



# PAKISTAN HOUSE

A THINK TANK OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

## MONOGRAPH SERIES

**VOLUME  
88**



**Pakistan House**

[www.pakistanhouse.net](http://www.pakistanhouse.net)



PakistanHouseOfficial



@PakistanHouse11

## Table of Contents

S#	Title	Page #
	Content .....	i
	Advisory Board .....	ii
	Pakistan House Team .....	v
	<b><i>SECURITY BRIEFS</i></b>	
01-	Saudi Arabia and Brazil: Growing Ties in Trade and Investment .....	01
02-	Israel's Long-Range Strikes Drill in Greece .....	02
03-	China-Venezuela elevated ties to "All Weather Strategic Partnership".....	03
04-	Australia's \$965M Investment to upgrade Maritime Surveillance Fleet ....	05
05-	United Nations Chief Offers New Proposal to Russia to Combat Global Food Crisis.....	06
06-	BRICS 2023: Strengthening Cooperation and Expanding Membership ...	07
07-	US-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Summit to Deepen Security Cooperation and Economic Ties .....	09
	<b><i>ARTICLES</i></b>	
01-	The Thar Coal Power Project: Balancing Environmental Sustainability and National Security .....	11
02-	Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Warring Neighbors Azerbaijan and Armenia Reached Ceasefire Deal .....	14
03-	Taiwan to Receive \$500 Million Arms Deal as U.S.-China Tensions Rise....	18
04-	The Persistent Threat of Racial Discrimination in the United States .....	21
05-	BRICS and Its Prospects for the Future .....	23
06-	The Resilience Of North Korea In The Face Of Sanctions .....	26
07-	China's New Map Sparks Concerns and Heightened Tensions among Neighboring Countries.....	30
08-	BRICS Countries Unite for Sustainable Development .....	32
09-	How Armed Combat Affects Mental Health of Former Child Soldiers in Africa?.....	35
10-	Africa Climate Summit: Accelerating Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for Africa and the World .....	38





## Table of Contents

S#	Title	Page #
	Content .....	i
	Advisory Board .....	ii
	Pakistan House Team .....	v
<b>SECURITY BRIEFS</b>		
01-	The Era Of Digital Diplomacy .....	01
02-	Owing To The Sikh Separatist Group, Trade Negotiations Between India And Britain Have Halted .....	02
03-	Turkey Towards European State's Ratification Of Becoming NATO Members .....	03
04-	Ecuador in Crisis: A State of Emergency is Declared.....	04
05-	Strengthening Alliances: China's President Xi Jinping's Visit To Russia.	05
06-	China's Warning: Potential for Conflict and Confrontation with the US over Taiwan is rising .....	06
07-	Key Takeaways From the "Our Ocean Conference (OOC), 2023".....	08
<b>ARTICLES</b>		
01-	Climate Change: A Threat to Global Food Security .....	10
02-	The Dangers Of Abandoned US Arms In Afghanistan: How They Have Fallen Into The Hands Of TTP .....	11
03-	China Warns of Consequences as Taiwan's President Visits the United States .....	12
04-	Violent Clashes Break Out At A Protest Over Water In France .....	13
05-	Food Security And Its Importance In Context Of Pakistan .....	15
06-	Another Rounding of Severe Weather in the United States .....	17
07-	Heightened Tensions: North Korea's Stern Warning over US-South Korean Drills .....	19
08-	Student Exchange Programs; Economy and Culture .....	21
09-	How Artificial Intelligence Can Be Utilized In Diplomacy? .....	22
10-	United Nations' Climate Justice Resolution: Outlining Legal Responsibilities around Climate Change .....	24
11-	The Impact Of Saudi Arab- Iran Relations In The Region.....	26
12-	Challenges Domestic Capital Markets Face .....	27
13-	The UN Water Conference 2023 amid threat of Global Water Crisis.....	29

*The copyright of this monograph belongs to the Pakistan House under the terms of the Pakistan Copyrights act. Due acknowledgement must always be made of the use of any material contained in, or derived from, this monograph.*





## Advisory Board



**Chairman**  
**General Ehsan Ul Haq,**  
*HI (M) NI (M) (Retd)*



**Director General & Founder**  
**Mr Muhammad Athar Javed**



**Board Member**  
**Lt General Asif Yasin Malik,**  
*HI (M) (Retd)*



**Board Member**  
**Lt General Khalid Rabbani,**  
*HI (M) (Retd)*



**Board Member**  
**Brig Riaz Chib,**  
*SI (M) (Retd)*



**Board Member**  
**Ambassador Zamir Akram**  
*(Retd)*



**Board Member**  
**Vice Admiral Rao Iftikhar Ahmed**  
*HI (M), (Retd)*



**Board Member**  
**Ambassador Salman Bashir**  
*(Retd)*



**Board Member**  
**Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad**



**Board Member**  
**Ms Iram Allaudin**



**Board Member**  
**Dr Shabana Fayyaz**





**Head of Legal Affairs**  
**Mr. Shah Khawar**  
**ADVOCATE SUPREME COURT OF PAKISTAN**



**Board Member**  
**Mr. Habib Paracha**  
**ENTREPRENEUR, FILM MAKER**

## Pakistan House Team



**SADDAM TAHIR**  
Senior Research Associate, Team Leader



**AZHAR IQBAL**  
OFFICE MANAGER



**SOHAIL IQBAL**  
IT ADMINISTRATOR



**HAMNA SEYYED**  
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



**EZBA WALAYAT**  
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



**MS SHAISTA RIAZ**  
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



**Ms Zarka Khan**  
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



**SYED TAYYAB HUSSAIN**  
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE



**KASHIF AHMAD MOHAAR**  
VISITING RESEARCH FELLOW



**SANIA KHAN**  
JUNIOR VISITING RESEARCH  
FELLOW



**KHANSA ISHAQUE QURESHI**  
JUNIOR VISITING RESEARCH  
FELLOW



**TAHAMA ASAD**  
JUNIOR VISITING RESEARCH  
FELLOW

**HARIS ALI KHAN**  
Research Associate, Afghan Expert





## 1- Saudi Arabia and Brazil: Growing Ties in Trade and Investment

Saudi Arabia and Brazil have had strong bilateral relations for many years. Both countries are key actors in the global economy, and they have many mutual interests, including the need to secure energy security and encourage economic growth. The two countries have reached a number of bilateral agreements in trade and investment. In July 2023, the Federation of Industries of the State of Sao Paulo and the Saudi Ministry of Investment jointly held the Brazil-Saudi Arabia Investment Forum. More than 500 business executives from both countries attended the meeting. Khalid Al- Falih, the Saudi Arabian minister of investment, attended the meeting. He spoke with Brazilian government representatives and business executives about potential investment prospects between the two nations. Al Falih said, "Brazil and Saudi Arabia, two proud members of the G20 and energy producers, are well positioned to be strategic partners, with us being the economic leaders of our respective regions." Over 25 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) between Saudi Arabian and Brazilian businesses were signed in sectors including infrastructure, agriculture, technology, and energy as a result of the forum.



