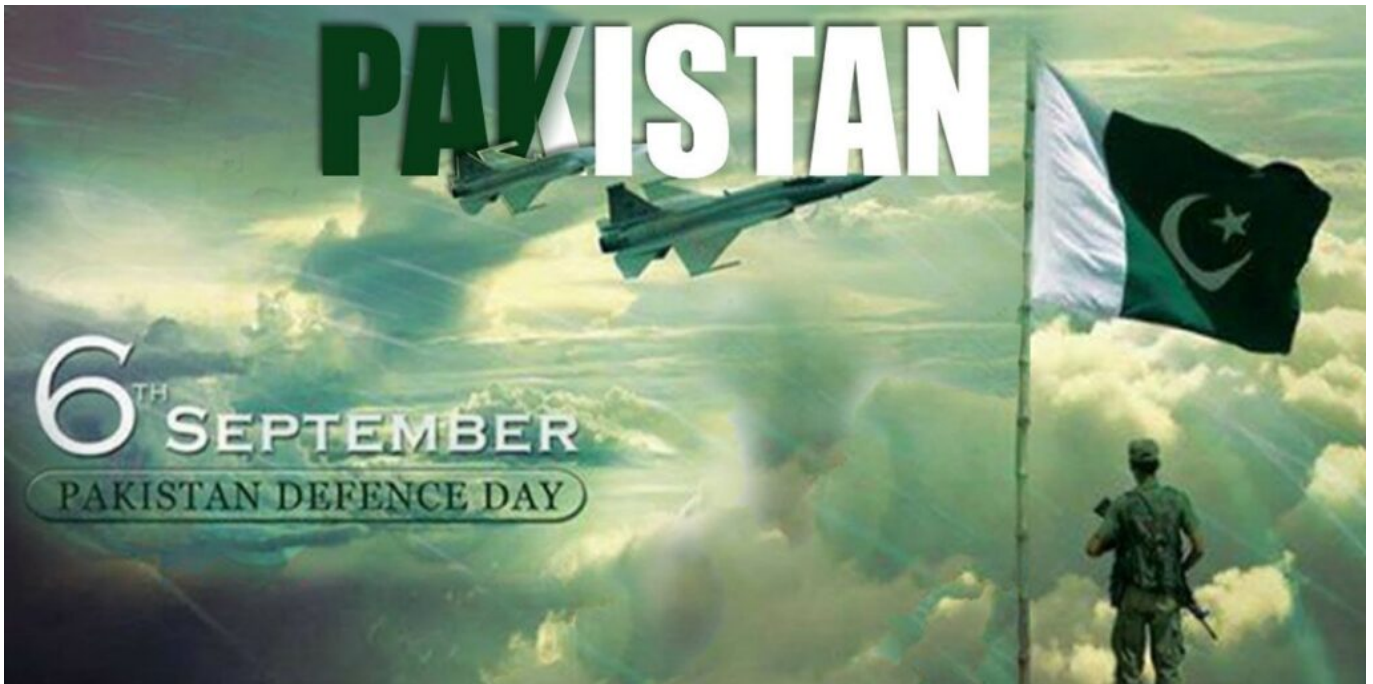
The SCO is still a major player in Central Asia and the surrounding area. The organization's actions show how important it is to use multilateral structures to handle complex processes. The 23rd Meeting of the Council of the Heads of Government of the SCO, which will take place in Islamabad soon, will emphasise this role, especially in light of the tense situation between India and Pakistan. India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar gave Pakistan the middle finger and said that India was not interested in having bilateral talks with them at the summit. However, the fact that all of these countries are willing to work together suggests that there may be a chance for indirect diplomacy and building trust.

Groups like the SCO are important because they help countries that have a past of fighting figure out how to work together better. They give member states a place to talk about things that are important to both of them that might not be clearly defined in bilateral relationships, like economic growth, security, and safety. In the case of India and Pakistan, the SCO may not call for an instant end to their long-running

conflicts, but it can help make conditions better for future talks by letting people work together on bigger issues. In terms of what will happen in the future, it is possible that the SCO summit will change the focus to the region's peace and security. While any direct bilateral talks between India and Pakistan may be sometime off, the mere interaction of these countries within the SCO could provide the basis for more serious negotiations at a later point. So, this summit isn't important for the diplomacy talks that are happening today. It's important for the chance of a new era of regional security. The people around the world are looking forward to seeing if the ideas of multilateralism will win out and make the world a better place to live in peace and cooperation for the political leaders in this area.

Valour and Victory: Defence Day of Pakistan

written by Saddam Tahir | October 15, 2024



In Pakistan, September 6th is Defence Day. This day is marked with deep respect and a renewed feeling of national pride. Today is a celebration of the bravery shown by the Pakistani Armed Forces in the 1965 war against India. This was a turning point in Pakistan's military history and in the country's character as a whole. The conflict started because of rising emotions over the disputed territory of Kashmir. This led to a full-scale war where the Pakistani forces fought bravely to protect their territory against an enemy with more troops. In this way, Defence Day is a moving reminder of the bravery, strategic thinking, and final sacrifices made by the armed forces, which stopped the Indian forces on many fronts. The celebration of this day goes beyond just remembering the past; it is an important part of Pakistan's national calendar and helps its people be loyal and strong. We want this piece to show how important Defence Day is for bringing the country together and remembering the brave people who gave their lives so that their country could be safe and prosper.

Historical Context and Events of 1965

Defence Day has its roots in a time when tensions were rising between India and Pakistan, mostly over the troubled region of Kashmir. As the summer of 1965 approached, these tensions hit a peak, leading to a series of skirmishes that quickly turned into a full-scale war. India began a massive attack into Pakistani territory on September 6, 1965, with the goal of taking over key positions and weakening Pakistan's resolve. Today was the start of fierce fighting, and Pakistani troops were thrown into a fight for the survival of the country.



The defence of Lahore

Lahore, a big city close to the border between India and Pakistan, was a key location early in the war. Indian troops wanted to take the city because they thought it would be a big psychological and military blow to Pakistan. But Lahore's defence was well planned, and the 16th Punjab Regiment of the Pakistan Army played a key part. Even though they were outnumbered, the troops fought off several Indian attacks. The fierce fighting around the BRB Canal stands out. It was there that Pakistani troops stopped the Indian advance, showing amazing determination and smart defence.

The Battle of Sialkot

At the same time, the Sialkot front became another important part of the war. Tank battles in this area were some of the biggest since World War II, with armoured units from both countries fighting in close quarters. The 16th Punjab Regiment once again showed its worth by fighting against stronger Indian forces and stopping them from making big advances into Pakistani land. There were heavy casualties on both sides in the battles around Sialkot, which showed how harsh war is and how determined the Pakistani forces were to protect their country.