Despite the fact that the two countries have long been trading partners, the kingdom's most recent investments in Brazil are in line with its ambitious "Vision 2030" reform project, which intends to diversify the Saudi economy and reduce its reliance on oil revenues.



Brazil and Saudi Arabia are major trading partners and their trade volume is constantly increasing. According to the Arab- Brazilian Chamber of Commerce, Brazilian exports to Saudi Arabia increased significantly in the first seven months of the year 2023 and reached to \$1.87 billion, the biggest amount among all Arab nations. Brazil also imported \$1.98 billion from the Kingdom, which was the most amount from any Arab nation. Moreover, Saudi and Brazilian government officials are visiting each other's countries to discuss increased trade and investment potential. In addition, the Russia- Ukraine war and the escalating hostilities between the U.S. and China have increased interest of Gulf nations in one of the emerging economies i.e. Brazil and opened up new trade and investments prospects for the country, which also reflect broader geopolitical shifts in the world. Saudi-Arabia and Brazil are well-positioned to complement each other's economies, therefore, the trade between the two countries is expected to increase significantly in the years to come.

## 2- Israel's Long-Range Strikes Drill in Greece

On September 13, 2023, the Israeli Air Force (IAF) conducted a significant long-range strike drill in Greece in preparation for a potential attack on Iran and its nuclear facilities. This drill was the most recent in a series of such exercises. The two-day long joint exercise between the Israeli military and the Hellenic Air Force of Greece involved low-altitude and long-distance flights, aerial refueling, as well as the use of live ammunition, according to the Israeli military. During the drill, the Israel Defense Forces claimed that dozens of fighter airplanes, spy planes, and refueling aircraft flew thousands of kilometers between Israel and Greece. According to the Times of Israeli, the drill had two main objectives. The first one was cooperation with Greece that includes learning from one another whereas, improving IAF readiness was the second goal, while coping with extremely complex challenges such as long-distance flights, weather difficulties, and a lack of intelligence.





The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) stated, "The exercise is one of a series of exercises and models carried out by the IAF in the past year. Their purpose is to improve operational and mental competence for long-range flights, refueling, attacks in the depth of enemy territory, and achieving air superiority." The recent combined drill between Greece and Israel are evidence of the two nations' expanding collaboration. This collaboration extends beyond joint exercises, Israel handed two M-346 advanced training aircraft to Greece in May, and Greece has contracted Elbit Systems of Israel to give virtual avionics for the M-346 aircraft as well as to establish an International Flight Training Center at 120 TW Kalamata in Greece. Earlier, in September 2023, the leaders of Cyprus and Greece met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to discuss trilateral relations. This is yet another indication of how closely the three nations are working together. Israel, Greece, and Cyprus are working with an aim to cooperate in areas such as energy, military, economics, and academia and to improve the security in the region. In addition, the IDF is reportedly planning to conduct a series of significant joint military exercises with the United States in the upcoming months, as a message to Iran. Israel and Iran are bitter enemies and share hostile relations, both countries are locked in a threatening standoff and the situation is expected to deteriorate between them.

### **3- China-Venezuela elevated ties to "All Weather Strategic Partnership"**

There are strong political and economic links between China and the South-American country Venezuela. In 1974, the two nations established diplomatic ties, and since then, their relationship has progressively improved. China is Venezuela's largest creditor, lending the nation billions of dollars in return for oil exports. However, the United States sanctions imposed on Venezuela have had a substantial impact on the country's economy and made it harder to export oil. But still, China has made significant investments in Venezuela's infrastructure, energy, and agriculture to help the country. On September 12, 2023, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro met and held bilateral talks. The Chinese President praised the relationship between the two countries and said, "China steadfastly supports Venezuela's efforts to safeguard sovereignty, national dignity, and social stability." During the meeting the two leaders has decided to upgrade their relations, and highlighted that China-Venezuela are good friends with mutual trust. Xi Jinping said, with Venezuela, China would elevate the ties to "all-weather strategic partnership," a title only given to few of China's diplomatic allies.





On behalf of the Chinese foreign ministry, Mao Ning, has also praised relations with Venezuela as “rock solid” and referred two countries as comprehensive strategic partners. The President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, throughout his time in power, has developed relationships with China and was able to secure loans, cash, and investments for his nation. Before his meeting with Xi Jinping in Beijing, a week earlier, he said on social media that his visit is intended to “strengthen cooperation and the construction of a new world order.” During his visit, Maduro stated that Venezuela is determined to work closely with China within frameworks like the United Nations and the BRICS. Therefore, Venezuela is actively courting membership in the BRICS, a group of significant emerging economies that recently supported expansion and welcomed new members. In order to improve the infrastructure for international trade, Venezuela ensured its supports for China’s Belt and Road Initiative. Following their discussions, the two leaders also signed several bilateral cooperation agreements spanning the fields of economy and trade, education, tourism, science and technology, health, civil aviation, and aerospace. China has welcomed Venezuela as it is the first nation from Latin America to join the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS), which is led by China. The two countries are committed to work together and the relationship between the two nations will continue to improve in the years to come due to mutual interests.



## 4- Australia's \$965M Investment to upgrade Maritime Surveillance Fleet Introduction

The requirement of maritime surveillance is in more limelight and crucial than ever before, with the center of gravity of conflict veering towards the waters and oceans. Australia has the third-largest marine jurisdiction in the world, with an 8.2 million square kilometers exclusive economic zone (EEZ). This area has significant economic and conservation value because it is home to oil and gas fields, fisheries, and shipping channels. Australia is situated close to important maritime powers like China, India, and Indonesia and is surrounded by some of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. For the purpose of extensive maritime interests and preventing foreign attacks and keeping track of local ship and aircraft movements, maritime surveillance is important.



### *Significance of Maritime Surveillance for Australia*

The Australian government's investment in maritime surveillance is a reflection of the growing importance of the Indo-Pacific region. The Australian government's investment in maritime surveillance is also a signal of its commitment to working with its allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region. Australia is a member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) commonly known as Quad, including four countries i.e. Australia, India, Japan, and the United States that are committed to cooperating on security issues in the Indo-Pacific. The Quad has been working to strengthen maritime cooperation in the region, therefore, the Australian government's investment in maritime surveillance will complement these efforts.

A well-protected maritime domain is not only essential for Australia's trade and commerce but also for deterring foreign aggression and responding to maritime emergencies.

### ***Australia to boost Maritime Surveillance Fleet***

The Australian government's decision to buy a new drone and upgrade existing patrol and response aircraft in a 1.5 billion Australian dollars (\$965 M) deal is a significant investment in its maritime surveillance capabilities. The new drone, a MQ-4C Triton, is a high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) that can fly for up to 24 hours at a time. It is equipped with a powerful radar system that can detect and track ships and aircraft over large areas of ocean. The Triton will be based in Australia's Northern Territory, which is closer to Asia and the Pacific Islands than the country's southern coastline. The upgrades to the existing patrol and response aircraft, which include 14 P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft, will focus on improving their anti-submarine warfare, maritime strike, and intelligence collection capabilities which is anticipated to be completed by 2030. To conclude, the new investment and upgraded maritime surveillance will give Australia the ability to better monitor and protect its maritime interests which is also important for both economic and security reasons.

## **5- United Nations Chief Offers New Proposal to Russia to Combat Global Food Crisis**

UN Secretary General António Guterres sent a new proposal to Russia on August 31, 2023, in an attempt to revive the Black Sea grain deal. The deal, which was brokered by the UN and Turkey in July 2022, allowed Ukraine to export grain from its Black Sea ports despite the ongoing Russian invasion. However, the deal collapsed in July 2023 after Russia accused Ukraine of not fulfilling its commitments. Guterres' new proposal includes a number of changes to the original deal, including the creation of a UN-led monitoring mechanism to oversee the safe passage of grain ships through the Black Sea. A "green corridor" will be established for ships carrying grain, as well as the lifting of sanctions on Russian and Ukrainian food and fertilizer exports. The Secretary General has said that he is hopeful that Russia will accept his new proposal. He added, "We have some concrete solutions, allowing for more effective access of Russian food and fertilizers to global markets at adequate prices. I believe that, working seriously, we can have a positive solution for everybody."

However, it is unclear whether Russia will be willing to do so. Russia has previously accused the West of imposing sanctions that have made it difficult for it to export food and fertilizer. The Black Sea grain deal is important because it could help to alleviate the global food crisis that has been caused by the war in Ukraine.





Ukraine is a major exporter of wheat, corn, and sunflower oil, and the war has disrupted its exports. This has led to a sharp increase in food prices, which has put a strain on food security in many countries. Although Western sanctions implemented after Russia's invasion of Ukraine do not apply to Russian exports of food and fertilizer, Moscow claims that restrictions on payments, logistics, and insurance have hampered shipments. If the Black Sea grain deal can be revived, it would help to get grain out of Ukraine and onto the global market. This would help to lower food prices and ease the global food crisis.

Russia has stated that it would consider reviving the Black Sea Agreement if requests to enhance its own exports of grain and fertilizer were met. Reconnecting the Russian Agricultural Bank to the SWIFT global payments network is one of Moscow's top requests. It was cut off by the EU in June 2022. It is still too early to say whether the new proposal will be successful. However, it is a positive step in the right direction to find a solution that will allow grain to flow out of Ukraine and help to avert a global food crisis.

## **6- BRICS 2023: Strengthening Cooperation and Expanding Membership**

The leaders of the BRICS countries met in Johannesburg, South Africa on August 22-24, 2023 to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation and expand membership. The BRICS countries are Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. They account for 40% of the world's population and 25% of the global economy. The summit was hosted by South Africa, which is the current chair of BRICS.



The South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, said that the summit was an opportunity to “strengthen our cooperation and partnership and to address the challenges facing the world today.” The Chinese President, Xi Jinping, called for strengthening BRICS cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, finance, and technology. He also said that BRICS should play a more active role in global governance. The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, also called for strengthening BRICS cooperation. He said that BRICS countries should “work together to build a more just and equitable world order.” The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, said that India is committed to expanding BRICS membership. He said that BRICS should be open to all countries that share its values and goals. The Brazilian president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, also expressed support for expanding BRICS membership. He said that BRICS should be a “forum for all countries that want to work together for a better future.”



The BRICS summit ended with a joint statement in which the leaders agreed to strengthen cooperation in a number of areas, including trade, investment, finance, and technology. They also agreed to work together to address global challenges such as climate change and poverty. In addition, the BRICS organization of developing countries, which is expanding for the first time in more than ten years, has extended an invitation to oil powers Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.



While concluding the group's annual conference in Johannesburg, the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, announced that Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Argentina will all join the following year. All the invited nations had already expressed a desire to take part. The BRICS summit highlighted the growing importance of the BRICS countries in the global economy. The leaders of the BRICS countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in a number of areas and to work together to address global challenges. The BRICS countries are poised to play an increasingly important role in global governance in the years to come.

## **7- US-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Summit to Deepen Security Cooperation and Economic Ties**

The leaders of the United States, Japan, and South Korea held a summit at Camp David on August 18- 19, 2023, to discuss ways to strengthen their trilateral alliance and cooperation on a range of issues, including the North Korean nuclear threat, China's growing military power, and economic security. The summit resulted in a joint statement in which the three leaders agreed to deepen security cooperation, including through joint military exercises and intelligence sharing. The three countries will coordinate efforts to deter and counter North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. The US, Japan and Korea will work together to promote peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region as well as to strengthen economic cooperation, through the creation of a new trilateral supply chain resilience initiative. The summit was seen as a major step forward in strengthening the trilateral alliance between the United States, Japan, and South Korea. It also sent a strong message to North Korea and China that three countries are united in their commitment to peace and stability in the region.



## Key Takeaways from the Summit

- The three leaders agreed to hold annual trilateral summit and to establish a new trilateral security dialogue.
- They also agreed to work together to develop new technologies, hold military trainings and share information on North Korean missile launches.
- The summit also addressed the issue of economic security, with the leaders agreeing to work together to strengthen trade.

The US-Japan-South Korea summit was a major step forward in strengthening the trilateral alliance between the three countries. It also sent a strong message to North Korea and China that the United States, Japan, and South Korea are united in their commitment to peace and stability in the region. The summit was also seen as a way to boost the new Yoon administration in South Korea. Yoon, who took office on May 10, 2023, has made strengthening the US-South Korea alliance a top priority. The summit was an opportunity for Yoon to meet with Biden and Kishida and to discuss ways to further strengthen the alliance.

To conclude, the North Korean nuclear threat remained a major focus of the summit. The three leaders condemned North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and reiterated their commitment to work together to deter and counter them. They also called on North Korea to return to dialogue and to denuclearize. Moreover, the three leaders also discussed the growing military power of China and expressed concern about China's presence and growing influence in the East and South China Seas.



# Articles

## 1- The Thar Coal Power Project: Balancing Environmental Sustainability and National Security



Pakistan's Thar coalfields cover an area of 9100 square kilometers and contain over 175 billion tons of lignite. These reserves are amongst the largest in the world, and equal to 618 billion barrels of crude oil. At \$50 per barrel this asset is worth up to \$30.0 trillion and equivalent to more than 187 times of Pakistan's current GDP. Started in the early 2000's the Thar Engro Coal Power Project is a massive undertaking that aims to harness Pakistan's vast coal reserves to generate electricity. Completed in 2023 the Thar Block-I and Block-II are fully operational and jointly producing 9 billion units of electricity which are enough to meet the demand of 4 million households. Although it's immense, this amount is still not enough to meet demands of the whole country and work on Thar block-III is currently underway.