Operations at sea, such as “Operation Dwarka”

During the war, the Pakistan Navy was also very important for strategy. “Operation Dwarka,” which took place on the night of September 8, 1965, was one of the bravest naval missions. The Indian town of Dwarka was attacked by Pakistani naval troops out of the blue. The goal of this action was to destroy the Indian naval radar station there, which was very helpful for Indian air operations along the western coast. Six Pakistani frigates carried out this operation successfully. They not only did a lot of damage to property, but they also served as a strategic distraction, which took pressure off the Pakistan Air Force and raised confidence in both the military and civilian population of Pakistan.

Impact of Defence Day on National Unity and Pride

Defence Day holds a unique place in the hearts and minds of Pakistanis, serving as a potent symbol of national unity and pride. Each year, this day rekindles the spirit of patriotism and reminds citizens of the sacrifices made for the nation’s security and sovereignty.

Fostering National Unity and Pride

Every year on Defence Day, people in Pakistan are reminded of how strong and determined their people and military are. All over the country, events and ceremonies that tell the stories of 1965 are held in schools, government buildings, and public places. These bring together people of different generations and strengthen national identity. These events aren’t just a way to remember the past; they’re also a powerful reminder of how determined everyone is to protect the country no matter what. Pakistanis from all walks of life feel deeply united by this shared story of bravery and sacrifice. It strengthens their pride in Pakistan’s military successes and their personal connection to the country’s past.

Defence Day is a powerful reminder of Pakistanis’ bravery, sacrifice, and unity. All Pakistanis, both at home and abroad, are asked to remember and honour the brave actions of their armed forces, who stayed strong in the face of huge odds. The bravery stories from the war of 1965 are not just facts; they are foundational stories that continue to shape and improve the national character. As we celebrate Defence

Day, it is important to reaffirm our dedication to national unity and the values that this day stands for. Defence Day should be more than just a day to remember things. It should be a constant force that motivates everyone to work together for national security and growth. It is a call for all Pakistanis to uphold the ideals of strength and readiness that are needed to deal with the problems of today.

Book 'The Lost War' by Brig Ishaq Khattak (Retd) Launched at IRS

written by admin | October 15, 2024



The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with Pakistan House hosted the launch of the book titled, 'The Lost War: Why the Taliban Re-emerged to Claim Victory in Afghanistan', authored by Brigadier Ishaq Ahmed Khattak (Retd) at its premises.

Speaking at the event, the author reflected on his challenging yet rewarding journey as an author. He noted that capturing the memories of the tumultuous years during the US invasion posed significant complexities, especially in addressing the book's central question: why the Taliban re-emerged to claim victory in Afghanistan. The author also described how his passion for writing about Afghan affairs began in 1998 during his posting in Peshawar, where frequent interactions with Afghans and the Taliban sparked his interest in the Afghan culture, history, and the struggle.

Addressing the gathering, Amb Jauhar Saleem, President of IRS, emphasized that while the global war on terrorism has concluded, achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan remains a significant challenge in the post-US withdrawal era, continuing to threaten regional and global security, particularly for Pakistan. He noted that Ishaq Khattak's book, "The Lost War," is not just a historical narrative but provides vital

lessons for promoting lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Athar Javed, DG Pakistan House, lamented that despite Pakistan's fight in the global war against terrorism being the frontline state, its contributions and sacrifices had largely been unrecognized. Reflecting on the book subject, he said that the author while avoiding oversimplification, and undermining any country presented a natural flow of the events and major occurring during the peak of NATO mission.

Ambassador Asif Durrani, Pakistan's special envoy to Afghanistan, stated that 'Ishaq Khattak's book offers a realistic assessment of the events that enabled the Taliban's resurgence and triumph after two decades of conflict'. 'His analysis correctly highlights the governance issues under the Karzai and Ashraf Ghani administrations and the US's failure to promote reconciliation as key factors in lingering the Afghan crisis', he remarked.

Lt. Gen (r) Asif Yasin Malik, former Secretary Defence, praised the author for effectively leveraging his extensive experience with the land and its people to analyze events and their repercussions for Pakistan and the region. Lt. Gen Malik noted that the author's greatest strength lies in guiding readers through historical events, linking them to present-day issues. 'The book offers valuable insights for a diverse audience, from the general public to policymakers and historians', he remarked.

Abdullah Gul, Chairman TJP, while describing the past occurring presented useful suggestions for future course of actions with regard to ongoing Afghan security problems. Hassan Khan, Journalist, Khyber News, stated that the book was a great contribution to the literature on the Afghan wars and conflicts, accurately depicting the events during the US invasion and realistically addressing the shortcomings of the NATO mission.

The event attracted a diverse audience of diplomats, researchers, students, and journalists.

Climate Emergency Pakistan

written by Ms Zarka Khan | October 15, 2024



Climate refers to the long-term patterns and averages of meteorological conditions in a particular region. It includes temperature, humidity, precipitation, wind, and seasons over periods ranging from decades to millions of years. In Pakistan, over the past 2 decades we have witnessed an increasing number of natural disasters repeating themselves. These disasters include earthquakes, floods, heat waves, landslides and droughts. Each province is affected differently by these natural disasters, impacting the livelihoods of the population inhabiting the regions. Not only are human lives at risk, but the economic stagnation in these areas persists for years after the disaster.

The question that arises here is, does Pakistan face a Climate emergency?

Yes as defined by this definition, “A climate emergency refers to the urgent and severe threat posed by climate change, requiring immediate and significant action to mitigate its impacts and adapt to its effects. It requires the critical need for rapid changes in policies, behaviors, and technologies to prevent catastrophic consequences for the environment, human societies, and economies”.

To support the above definition, if we define it in Pakistan’s context, Pakistan does face a climate emergency. The climate emergency appeal can be supported by the following justification;
Extreme Weather Events

Pakistan has experienced a rise in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, floods, and droughts. For example, the devastating floods of 2010 and 2022 displaced millions and caused extensive damage. One-third of the population has been displaced from their homes, and the efforts to safely evacuate water from villages have been inadequate. These internally displaced people (IDPs) have found homes and shelters in other cities, as their own lands remain flooded. These areas have become uninhabitable due to the proliferation of waterborne diseases, algae, stagnant water, and contamination, along with the destruction of infrastructure and the depletion of essential resources.



Glacial Melt

The Himalayas and the Karakoram range in Pakistan are home to some of the largest glaciers outside the polar regions. These glaciers are melting at an accelerated rate due to rising temperatures, leading to glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) and impacting water availability. Not only can this cause floods, but in the northern regions of Pakistan, glacial melt is severely endangering various wildlife species, including the iconic snow leopard, Himalayan brown bear, and Marco Polo sheep. These species rely on the unique high-altitude ecosystems sustained by glaciers for their habitat and food sources. The melting glaciers lead to habitat loss, reduced prey availability, and disrupted water sources, increasing the already sensitive existence of these animals.