### Environmental Constraints:

Pakistan contributes a mere 0.9% to global greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) and yet it is the fifth most vulnerable country to climate change. During the years 1999-2018, Pakistan lost ten thousand lives and suffered economic losses accounting for USD 3.8 billion due to climate change. Heat waves, water shortages and flash floods in the country have impacted lives and infrastructure.



According to the UN, scorching temperatures have blazed wheat production all over the country and formerly arable land has been rendered not fit for growing crops. Pakistan's wheat production capacity has reduced by 10% this year. Combined with the rising inflation and political turmoil in the country this has become a recipe for disaster. The Thar Coal Power project has raised important questions about the relationship between environmental sustainability and national demands. Pakistan is a nation caught in a difficult bind. Amid being highly vulnerable to climate change, the country also faces a severe energy crisis. Once complete, the Thar Coal Power Project would provide Pakistan with a reliable and uninterrupted source of electricity. However, on the flip side of the coin, lignite is one of the cheapest forms of coal which means burning it releases large quantities of greenhouse gases and ash. Environmental deterioration due to this project has caused water scarcity, food insecurity, and mass emigration. Improper disposal of coal ash has caused water contamination and soil pollution and have disrupted the ecological balance of the region.



### Benefits of the project:

The Thar coal power project has the capability of producing 100,000MW of electricity when complete, enough to meet the demands of the country for over two hundred years. Coal mining has a history of providing jobs in areas affected by high poverty.



Similarly, the Thar power project has employed of people especially from nearby areas and even whole families earning their livelihoods out of the same project. Pakistan's unreliable power supply affects the productive use of energy. The power shortage in the form of load shedding costs Pakistan 7% of its GDP annually. The Thar coal power project contemplates a steady supply of power that will overcome this shortfall and will result in a positive growth and possible improvement in the country's GDP. By providing additional job opportunities the project will result in prosperity in the region and stable wages for the laborers. Furthermore, the project will result in reduced electricity costs and benefit industrialists, domestic consumers and economy of the country as a whole. This will also reduce the fuel import costs as a large chunk of the fuel imported into Pakistan goes towards power generation.

### **Impact on national security**

In order to achieve high economic growth a country must be producing sufficient energy. The production of energy is directly proportional to the industrial growth and agricultural output of a country. National security refers to the survival of a state through the use of economic, military and political power. In this regard, adequate and cost effective supply of energy is the pre-requisite for socio-economic development and economic prosperity, which ultimately contributes to national security of a country. The Thar power project has great potential in solving Pakistan's energy crisis and is seen as an opportunity to improve the national security. It also reduces Pakistan's dependency on foreign imports for energy generation and grants autonomy to the country in producing its own electricity. However, the success and impact on national security depend on how it is managed and the extent to which environmental, social, and economic considerations are taken into account. Proper planning, responsible resource management, and effective regulation can help ensure that the project contributes positively to national security by providing reliable energy and supporting economic growth while mitigating potential negative impacts.

The Thar coal project is a massive undertaking that has the potential to revolutionize Pakistan's energy landscape. However, in the current times, the world is shifting towards an eco-friendlier environment in which non-renewable resources are being preferred to run industries. While the Thar coal project is an amazing opportunity to pay off our debt and generate much-needed revenue, it is important to consider the environmental impact of the project. Coal is a fossil fuel, and its combustion releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. However, there are ways to mitigate the environmental impact of coal power plants.

For example, we can use carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology to capture the carbon dioxide emissions from the power plant and store them underground. CCS technology is still in its early stages of development, but it has the potential to make coal power plants much more environmentally friendly. Another way to mitigate the environmental impact of the Thar coal project is to use the revenue generated from the project to invest in renewable energy sources. Renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, do not produce any greenhouse gas emissions. By investing in renewable energy, we can reduce our reliance on coal and create a more sustainable energy future for Pakistan.

In conclusion, the Thar coal project is a complex issue with both pros and cons. While the project has the potential to generate much-needed revenue and pay off our debt, it is important to consider the environmental impact of the project as well.

## 2- Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Warring Neighbors Azerbaijan and Armenia Reached Ceasefire Deal



### Introduction

Nagorno-Karabakh is a hilly region in the South Caucasus Mountains of Armenia. The region is primarily inhabited by Armenians, but there is a sizable Azerbaijani minority. Around 120,000 ethnic Armenians live in the region, which is officially recognized as part of Azerbaijan.



The conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh is complicated, and there are numerous opposing viewpoints on it. The region of Nagorno-Karabakh, according to Azerbaijan, is a legal extension of its own territory and is not occupied by Armenia. On the other side, Armenia is of the view that the Armenian population in the territory has the right to live in peace and security as well as the right for Nagorno- Karabakh to exercise its right to self-determination.

### **Historical Background**

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia dates back to the early twentieth century, when both nations were part of the Russian Empire. Following the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917, the two countries fought a brief war over Nagorno-Karabakh, which ended with a cease-fire in 1920. Nagorno-Karabakh was integrated as an independent province into the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic by the Soviet Union in 1923. Tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh intensified in the late 1980s, and a full-fledged war broke out in 1992. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) launches the Minsk Group process in 1992 to promote a peaceful, negotiated resolution to the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh. Nearly 30,000 people were killed and nearly 1 million were displaced during conflict. A cease-fire was signed in 1994, but the issue remained unsolved. The April conflict, sometimes referred to as the four-day conflict, started in 2016 between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Since then, various attempts to end the dispute through dialogue have been attempted, but none have been successful.

Following that, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia then erupted again in September 2020, leading to the worst conflict since the 1994 truce. Over 6,000 people, both military personnel and civilians, died during the 44-day conflict. A new cease-fire deal was agreed in November 2020, cementing important achievements for Azerbaijan.

### **Significant Developments**

In 2021, the European Union (EU) launched a new monitoring mission to Armenia, and Russia deployed about 2,000 Russian peacekeepers to Nagorno-Karabakh as part of the ceasefire agreement. Armenia and Azerbaijan also held their first direct talks since the 2020 war. In 2023, tensions remained high as both sides continued to build up their militaries. The Lachin corridor, the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, was blocked by Azerbaijan's Government in December 2022, causing severe shortages of food, medicine, and other essential supplies in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan accused Armenia of bringing in military supplies via the road, which Armenia denied.





The most recent development is, Azerbaijan began a military operation against the Nagorno- Karabakh area on September 19, 2023. This escalation occurred when Russia, a leading power broker in the area, is busy in Ukraine conflict. The military operation in Azerbaijan had the full endorsement of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Turkey, a longtime supporter of Azerbaijan, sees Armenia as one of its major adversaries in the region. In an online statement, Erdogan stated, “We support the steps taken by Azerbaijan with whom we act together with the motto of one nation, two states to defend its territorial integrity.” According to Azerbaijan, the operation objectives were to “disarm and remove” Armenian forces that were operating inside the enclave unlawfully while also defending local ethnic Azerbaijani minority. Armenia’s Defense Ministry responded and denied the presence of its forces in the region.

### **Azerbaijan-Armenia Ceasefire Deal**

A day after commencing an operation to seize control of the enclave, Baku declared that it had accepted a proposal for a truce after the Nagorno-Karabakh region’s separatist troops from Armenia accepted the terms of a cease-fire that indicated Baku would retake control of the region. On September 20, 2023, a cease-fire deal was reached between the two countries. According to the Russian Defense Ministry, the deal was brokered by Russia. Before both sides announced a total cease-fire, the Azerbaijani army claimed it had taken more than 90 sites from the ethnic Armenians. However, the next day, on September 21, 2023, Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh accused Azerbaijan of breaking a truce as peace negotiations got underway.



Baku denied and dismissed the accusations as completely false. Earlier, protestors gathered in the capital to demand the resignation of Armenia's Prime Minister and protest the government's alleged failure to back Armenian separatists.

A day after commencing an operation to seize control of the enclave, Baku declared that it had accepted a proposal for a truce after the Nagorno-Karabakh region's separatist troops from Armenia accepted the terms of a cease-fire that indicated Baku would retake control of the region. On September 20, 2023, a cease-fire deal was reached between the two countries. According to the Russian Defense Ministry, the deal was brokered by Russia. Before both sides announced a total cease-fire, the Azerbaijani army claimed it had taken more than 90 sites from the ethnic Armenians. However, the next day, on September 21, 2023, Armenians from Nagorno-Karabakh accused Azerbaijan of breaking a truce as peace negotiations got underway. Baku denied and dismissed the accusations as completely false. Earlier, protestors gathered in the capital to demand the resignation of Armenia's Prime Minister and protest the government's alleged failure to back Armenian separatists.

## Conclusion

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh remains a major source of tension between the two countries, and there is no easy solution. The September clashes were the most serious outbreak of violence since the signing of the 2020 ceasefire agreement which raised the risk of a new conflict between the two countries. Future relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia will be influenced by a variety of factors, including how both countries are willing to talk. In this situation, the international community must play its role to establish peace and end the dispute. If Azerbaijan and Armenia are unable to negotiate diplomatically, this could have catastrophic consequences for the peace and stability of both countries as well as the region.

### 3- Taiwan to Receive \$500 Million Arms Deal as U.S.-China Tensions Rise



The United States has announced that it will sell \$500 million worth of military equipment to Taiwan, including F-16 Infrared Search and Track (IRST) and related equipment. The Pentagon stated that the main contractor would be Lockheed Martin Corp (LMT.N), which manufactures the F-16. The announcement was made shortly after Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen reaffirmed her commitment to bolster Taiwan's self-defense while visiting a memorial where Taiwan and China fought during the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958. Tsai paid tribute to those who perished during a visit to the remote islands of Kinmen. At the ceremony, she gave remarks that "In order to keep the peace, we need to strengthen ourselves. As such, we need to continue to reform the national defense, push for self-reliance, and strengthen our defense capabilities and resilience." According to President Tsai Ing-wen, Taiwan's military budget would increase by 3.5% annually and reach a record high in 2024.

The arms sale move has been met with anger from China, which claims the island nation as its own territory urge Washington to halt the sale in order to safeguard its national sovereignty and territorial integrity.



The sale is the latest in a series of arms deals between the United States and Taiwan, and it comes at a time of heightened tensions between the two countries. China has been increasing its military activity around Taiwan, and there is growing concern that it may be preparing to take military action. The United States has said that the sale is necessary to help Taiwan defend itself, and that it does not change the United States' one China policy. The Taiwan's

Defense Ministry has said that, the newest F-16 aircraft will be equipped with new technology which would "greatly improve the effectiveness of air operations" and increase the aircraft's capacity to track and detect long-range targets. The ministry also expressed its gratitude to the United States for the sale, noting that China's persistent entry of military aircraft and drones into airspace close to Taiwan poses a major threat to the island.



According to the Defense Security Cooperation Agency of the United States, the planned sale will help the recipient country to sustain regional political stability, military parity, and economic growth while also enhancing security. Moreover, Taiwan's ongoing efforts to modernize its armed forces and to preserve a credible defensive capability are supported by this proposed sale, which advances



United States national, economic, and security objectives. The particular sale will help the recipient protect its airspace, offer regional security, and boost interoperability with the U.S. through its F-16 program, which will help the country to deal with present and future challenges, and the recipient will have no trouble integrating this equipment into its military. Before that, in July 2023, the United States approved \$345 million in military funding for Taiwan in July. In a move similar to what was done for Ukraine, the U.S. President Joe Biden utilized his presidential drawdown authority for the first time to send military equipment from the Pentagon to Taiwan.



China has condemned the sale, saying that it is a serious violation of its sovereignty. In addition, China's Foreign Minister Wang responded to the sale by saying, "Beijing will take resolute, powerful measures to safeguard its national sovereignty and territorial integrity." The situation in the Taiwan Strait is complex and delicate. It is important that all the involved countries consider all of the potential consequences before making a decision. The sale is likely to further strain relations between the United States and China. The two countries are already at odds over a number of issues, including trade, human rights, and the South China Sea. The sale of arms to Taiwan could further complicate the situation, and could even lead to a conflict between the two countries. The implications of the sale are far-reaching, it could lead to a military build-up on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The sale could also further destabilize the region, and could even lead to a conflict between the United States and China. The United States and China must tread carefully on the Taiwan issue in order to avoid any miscalculation that could lead to a serious conflict between the two countries.



#### 4- The Persistent Threat of Racial Discrimination in the United States



Racial discrimination has been a persistent issue in the United States throughout its history. While progress has been made in the fight for racial equality, there are still instances of discrimination that exist in various aspects of American society. Racial discrimination is a serious problem in the United States that has a profound impact on the lives of people of color. It can lead to poverty, unemployment, poor health, and even death. There are many factors that contribute to racial discrimination in the U.S. The U.S. has a long history of racism, which has created a system of inequality that benefits white people and disadvantages people of color. Whereas, white people in the United States enjoy a number of advantages, such as higher incomes, better education, and more opportunities, simply because of their race. Many people hold implicit biases against people of color, even if they do not consciously realize it. These biases can lead to discrimination in everyday interactions, provision of the facilities and experiencing problems in hiring, lending, and housing.

##### Background

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) was ratified by the United States in 1966. It has been over 50 years since the U.S. signed the ICERD, nearly 30 years since its ratification, and more than 20 years since identifying obstacles to effective implementation. However, progress towards compliance remains insufficient in key areas such as reparative justice, discrimination in the criminal legal system, use of force by law enforcement, migration control,

, economic opportunity, and healthcare. Structural racism continues to persist as an influential force in American society.