Water Scarcity

Climate change is severely affecting water scarcity in Pakistan. Changes in rainfall patterns and the melting of glaciers are affecting the flow of the Indus River, which is crucial for the country's agriculture and water supply. The aftermath of this can be seen in the water scarcity issues faced by metropolitan cities such as Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad, where citizens are now relying on the purchase of water tankers worth Rs. 4000. If you do not have ground water supply, you have to wait for the government's water supply for up to 3-4 days. Many incidents have been reported where government supply was halted for up to 10 days in some sectors on the Capital, causing citizens to relocate.

Agricultural Impact

Agriculture, which employs a large portion of Pakistan's population, is highly vulnerable to climate change. Changes in temperature and rainfall patterns, along with increased pest outbreaks and soil degradation, are affecting crop yields and food security. Wheat, a staple crop in Pakistan, has experienced yield reductions of up to 15-20% in some regions due to increasing temperatures and unconventional rainfall patterns. Rice, another critical crop, is similarly affected by these climatic changes. The agricultural sector, contributing around 19% to Pakistan's GDP and employing about 42% of the labor force, faces significant

economic losses due to climate change. Annual losses are estimated to be around \$3.8 billion, primarily due to reduced crop yields and extreme weather events.

Urban Vulnerability

Rapid urbanization and inadequate infrastructure further complicate these challenges. When major private housing schemes cut down the forests in order to build urban housing societies, not only are they disturbing the quality of land but they release toxic waste which is harmful to the ecosystem and the water supply of the territory. These housing societies, under the umbrella of business are creating a problem for Pakistan's government, because if a natural disasters strikes or if a disease spreads, the government will have to compensate for the loss of life, not these housing societies.

Health Issues

Climate change is contributing to a rise in health problems, including heat-related illnesses, respiratory issues from poor air quality, and the spread of vector-borne diseases. Lahore has one of the worst air qualities in the world, causing respiratory diseases among the inhabitants. According to a study, One day spent in Lahore is equal to smoking 30 cigarettes in a day. Increased temperatures and altered rainfall patterns contribute to the proliferation of waterborne diseases such as cholera and dysentery, which disproportionately affect children due to their weaker immune systems. Additionally, extreme weather events, such as floods, lead to the displacement of families, resulting in overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions that further spread infectious diseases like respiratory infections and skin diseases. Malnutrition is another critical issue, as climate change impacts agricultural productivity, leading to food shortages that primarily affect pregnant women and children, increasing the risk of stunted growth and maternal health complications.



Economic Losses

The economic impact of climate change is substantial, affecting various sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and infrastructure. Natural disasters and changing climate conditions lead to significant financial losses and hinder economic development.

Pakistan has developed a National Climate Change Policy aimed at addressing and mitigating the impacts of climate change, focusing on adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) coordinates disaster response and implements disaster risk reduction strategies, playing a crucial role in managing climate-related disasters. Initiatives like the Billion Tree Tsunami, launched in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and expanded nationwide, aim to combat deforestation, restore ecosystems, and enhance carbon sequestration. Additionally, Pakistan is investing in renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions. At the community level, local adaptation strategies involve changing agricultural practices, improving water management, and building resilient infrastructure. Numerous NGOs and civil society groups are actively working on climate change awareness, education, and community-based adaptation projects. However, these efforts are not enough. If not now, when will we take the comprehensive, immediate action necessary to protect our future and mitigate the severe impacts of climate change?

The New Phase of China-Pakistan Cooperation - CPEC 2.0

written by Saddam Tahir | October 15, 2024



The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) also known as the CPEC 2.0 has entered a crucial second phase, marking a significant evolution in the strategic partnership between China and Pakistan. This phase focuses on establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs), modernizing agriculture, and developing the IT and mining sectors. These initiatives aim to amplify Pakistan's economy, create jobs, and attract substantial foreign direct investments, particularly from the Middle East.

The establishment of SEZs is central to this new phase. These zones are expected to attract investment by providing tax incentives and facilitating business operations. Key SEZs include Rashakai in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dhabeji in Sindh, and Allama Iqbal in Punjab. These zones will house industries ranging from textiles to technology, aiming to boost local production and exports. It was also agreed to fast-track the work on the ML-I project, KKH realignment and, the Sukkur- Hyderabad motorway which is the only missing link within the Karachi-Peshawar motorway network.

Agriculture, a backbone of Pakistan's economy, is set for modernization under CPEC. This includes introducing advanced farming techniques, high-yield crops, and better irrigation systems. Collaborative projects between China and Pakistan aim to increase agricultural productivity and food security. Chinese technology and expertise in agricultural mechanization and water management are crucial to these efforts. The IT sector is another focus area, with plans to establish technology parks and incubators. These initiatives aim to foster innovation, support startups, and enhance digital infrastructure. The mining sector, rich in minerals like copper and gold, is also set for development. Joint ventures will explore and exploit these resources, contributing to economic growth.



Gwadar port remains a pivotal element of CPEC. Its development into a hub for oil storage and the petrochemical industry will enhance regional connectivity and trade. The port's strategic location on the Arabian Sea makes it vital for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), providing a direct route for Middle Eastern oil to China, bypassing the longer maritime route through the Malacca Strait. Energy cooperation under CPEC is extensive, with numerous power projects already completed or underway. These projects address Pakistan's energy deficit, ensuring a stable supply of electricity to fuel industrial and economic activities.

The second phase of CPEC is designed to attract investments from the Middle East. The improved infrastructure and economic zones present lucrative opportunities for Gulf investors. Middle Eastern countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and the UAE, have shown interest in investing in various CPEC projects, including refineries, petrochemicals, and agriculture. As petrochemicals are the main area of specialty for middle eastern countries, they have shown significant interest in these programs. Despite its economic potential, CPEC faces security challenges. Militant attacks in Balochistan and other regions pose risks to the project's infrastructure and personnel. Pakistan has taken measures to enhance security, including deploying special forces and establishing a dedicated security division for CPEC. China remains committed to supporting Pakistan in these efforts, recognizing the strategic importance of CPEC for regional stability. With the launch of the new operation "Azm e Istehkam" operations are also being carried out across Pakistan, to counter Non state actors.

CPEC's success has significant economic and geopolitical implications. Economically, it promises to transform Pakistan into a regional trade hub, boosting its GDP and improving living standards. Geopolitically, it strengthens China-Pakistan ties while positioning China as a key player in South Asian and Middle Eastern affairs. The development of Gwadar port enhances China's maritime influence and secures

its energy supply routes. The collaboration between China and Pakistan under CPEC is a model for other BRI projects. It demonstrates how infrastructure development can drive economic growth and foster international partnerships. As CPEC progresses, it will likely attract more countries to participate in similar initiatives, promoting regional connectivity and economic integration.

On the contrary while the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are widely recognized as catalysts for economic development, they also pose significant challenges to indigenous cultures, potentially causing societal stress. The BRI, an ambitious infrastructure and economic development project launched by China in 2013, aims to enhance global trade and stimulate economic growth across Asia, Africa, and Europe. The CPEC, a flagship project of the BRI, is a massive network of roads, railways, and pipelines connecting China's Xinjiang region to Pakistan's Gwadar Port. These initiatives promise substantial economic benefits, including improved infrastructure, increased trade, and job creation, which can contribute to the overall development and prosperity of participating countries. However, these projects come with a complex set of cultural and social implications. The large-scale infrastructure development and the influx of foreign investment and workforce can lead to significant cultural shifts in the regions involved. As globalization intensifies, the exposure to foreign cultures and practices can result in the erosion of traditional values and customs that have been preserved by indigenous communities for generations. The process of globalization often brings with it the dominance of a more homogenized, global culture, which can overshadow and diminish the unique cultural identities of local populations. For instance, the introduction of new business practices, languages, and lifestyles can marginalize indigenous languages, customs, and social norms. This cultural displacement can lead to a sense of loss and identity crisis among local populations, causing societal stress and tensions.

Moreover, the rapid pace of development can lead to socio-economic disparities, where the benefits of these projects are unevenly distributed. While some segments of society may experience significant economic gains, others, particularly those in rural or marginalized communities, may be left behind. This disparity can increase existing inequalities and create social divisions, further contributing to societal stress. Environmental degradation is another critical issue associated with these large-scale projects. The construction of infrastructure such as highways, railways, and ports can disrupt local ecosystems and displace communities that rely on natural resources for their livelihoods. This environmental impact can have a profound effect on the cultural practices and lifestyles of indigenous populations, who often have a deep connection to their natural surroundings.

Additionally, the influx of foreign workers and businesses can strain local resources and infrastructure, leading to overcrowding and increased competition for jobs and services. This can create friction between local populations and foreign entities, resulting in social tensions and conflicts.



The second phase of CPEC marks a significant step in China-Pakistan cooperation. By focusing on industrialization, agriculture, technology, and energy, it aims to boost Pakistan's economic development and attract foreign investments. Despite security challenges, the commitment of both nations to CPEC remains strong, promising a future of shared prosperity and regional stability. The involvement of Middle Eastern investors further underscores the project's global significance and potential for fostering broader economic ties. While the Chinese BRI and CPEC projects hold significant potential for economic development and regional integration, they also expose indigenous cultures to the forces of globalization, leading to cultural erosion and societal stress. It is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders to consider these cultural and social implications and strive for a balanced approach that promotes economic growth while preserving and respecting the unique cultural identities of local communities. Ensuring that the benefits of development are equitably distributed, and that environmental and social impacts are carefully managed will be key to mitigating the negative effects of globalization and fostering sustainable and inclusive development.

Impact Of Technology On International Relations

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Introduction

Tech has played an indispensable role in forming relationships among nations, and the role of technology in international relations (IR) is no exception. The origins of technology can be traced back to the rudimentary tools of the Paleolithic era, and nowadays, it has reached the sophisticated digital technologies of the 21st century. It has always been a determining factor in states' social, economic, and political dynamics. The development of technology not only improves the capacities of states and nations but also creates intricate issues that affect foreign relations on a global scale. While technological developments are basically restructuring international politics scales, they impact everything from diplomacy and warfare to economic development and international communication. As nations are navigating these changes, technology has become the central issue in the international arena today, dictating the new order of nations concerning the power and strategies of states.

Digital Diplomacy:

Digital tools have become essential in how states manage their external presence and relations. These media, from social media to virtual summits, are the tools that connect people who are geographically separated and offer a platform for real-time communication and diplomacy. This real-time lack of privacy can enhance the transparency level. Still, on the other hand, it may pose difficulties for diplomacy, as messages and policies are broadcasted and scrutinized worldwide simultaneously.

Cybersecurity:

As countries increasingly depend on digital platforms for governance and communication, cybersecurity becomes the core element in international relations. From cyber espionage and stealing national security secrets to attacks on critical infrastructure that can escalate international tension, a wide range of risks exist. This complex cybersecurity environment consists of state actors - governments -, non-state actors

like hacker groups, and even private sector agents. An urgent need for strong cybersecurity and international collaboration among states to solve cyber threats has become unavoidable. The advent of technology, especially in information and communication, has brought forth a new era with technological advancements as pivotal factors in determining the distribution of power among nations. States that have developed the most advanced tech have very powerful means at their disposal in both economic and military sectors, thus changing the way power works worldwide and introducing a new hierarchy of digital power in international relations.

Artificial Intelligence (AI):

AI impacts global trade and economics by automating complex tasks automatically, optimizing logistics, and refining forecasting. AI trade systems expedite customs processes and trade documents; hence, cross-border dealings have no delays or costs. Economically, AI brings about substantial productivity improvements resulting from applying AI technology to optimize supply chains and manufacturing processes, as well as more precise demand forecasting and resource allocation. In addition, AI-assisted data mining assists nations and companies in finding economic trends. It helps them make strategic decisions more efficiently, affecting economic policies and trade agreements between states.



Blockchain Technology:

Blockchain's effect on international economics is powerful, mainly because it gives more visibility and minimizes fraud in trade finance. Blockchain, as a distributed ledger technology, has an immutable and transparent mechanism for tracking the products from the point of making to its entry into the market. This technology is the basis for cryptocurrency currently fighting against traditional banking and monetary systems. It may force the people to have less faith in the central banks and fiat currencies. Additionally, blockchain gives smart contracts that run by themselves and veil the need for intermediaries while reducing transaction costs and increasing trade efficiency.

Economic Security and Policy:

Both AI and the blockchain interact with national security policies and economic operations. Countries are now realizing the crucial role of technological sovereignty for which they are pouring strategic investments in developing their technologies and reducing their reliance on alien AI and blockchain technologies. This change is also reflected in international talks, where technical skills are used as a main negotiation tool and become the key element of trade agreements and economic partnerships.

Global Shifts in Economic Power:

The use of these technologies is not the same for everyone, thus leading to a change in the economic power holders. Nations that are fast to adopt AI and blockchain into their economic system are gaining an advantage over others, which might gradually change the world economy map. Emerging states, specifically, can benefit from this leapfrogging by encompassing these technologies in their industrialization, where they restructure their positions in the global economy and challenge status quo developed states.

Conclusion

Technology has increasingly been seen as a mighty force that is changing the web of global interactions, redefining the dynamics of diplomacy, security and economic development. The birth of digital diplomacy and the rise of cybersecurity measures demonstrate that nations are increasingly using technology to strengthen international relations while, in turn, becoming vulnerable to cyber threats that can disrupt those partnerships. AI and blockchain-related developments in the economy are the engines of global trade and business transformation, which creates new feasibilities and at the same time puts a deal of responsibility on the countries as well as risks related to technological dependence and inequalities. The advancement of technology is fostering a new possibility of addressing global issues, from environmental to social issues. While it is an enabler, it should also be an incentive to re-establish international cooperation and to stay ethical in governing the world so that technology does not become a bridge but a barrier in international relations.