### **Killing of Black Americans by Police and Protests**

The killing of Black Americans by police and the resulting protests have ignited a national and global conversation about racial inequality and police reforms in the U.S. High-profile cases, such as the killing of George Floyd in 2020, prompted widespread outrage and demands for justice and accountability. Protests have called for an end to systemic racism, police violence, and greater transparency and accountability within law enforcement. The movement has led to discussions on police reform, use of force policies, and the impact of systemic racism. Although there are varying opinions on the best path forward, the events have undeniably highlighted the urgent need for change and sparked ongoing conversations about social justice. Moreover, according to data published online in the *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*, the rate of fatal police shootings of unarmed Black persons in the United States is three times higher than the rate for unarmed White people.



### **Recent Incident of U.S. Soldier who crossed into North Korea**

On August 16, 2023, North Korea claimed that a U.S. soldier, Travis King had fled across the strongly fortified Korean border. For the first time, North Korea made an official remark regarding a U.S. soldier who entered the country illegally approximately a month ago.



They asserted in the statement that he sought safety there because of the racism and poor working circumstances he experienced in the Army of the United States. Pvt. Travis King, 23 years old, who had served in South Korea and ran into the North on July 18 while on a tour with the general public of a border town, was detained, according to an official statement from North Korea. He became the country's first confirmed detainee of an American in the region in almost five years. The racism in the American military was also brought to light by this incident.

To conclude, racial discrimination is a complex problem that will not be easy to solve. A comprehensive approach is required to address the issue. There is a need of regulations, frameworks, and laws that prohibit discrimination and hold responsible individuals accountable for their discriminatory practices. Raising awareness about the history and impact of racism can help to reduce individual bias. There are many organizations that are working to combat racism in the United States. The Government of the United States can support these organizations, in order to make a difference and to create a more just and equitable society for all.

## 5- BRICS and Its Prospects for the Future



## Perspectives on the Future

**Economic Growth:** The BRICS nations are still regarded as having significant growth potential despite facing challenges such as economic slowdowns and political uncertainties. This is due to the fact that these nations are considered to have significant growth potential. As a result of demographics, natural resources, and technological advancements, it is anticipated that their economies will continue to expand at a faster rate than the average growth rate for the entire world. **Influence on Politics:** As the economic balance of power in the world continues to shift, it is possible that the BRICS nations will play an even more decisive role in the formation of international norms and regulations. The global order that is dominated by the West could be challenged by their combined voice in organisations such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, and the International Monetary Fund.

**Goals of Sustainable Development:** It is very likely that the future of BRICS will become increasingly intertwined with those of sustainable development. Their commitment to working together to address issues such as climate change, the reduction of poverty, and equitable economic growth has the potential to contribute to global solutions and further enhance their standing on the international stage.

**Possibilities for Growth:** The idea that BRICS could grow to incorporate additional countries is one that has been the focus of on-going debate. The direction that future expansion takes could be influenced by things like the potential for economic growth, political alignment, and regional representation. The following are some potential candidates:

**Indonesia:** Thanks to its robust economic growth and advantageous location in Southeast Asia, Indonesia has the potential to bolster the presence of the BRICS nations in the region.

**Turkey:** The geopolitical importance of Turkey, along with its status as an emerging market, makes it a strong contender. The incorporation of this idea has the potential to reduce the gap between Asia, Africa, and Europe.

**Mexico:** As one of the largest economies in Latin America, Mexico has the potential to bolster the collective economic clout of the BRICS nations and increase Latin American representation within the organisation.

**Nigeria:** As the country with the largest economy in Africa, Nigeria has the potential to expand the BRICS initiative's focus on Africa and provide insightful commentary on the opportunities and challenges facing the continent.





## Concerns and Things to Take Into Account

**Tensions in the Geopolitical Arena** the countries that make up the BRICS bloc have a diverse set of geopolitical interests, and these interests can sometimes be at odds with one another. Managing contentious issues like border disputes, trade wars, and divergent objectives in foreign policy requires a delicate touch.

**Disparities in Economic Systems** the BRICS countries all have significantly different economic systems, which may make it difficult to formulate unified policies. In order to bring the interests of countries as economically distinct as China and South Africa into alignment, careful negotiation and compromise are required.

**Problems Associated with Expansion** In order to expand BRICS, all of the current members will need to give their blessing and be in agreement with the organization's overarching goals. The addition of new members ought to enhance rather than dilute the framework that is already in place for the coalition's operations.

BRICS's future holds a great deal of potential, with opportunities to further influence the economic and political dynamics of the world. Because of their shared emphasis on inclusive growth, sustainable development, and international reform, these countries are uniquely positioned to play an important role in the emerging multipolar world order.

The process of expansion needs to be approached with caution and foresight, with the goal of ensuring that any new members will both contribute to the group's goals as well as align with those goals. As a reflection of the dynamic nature of global development, countries such as Indonesia, Turkey, Mexico, and Nigeria offer intriguing possibilities for expansion.

The future of BRICS will be determined by the group's capacity to innovate, adapt, and take the lead in an ever-evolving global landscape. Their continued success has the potential to offer a new model of cooperation and growth, which will help promote a global order that is more balanced and inclusive.

## 6- The Resilience Of North Korea In The Face Of Sanctions



North Korea is one of the most sanctioned countries in the world. The United Nations Security Council has imposed sanctions on North Korea since 2006 in response to its nuclear and missile programs. These sanctions have had a significant impact on the country's economy, but North Korea has been able to find ways to evade them. The most stringent sanctions have been imposed by the EU, the US, and Canada, while Japan and South Korea remain the biggest hurdles in Asia. Although all of these markets have banned trade, humanitarian assistance is still provided to North Korea. However, it is unrealistic to think that the country's exports can cover the expenses needed to maintain the luxurious lifestyle of its leader. Despite the strained relations that North Korea has with the rest of the world, the country somehow manages to survive. ***This begs the question: how? In this article, I will explain the techniques used by transnational networks to keep the country afloat.***

### History:

The Korean War was a proxy war fought between North Korea and South Korea, based on ideological differences. With the allied powers supporting South Korea, North Korea was left to defend itself with the help of the Soviet Union.



After the end of the Korean War in the 1950s, the Soviet Union helped the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) run its economy. Until the 1960s, the USSR provided North Korea with technology, goods, weapons, and money. However, in the 1970s, Soviet support vanished. This meant that North Korea lost access to foreign goods, technology, weapons, and money, placing it in a vulnerable position.



### Creation of Room 39:

As a result of these unfortunate circumstances, Room 39 was created. Room 39 is a state-sponsored criminal network that is used to fulfill the needs of the economy. The network is involved in trafficking weapons, counterfeit money, and distributing opium around the world. Room 39's mission is to acquire capital for the state, as tourism and trade are not viable options to keep the economy running. In the 1980s, Room 39 expanded into the production of hard drugs. According to North Korean refugees, all drug operations are under the control of the ruling family. North Korea has a significant advantage over other criminal organizations because it uses the tools of the state to run this criminal empire. It uses its naval vessels and provides smugglers with diplomatic passports to ensure that illicit contraband is circulated all over the world. The use of transnational criminal networks is just one way that North Korea evades sanctions. The country also engages in other activities, such as trading with countries that are not signatories to the UN sanctions regime and using shell companies and front organizations to obscure the true nature of its financial transactions. This allows North Korea to exploit loopholes in international law and traffic in goods and services that are banned under sanctions.