Downfall Of The Apple Car

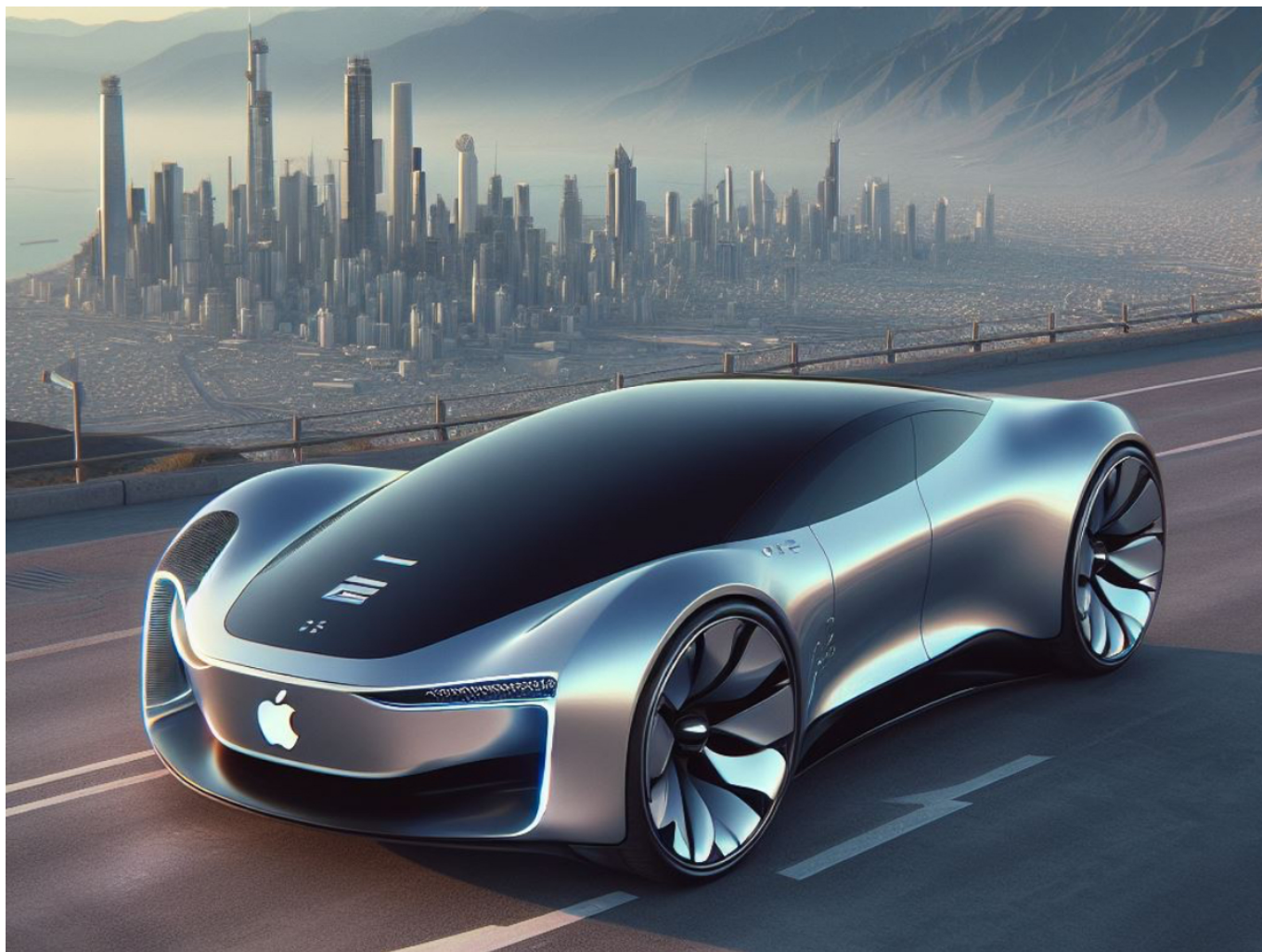
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Apple's exploration into the realm of automotive technology began around 2014. The project, known as "Project Titan," initially aimed at developing an electric vehicle. However, over the years, the focus has shifted multiple times, including considerations for autonomous driving technology. While Apple has been quite secretive about its developments, there were reports of hiring automotive engineers and testing vehicles on public roads. The technological world's response to Apple's rumored entry into the automotive industry was a mixture of excitement, curiosity, and speculation. Apple's reputation for innovation and design excellence, coupled with its massive consumer base, meant that any move into the automotive sector was bound to attract significant attention. Many industry analysts and enthusiasts speculated on what an "Apple Car" might entail, considering potential features such as advanced autonomous driving capabilities, seamless integration with other Apple devices and services, and a focus on user experience and design. Competitors in the automotive and tech sectors closely monitored Apple's moves, recognizing the potential disruption such a product could bring to the market. However, there were also skeptics who questioned whether Apple could successfully navigate the challenges of the automotive industry, which include manufacturing, regulation, and competition from established automakers and tech companies like Tesla and Ford already working on electric and autonomous vehicles.

Apple's Project Titan underwent significant development, including the testing of autonomous vehicle technology and the exploration of partnerships with established automotive manufacturers. Apple likely made advancements in autonomous vehicle technology, including sensor technology, machine learning algorithms, and software systems for navigation and decision-making. Given the global push towards electric vehicles (EVs), Apple may have developed breakthroughs in battery technology, energy management systems, and charging infrastructure. Improvements in these areas would be crucial for enhancing the performance, range, and sustainability of electric vehicles. Apple is renowned for its focus on user experience and seamless integration across its products and services. Breakthroughs in Project Titan may have involved developing innovative interfaces, connectivity features, and in-car entertainment systems that provide a unique and cohesive user experience for drivers and passengers. Building a car

requires intricate coordination of manufacturing processes, supply chain management, and quality control. Apple may have achieved breakthroughs in optimizing manufacturing efficiency, reducing costs, and ensuring product quality through innovative production techniques and partnerships with manufacturers and suppliers. Ensuring the safety and security of autonomous vehicles is paramount. Breakthroughs in Project Titan may have involved developing advanced safety systems, cybersecurity measures, and fail-safe mechanisms to mitigate risks and ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of autonomous driving technology.



However, Apple's Project Titan faced several controversies and challenges throughout its development: Project Titan experienced multiple leadership changes, including the departure of key executives and engineers. These changes raised questions about the project's direction and contributed to speculation about internal challenges within Apple's automotive division. Apple faced lawsuits related to Project Titan, including accusations of poaching employees from rival companies and stealing trade secrets. These legal disputes underscored the competitive nature of the autonomous vehicle industry and the potential for conflicts between tech giants and established automakers. There have been reports of accidents involving vehicles used for testing autonomous technology, including incidents where Apple's test vehicles were rear-ended by other vehicles. While these incidents did not result in serious injuries, they raised concerns about the safety and reliability of autonomous driving technology. As with other tech companies involved in autonomous vehicles, Apple faced scrutiny over privacy and data security concerns. The collection and use of data from sensors and cameras in autonomous vehicles raised questions about consumer privacy

and the potential for misuse or unauthorized access to sensitive information. The secretive nature of Project Titan and Apple's reluctance to provide details about its plans led to speculation and uncertainty about the project's status and timeline. Delays in development and shifting priorities fueled speculation about whether Apple will ultimately release a consumer vehicle or focus solely on autonomous driving software. Apple officially cancelled Project Titan in February 2024 after 10 years of development [techcrunch.com].

The cancellation of Apple's car project, Titan, has several potential implications for the tech world:

For Apple:

- **Strategic shift:** It signals Apple's focus on areas with a clearer path to success, potentially reallocating resources to AI development, a field they see as more promising.
- **Innovation perception:** Some may view it as a dent in Apple's reputation for groundbreaking innovation, having invested heavily with no tangible product.

For the EV industry:

- **Reassessment by competitors:** Other companies developing electric vehicles might re-evaluate their strategies based on Apple's exit, potentially impacting the market landscape.
- **Focus on existing players:** It might solidify the position of established EV manufacturers like Tesla.

For autonomous vehicle development:

- **Uncertainty about Apple's future involvement:** While the project is shelved, it's unclear if Apple will completely abandon the self-driving car concept.
- **Continued development elsewhere:** Other companies and research institutions will likely continue pushing the boundaries of autonomous driving technology.

Overall impact:

- **Focus on near-term solutions:** The cancellation might indicate a shift towards more commercially viable driver-assistance features in the near future, rather than fully autonomous vehicles.
- **Importance of AI:** Apple's focus on AI suggests they see it playing a crucial role in future transportation advancements.

Technology Advancements and the Evolving Cyber Security Landscape

written by Ezba Walayat | October 15, 2024



Introduction

Our world is undergoing a digital revolution and technology is fundamentally altering the entire digital ecosystem. From the proliferation of internet-connected devices to the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT), the IoT is a vast network of interconnected items that includes wearable technologies, industrial systems, smart appliances, and critical infrastructure. While these advancements offer incredible opportunities for progress, they also create a complex and ever-evolving cyber-security landscape. Cyber-security is the process of defending networks, data, and computer systems against online attacks that jeopardize the privacy, accuracy, and usability of information systems. Cyber-security is a top priority in today's digital world due to the increasing tech advancements and frequency of cyber-attacks. It is critical for preserving the safety of individuals and businesses that rely heavily on digital technologies. Cyber security is used in a variety of applications, including health care facilities, financial institutions, smart cities, grid systems, government organizations, education, and the military. Cyber security faces a variety of threats from various sources, including hackers, cybercriminals, state actors, terrorists, and insiders (Admass et al., 2024).

A greater emphasis on cyber-security is required as the digital landscape changes due to developing technologies. In order to combat the growing threat of cyber-crime, organizations must place a high priority on protecting their digital assets, intellectual property, and consumer data. Businesses confront additional risks as they adopt digital technology, risks to their operations, company, and customer trust. Cyber-attacks are now more frequent, sophisticated, and have the ability to cause immense damage. Therefore, keeping information private, accessible, and of high quality while safeguarding digital assets has become a critical task in this regard (Mandal et al., 2023).

Technological Advancement: A Digital Dilemma

Rapid technology advancement poses a digital dilemma. While technology presents exciting potential to

strengthen cyber-security defenses, these same developments create new vulnerabilities that malicious actors might exploit. Technological advancement, innovation, and scientific growth have long been hailed as drivers of social and economic progress. The last few centuries, particularly in recent decades, have seen incredible advances that have revolutionized digital world. But progress is not without its costs. The potential for exploitation and abuse grows significantly as society become more dependent on technology (Rolenc, 2020).

The emergence of sophisticated technologies poses a challenge to cyber-security. Conventional security methods are slow to adapt because they were created for less complex systems. This vulnerability results from incomplete knowledge of new technologies, a lack of comprehension of software, and insufficient security-related procedures used throughout the development process. In order to effectively combat the constantly changing landscape of cyber-attacks, a multi-layered security approach is essential. To maintain a robust defense, security frameworks must also be continuously monitored and evaluated (Kalra* et al., 2020).



Cyber-security is a major problem that is becoming more and more of an issue for developing countries (Otieno, 2020). These countries are facing challenges in utilizing technology for good while reducing its potential for harm. Several countries are susceptible to data breaches and network attacks because, in contrast to developed nations, they lack a strong cyber-security infrastructure. Cyber-attacks are not limited to individual and businesses in the modern world, but we have examples of disruption of vital national infrastructure, which hinder services and spreads instability. Moreover, anti-state actors may use cyber espionage to steal confidential government information, endangering national security leading to devastating consequences, For that matter, not only spreading awareness about emerging technologies is essential but prioritizing cyber-security by all the stakeholders from all sectors in order to address this

threat is needed. Only through collective effort, countries can fully benefit from technological advancement and fortify their cyber-security defenses.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Cyber-security

The future of cyber-security is characterized by both impending threats and beneficial developments in the quickly expanding digital world. As artificial intelligence (AI) develops, both revolutionary advancements and new risks for cyber-threats are present. It is essential to develop AI-powered security systems that are capable of recognizing and responding to emerging threats. Moreover, it is imperative to ensure the ethical application of AI in cyber-security protocols, in order to curtail potential exploitation and mitigate adverse consequences of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Transparency and accountability are indeed fundamental in unlocking the true potential of AI for robust cyber-security.

Cyber threats present a variety of issues which require innovative and adaptive solutions that can keep up with the ever-changing landscape of digital risks. Therefore, there are several benefits of integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into cyber-security solutions but it also requires a complex approach due to ethical and privacy concerns. Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to a variety of sophisticated methods and algorithms including data-driven learning, prediction, and information adaptation. AI-powered systems use machine learning algorithms and powerful data analytics to examine massive volumes of data in real-time. This feature makes it possible to spot unusual trends that can point to possible shortcomings in cyber-security.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has immense potential as a critical technology with unmatched capabilities to strengthen cyber-security defenses. AI can be used for cyber-security because it has great ability to improve threat detection, strengthen defenses, and reduce risks in the digital domain. Through this, AI can help businesses implement proactive defense systems by analyzing prior data and identifying current trends. These systems will help to detect new threats and take countermeasures before they develop into full-fledged cyber-attacks. This approach, facilitated by AI will help to strengthen an overall cyber-security posture (Camacho, 2024).

In addition, Artificial Intelligence is revolutionizing national security strategies and capacities worldwide; nonetheless, its impact on the Global South is more significant. With AI-driven projects like cyber security, autonomous technology, and surveillance, every country is actively seeking to bolster internal security. AI combined with data processing efficiency has opened up new strategic opportunities for countries, allowing them to step up efforts to protect national integrity, sovereignty, and peace. It is because AI can be used to proactively identify threats and advance intelligent surveillance, strong cyber resilience, thorough data analysis, and well-informed decision-making (Srivastava, 2023).