The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations provides diplomatic immunity to diplomats, which means that they cannot be arrested or detained for their activities. This gives Room 39 a significant advantage over other criminal organizations, as it allows them to operate with impunity. The Vienna Convention provides a framework for the protection of Diplomats (VCDR Art. 29: ***“The person of a diplomatic agent shall be inviolable. He shall not be liable to any form of arrest or detention. The receiving State shall treat him with due respect and shall take all appropriate steps to prevent any attack on his person, freedom or dignity.”*** This allows North Korea to produce drugs such as methamphetamine and heroin, which are then smuggled all over the world by diplomats. The drug labs are located on North Korean soil, making them inaccessible to the international community.



Similarly, North Korea is involved in the production of counterfeit US dollars. The network of smugglers is so well-organized that the counterfeit bills have been found all over the world, including Las Vegas. The US Secret Service has called these bills some of the most sophisticated ever made. There have also been reports that North Korea has traded bullets for diamonds with Mugabe's secret police in Africa. In addition, a North Korean diplomat has been accused of smuggling ivory and rhino horn out of Africa to resell elsewhere.

### 5th generation warfare:

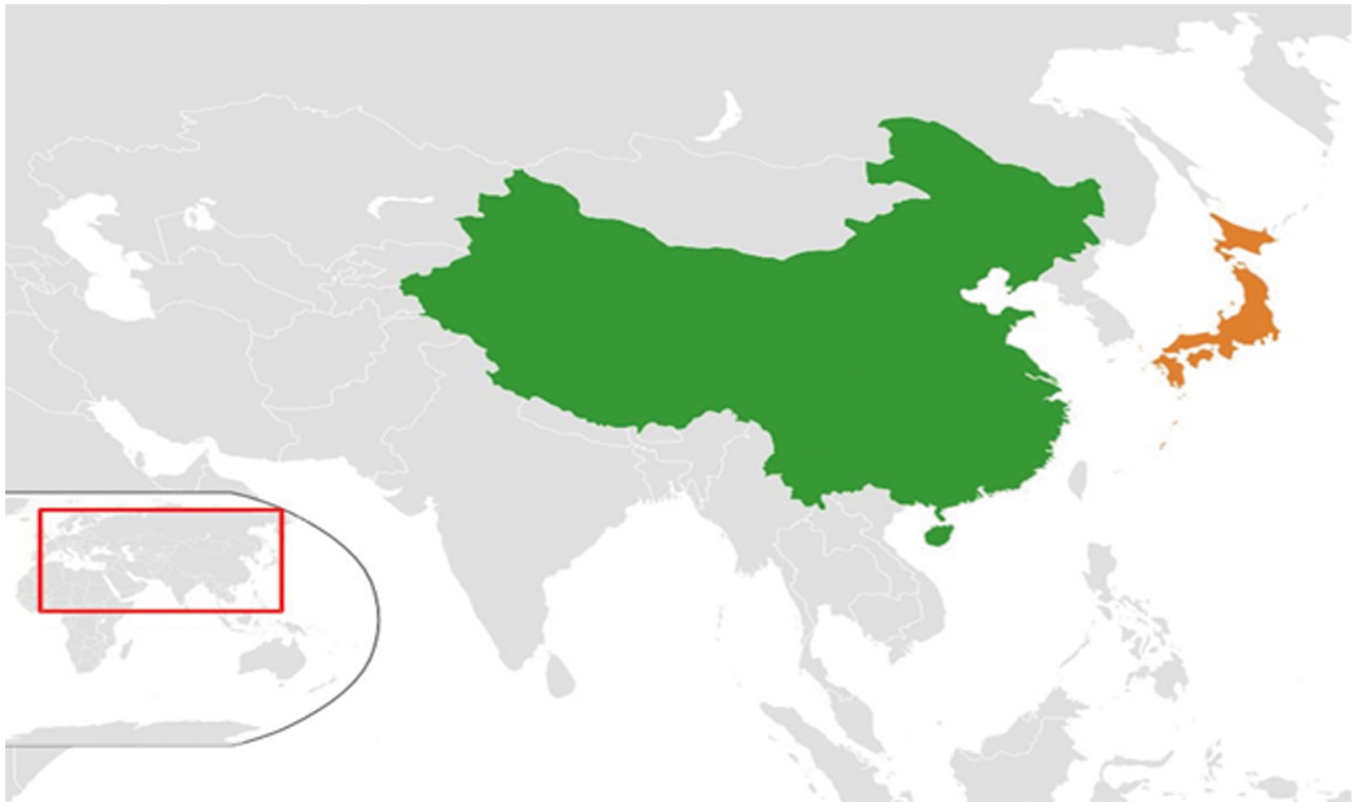
While drugs may remain a primary means of maintaining their economy to sustain their military, North Korea has also created a cyberwarfare force called the Lazarus Group



The group was created in the 1960s to deal with the threat posed by fifth-generation warfare. The Lazarus Group has been linked to a number of cyberattacks, including the hacking of the central bank of Bangladesh and the WannaCry ransomware attack. The WannaCry ransomware attack was a global cyberattack that infected over 230,000 computers in over 150 countries. The attack was caused by a worm that encrypted files on the infected computers and demanded a ransom payment in Bitcoin. The worm exploited a vulnerability in the Windows operating system that had been patched by Microsoft in March 2017. However, many computers were still running the unpatched version of Windows, which allowed WannaCry to infect them. The Lazarus Group is believed to be responsible for the WannaCry attack, as well as other cyberattacks, such as the hacking of the Sony Pictures Entertainment network. The group is believed to be funded by the North Korean government and is used to steal money and information from other countries. The Lazarus Group is a serious threat to global security. The groups cyberattack have caused billions of dollars in damage and have disrupted critical infrastructure. The international community needs to take steps to disrupt the Lazarus Group's operations and prevent future cyberattacks.

The resilience of North Korea in the face of sanctions is a testament to the ingenuity and determination of its leaders. The country has been under sanctions for over 15 years, but it has still been able to maintain its nuclear and missile programs. This is due to a number of factors, including the country's isolation, its authoritarian government, and its fear of the United States. The sanctions against North Korea have had a significant impact on the country's economy, but they have not been able to stop its nuclear and missile programs. The international community needs to find new ways to pressure North Korea to abandon its nuclear and missile programs. These new ways may include increasing the enforcement of sanctions, targeting sanctions evasion networks, and promoting international cooperation on sanctions enforcement.