Conclusion

Technological advancements and the ever-evolving cyber security landscape are inextricably linked. These advancements, while offering significant benefits, create new avenues for cybercrime. This dynamic environment necessitates a flexible and responsive approach to security. Businesses must leverage

emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and automation, to enhance their defenses and stay ahead of increasingly complex threats. Additionally, fostering a culture of cyber security awareness and prioritizing investments in robust security measures are critical for navigating digital landscape. Furthermore, governments should play their vital role in fostering a secure digital environment. This can be achieved through initiatives such as promoting international cooperation on cybercrime, establishing clear regulatory frameworks, and investing in research and development of advanced cyber-security solutions. Only through a collaborative effort, encompassing organizations, individuals, and governments, a secure digital future can be achieved.

Recommendations

- **Standardize Cyber-security Frameworks:** Moreover, establish common standards and protocols for secure development, deployment, and operation of new technologies. This promotes interoperability and reduces the attack surface across different systems.
- **Embrace Regulatory Measures:** Introduce clear and comprehensive regulations to address emerging cyber threats. Develop and enforce clear regulator measures for data privacy, breach notification, and security standards for critical infrastructure sectors. This will empower businesses and provide a baseline to operate on.
- **Research and National Strategy:** Countries must invest in research for cutting-edge security solutions for cyber-security threats and risks. A national cyber-security strategy is needed, outlining critical infrastructure protection and fostering collaboration between government, industry, and other relevant stakeholders.
- **Invest in Cyber-security Education:** Prioritize investment in research and development of advanced cyber-security solutions to stay ahead of evolving threats Equip the workforce with the skills needed to identify, prevent, and respond to cyber threats in the context of emerging technologies. This includes both technical training and awareness programs for all levels. Furthermore, educate the public on cyber security best practices to empower individuals to protect themselves online.
- **Promote International Collaboration:** Encourage information sharing and coordinated responses to cyber threats among different countries. This strengthens collective defenses against large-scale cyber-attacks and fosters international cooperation in developing cyber-security solutions.

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Takeaways from National Human Development Report 2024 on Digital Transformation in Pakistan

written by Ezba Walayat | October 15, 2024



Introduction

On April 23, 2024, Pakistan unveiled its National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2024 on Digital Transformation, titled as "Doing Digital for Development - Access, Adopt, Anticipate, Accelerate." The Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, launched the report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). According to the Global Human Development Report, Pakistan ranks at 164th out of 193 countries, along with a ranking of 135th out of 166 countries in the Gender Inequality Index. Inadequate development outcomes are made worse due to digital divide. In terms of digital development, Pakistan is included in the group of countries whose digital development can be described as moderate. The report examines the crucial role of digitalization and emphasizes the significance of equal and safe access to technology as a means of enhancing human lives.

Digital Divide

Pakistan's digital divide continues to be a major challenge. The rates of internet access in urban areas are considerably greater than those in rural and remote areas. A significant portion of the Pakistani population does not have access to essential services as a result of this disparity. Digital development does not adequately benefit women. Moreover, lack of digital literacy and digital skills among a large segment of the population further restricts the benefits of digitalization. According to the Doing Digital for Development report, 54.3 percent of the country's population lacks internet access due to inadequate digital infrastructure and affordability difficulties.

The NHDR 2024 report assessed digital technology access along with additional factors, such as digital usage, digital skills attainment for the first time in Pakistan. The Digital Development Index (DDI) revealed that districts that do better in terms of digital transformation are also among the better performing in terms of human development. The digital development rankings of nearly half of Pakistan's districts are low. With 'very high' digital growth, Islamabad is the only district in the country, other districts with 'high' development include Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Haripur, and Abbottabad. It is imperative that all the societal groups have equal access to digital technology including the internet. Pakistan is ranked 45th out of 52 countries in the World Internet Development Index (2023). Equal access to digital technology, particularly the internet, for all segments of society necessitates a strong focus on two key areas i.e. digital literacy and infrastructure development. By equipping people with the skills to effectively utilize technology and expanding internet reach across the country, Pakistan can bridge the digital divide and empower all its citizens.



Digital Transformation

Without fair access to digital technologies, Pakistan's human development outcomes will remain

inadequate. With 87.35 million internet users and strong mobile connection, Pakistan's digital transformation opportunity offers a possibility to transcend growth constraints. The Pakistan NHDR 2024 gives a dynamic digital transformation policy framework consisting of four As – Access, Adopt, Anticipate, and Accelerate, investments that can become Pakistan's quickest path to human development. For digital transformation in Pakistan, it is important to ensure widespread availability of low-cost digital technology such as internet connectivity and devices. It entails improving infrastructure, cutting expenses, and promote initiatives for underserved areas of the country. Encourage responsible use of digital technology and develop appropriate applications for education, healthcare, and economic development. It is necessary to plan forward for the future of digital breakthroughs through research and development on cutting-edge technology, developing a workforce with the skills to adapt to a rapidly changing digital environment, and tackling possible obstacles like cyber-security attacks.

Moreover, data driven policies can help to optimize the beneficial effects of digital technology on development objectives, and efforts should be made for building public-private partnerships, and encouraging innovation.

These measures will unlock the potential of e-learning platforms to bridge the gap in access to quality education, particularly in remote areas. Digitalization can transform healthcare sector by promoting digital health records to improve healthcare delivery and patient outcomes. The role of digital technologies in economic empowerment is important because it promotes entrepreneurship and creates new job opportunities. E-commerce platforms can connect businesses with a wider market, while digital skills training can equip Pakistanis to participate in the digital economy. The potential of digital tools can bridge the gender gap in Pakistan. Online training programs can empower women with skills and knowledge, while digital platforms can facilitate women's participation in the workforce. By utilizing digital technologies, E-governance initiatives can be launched to streamline service delivery in an efficient manner. But, this all require careful consideration of the ethical implications of digitalization in order to fully harness the potential of digitalization for human development in Pakistan.

Conclusion

The 2024 National Human Development Report highlights opportunities for human development in Pakistan. It portrays digital transformation as an effective tool for empowering people, promoting inclusive development, and improving national productivity in Pakistan. The path forward requires not just technological advancements, but a well-defined strategy that prioritizes equitable access, ethical considerations, and the well-being of all citizens. Pakistan can navigate the challenges and unlock a future of human development for all by embracing a responsible and inclusive approach to digitalization.

Evolving Threat: North Korea's Military

Capabilities and Strategic Implications

written by Saddam Tahir | October 15, 2024



Introduction

The existence of the North Korean military is based on historical development, and its starting point was the Korean People's Army (KPA) was established in 1948. This bloc was largely backed by the Soviet Union, which not only provided military equipment, but also formulated the core of the KPA's future development and principal strategy. The Korean War of 1950-1953 had the most profound influence, since it underlined the importance of a well-armed military force to defend the country against external threats, which, in turn, was the factor that sealed North Korea's resolve to prioritize its military build-up.

In a course of the Cold War, North Korea had the opportunity to benefit from its alliance with the USSR and China, which made it possible for the DPRK to develop an effective conventional military force. The central theme of this epoch was the creation of a self-sufficient military system based on the Juche doctrine, which highlighted the need for independence in the area of military capabilities and the beginning of the development of a nuclear weapons program. But on the flip side, the end of the Cold War ushered in a strategic turn. And to bring back the balance in its conventional military capabilities that were threatened by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the decrease in support from its traditional allies, North Korea started developing asymmetric military capabilities, including nuclear and missile technologies, which are considered a good way to defend against its economic challenges.

In the past several years, North Korean technological innovation in missiles has been going from strength to strength. In 2024, the state explored what it called a "super large warhead" to be used on a strategic cruise missile, which was a significant step towards improving its offensive capabilities. The introduction of this new missile technology would likely imply a shift in the emphasis of the military towards extending the range and carrying capacity of its armaments, which could potentially result in more strategically applied and stealthier strikes. Additionally to the strategic missiles, North Korea has also tested a brand new anti-aircraft missile, the so-called "Pyoljji-1-2," hence a sign of progress in defensive technology meant to counter the aerial threats more efficiently. Of course, these developments reaffirm the dedication on the part of North Korea for improving their military capabilities which has the potential to revolutionize the regional security and this presents a complex situation for global diplomacy and security strategies. The international community has not abdicated vigilance, carefully watching these trends and considering the

implications for their wider impact on regional stability and international peace efforts.

Current Military Status

The current military capabilities of North Korea are broad and varied, including an advanced system made up of nuclear, missile, conventional, and cyber forces. The nuclear armament of the country is at the center of the strategic military setup, employing various types of warheads that can be delivered by a number of platforms, such as long-range missiles that target the entire US mainland and shorter-range systems that threaten regional adversaries. The details of the arsenal are hidden in secrecy, however, it is believed to be focused on shrinking the size of the warheads to give more flexibility in delivery options, which is ballistic and potentially cruise missiles.

In particular, the ballistic missile program becomes the most significant since North Korea has been able to expand its missile technologies since the past year. They can be either shorter-range tactical missiles aimed at South Korea and its U.S. military bases, or intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) intended to serve as a deterrent for a U.S. attack by threatening the U.S. mainland. The missile tests are one way of showing the technical capacity of the country and another way of sending political signals, both to friends and enemies, with the test transmitting political messages to both.



Conventional strand is still the main element of North Korean military, even though the equipment is oftentimes outdated compared to modern Western standards. The North Korean military on the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is heavily fortified and in a position to launch mass fire assault to the South with minimal prior notice. In addition to this, the massive military capability is also supported by a wide area of

defensive fortifications and infrastructure which is purposefully designed to defend against any incoming attacks and prolong the war.

The country has also paid special attention to cyber warfare, making units that work in both defensive and offensive modes. These cyber soldiers are attributed to many international incidents for example cyber-attacks against the financial institutions, government agencies and the vital infrastructure. The use of cyber warfare enables North Korea to exercise its power and to control the environment that it is beyond the boundaries of its traditional military strength, which is a very useful and economic way to confront the more advanced opponents. This complex military strategy of North Korea reflects its determination to maximize the whole range of military instruments to secure the regime's survival and its regional impact.

The latest military exercises conducted by North Korea indeed point to an increase in its strategic capabilities which are a part of the general military policy of the regime to hold a powerful deterrent force. The main one of these developments is the test-firing of a "super-large warhead" which is supposed to be used for the strategic cruise missile deployment. This warhead, which is going to be used for the "Hwasal-1 Ra-3" missile, is therefore an indicator of a big jump in the cruise missiles of North Korea's payload capacity and lethality. One of the most potent features of cruise missiles is that they can fly at a lower altitude compared to ballistic missiles, which makes them more difficult to detect and intercept. Thus, this kind of weaponry adds a stealthy component to North Korea's array of strategic offensive capabilities.

Furthermore, the launching of the newly developed 'Pyoljji-1-2' surface-to-air missile system is an indication that North Korea is at the same time making strides towards improving its defensive capabilities. This system, which is the most recent addition to the Korean People's Army's West Sea arsenal, has been built to enhance the North Korean military capability to shield against airborne attacks, including the possible preemption by the adversaries. The creation of such systems is a necessity for the military doctrine of North Korea which is based on the idea of 'retaliation and readiness' against any premeditated acts of enemy forces.

These tests have been conducted on a backdrop where international monitoring of North Korea's weapons programs has been affected after Russia vetoed the United Nations sanctions monitoring. This allowed North Korea to have more freedom to enlarge its military muscle without facing the immediate international consequences of breaching UN sanctions. That these tests are timed in such a way as well as the fact that they involve planned messages to showcase North Korea's determination to both improve its offensive and defensive military capabilities is noteworthy. This kind of the approach is the crucial element in his overall strategy aiming at the regime survival and strengthening its negotiating power on the international stage, including the US and its allies.

WHY North Korea need Military:

North Korea's efforts to strengthen its military can be understood through several key factors that intersect national security, political ideology, and international relations:

Regime Survival: The first objective of military growth in North Korea is the regime survival. The North

Korean government, headed by the Kims dynasty, regards a strong military as crucial for any foreign attempt at a regime change to be prevented. For the Kim regime in Pyongyang the core threat is South Korea and United States and their allies as well as it's considered powerful military as the last line of defense and preventions of invasions or interventions.

Deterrence Strategy: Correspondingly, deterrence is another method of regime survival. Both of which are employed to keep opposition forces at bay. North Korea's researching and producing of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles is a way of demonstrating its indomitable power against its enemies who might attack it. Through the possession of a credible threat of retaliation, North Korea seeks to perpetuate the advantage of having to pay incurred costs to an aggressor who might be contemplating action by a military means.

Domestic Legitimacy: Militant preparedness as well is a vital element of the government's internal legitimacy. The leadership portrays the image of a robust and unyielding nation which is capable of shielding itself from the interventions of a foreign country or any aggressive action. This story is important in getting the population to agree with the regime on the country's priorities, including the fact that the military gets the largest share of the resources even in the wake of the country's economic difficulties.

Bargaining Power: North Korea resorts to military force as a means of pressurizing the international community in the process of negotiations. It attempts to do this by improving its nuclear and missile arsenals and, therefore, demanding economic aid, sanctions relief, and security guarantees as concessions. Military building of the country can thus be regarded as a tool to improve its position in a negotiation table and increase its influence at the diplomatic talks.

National Identity and Pride: The military is an unquestionably important component of the national identity of North Korea. Parades, exams or demonstrations of military power not only serve for deterrence and internal control but also to unite the nation in patriotism and solidarity. The government will use such exhibitions for population mobilization, with the specific target being the citizens in the period of economic crisis.