## 7- China's New Map Sparks Concerns and Heightened Tensions among Neighboring Countries



### Introduction

China has recently unveiled an updated version of its territorial map, encompassing its disputed claims in various regions. The release took place on August 28, 2023, coinciding with the "National Mapping Awareness Publicity Week" hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources of the People's Republic of China. According to Chinese state media, the map was formulated using the established method of delineating national boundaries utilized by China and other countries across the globe. On the other side, Wu Wenzhong, China's Ministry of Natural Resources' chief planner, said at the map's unveiling that surveying, mapping, and geographic information play a significant role in supporting the management of natural resources, advancing the development of ecology, and fostering civilization. Wu said in an interview with China Daily, "The next step will be to accelerate the application of geographic information data such as digital maps and navigation and positioning in the development of the digital economy, such as location-based services, precision agriculture, platform economy and intelligent connected vehicles."



## Changes in the New Map

The new map incorporates several regions, such as the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, which China has consistently maintained as the southern region of Tibet. Furthermore, the map includes Aksai Chin, an extension of Ladakh, which has been under China's control since the 1962 Sino- Indian War. In addition, the new map differs from the version of the South China Sea provided by China to the United Nations in 2009, which contained nine-dash line. The most current map covered a bigger geographical area and includes a line with ten dashes encompassing democratically controlled Taiwan, similar to a depiction of China from 1948. China also released a map with a tenth dash in 2013. The map also showed numerous small islands and islets that are also claimed by Southeast Asian nations, including Vietnam, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

## Response of Different Countries

After China published an official map showing Indian lands in the Himalayas as its own, India raised a strong diplomatic complaint with Beijing. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, the foreign minister of India, slammed the Chinese chart as absurd and remarked, "Just by putting out maps with parts of India, doesn't change anything. Our government is very clear about what our territory is, making absurd claims does not make other people's territories yours." Also, only a few days have passed since Mr. Xi and Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, met informally during the BRICS summit in South Africa and decided to ease border tensions.



While Chinese claims are not entirely groundbreaking, the timing of the release is crucial which coincides with the G20 summit and ASEAN summit. The President of the United States Joe Biden, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and other world leaders will attend the multilateral event. However, there are concerns regarding Xi Jinping's anticipated trip to Delhi for the G20 summit. It is scheduled to start next week, which will take place against the backdrop of a long-standing border dispute between the two nuclear neighbors, which has only strained their diplomatic ties.

Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam have all rejected China's recently released map, in a joint response to Beijing's recent territorial claims. Highlighting China's obligations under international law, the Philippines cited the 2016 arbitral decision that deemed China's U-shaped boundary to be legally unjustified. Malaysia simultaneously lodged a diplomatic objection to the Chinese map. In response, Malaysia said the map was non-authoritative over its territory, recognizing the complexity and delicate nature of the South China Sea dispute. By joining ASEAN-neighbors, Vietnam's foreign ministry dismissed China's claims based on the map as meaningless and illegal under both Vietnamese and international law. Whereas, Taiwan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Jeff Liu, emphasized Taiwan's independence in answer to questions about the map by claiming that "Taiwan absolutely was not a part of the People's Republic of China regardless of what China says" The countries are protesting against the release of China's new map and have rejected the map, claiming that it is illegitimate and violates international law. They have also threatened to take action to protect their own claims. If the governments' responses become more aggressive, it could lead to more violent encounters in the disputed territory and escalated tensions between the countries. Moreover, The ASEAN countries have maintained same stance over China's maritime claim, it remains to be seen whether any specific action or strategy will emerge at the upcoming ASEAN summit.

## **8- BRICS Countries Unite for Sustainable Development**

The BRICS countries including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa have expanded their partnership for sustainable development. They are all major emerging economies, and have been working together to promote sustainable development. At the 2023 summit, the BRICS countries agreed to expand their partnership for sustainable development. They will cooperate on a number of areas, including climate change, clean energy, sustainable agriculture, water conservation, disaster risk reduction, and poverty alleviation which covers SDG 1,2,3,4,13 and 17.





Sustainable development is important for BRICS because it can help them to address the challenges of economic growth, poverty, and environmental degradation. Dealing with challenging situations requires collaborative approach from BRICS nations in order to ensure successful solutions. Sustainable development can help them to address these issues by promoting economic growth that is both environmentally and socially responsible. In terms of partnerships for sustainable development, the leaders recognize the importance of implementing the SDGs in an integrated and comprehensive way, highlighting the SDG Summit in September 2023 and the Summit of the Future in 2024 as significant opportunities for renewing international commitment to the 2030 Agenda.



The BRICS nations reiterated the significance of putting into practice the Paris Agreement of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), as well as the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) for achieving sustainable development. This includes enhancing the transfer of low-cost climate technology, building capacity, and mobilizing new additional financial resources that are affordable, adequate, and timely delivered for environmentally sustainable projects. They agreed that cooperation is required to ensure the 28th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is effective and that it is necessary to preserve, promote, and strengthen the multilateral response to climate change. The leaders are aware of how crucial it is for BRICS nations to cooperate in order to address threats to the global economy and foster sustainable growth. In order to achieve a robust, sustained, balanced, and inclusive economic recovery,

reaffirmation of the commitment to improving macroeconomic policy coordination and deepening economic cooperation was made. The BRICS countries considered the significance of continuing to implement the BRICS Economic Partnership Strategy 2025 in all relevant ministerial tracks and working groups, and to look for ways that can speed up the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The expansion of the BRICS partnership for sustainable development is a positive step. It shows that the BRICS countries are committed to working together to address the challenges of sustainable development. The partnership has the potential to make a significant contribution to the global effort to achieve sustainable development. The BRICS countries have taken specific initiatives and are committed to share ideas and research on sustainable development particularly in clean energy, water conservation, and sustainable agriculture. They realize the gravity of global food insecurity and as one-third of the world's food is produced by the BRICS nations, emphasis was given on the importance of progressing towards a fair and market-oriented agricultural trading system, eradicating hunger, attaining food security and enhanced nutrition, supporting sustainable agriculture and food systems, and implementing resilient agricultural practices.

The BRICS countries have worked together to develop a common position on climate change. They have called for ambitious action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. At the summit, the countries emphasized the importance of developed countries in supporting the emerging economies like BRICS to gain access to low-emission technology and solutions that prevent, reduce, and eliminate GHG emissions and improve adaptation to climate change. In addition, the BRICS countries have launched a number of initiatives to promote sustainable development in Africa. These initiatives include the BRICS-Africa Partnership for Development to improve technology, innovation, and employment opportunities for sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as to unlock the potential of agriculture, and use renewable energy to transform Africa. The BRICS countries are still at the early stages of their partnership for sustainable development. However, they have made significant progress in a short period of time. The partnership has the potential to make a major contribution to the global effort in order to achieve sustainable development.



## 9- How Armed Combat Affects Mental Health of Former Child Soldiers in Africa?



Children recruited into armed groups are subjected to physical and psychological trauma. They may witness violence, death, and other horrors. They may be forced to commit acts of violence themselves, leading to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and other problems. The issue of the induction of children into armies can lead to a significant amount of damage, impacting not only their present but leaving them with a void that cannot be filled in a lifetime. In addition to the physical and psychological trauma, child soldiers are also often separated from their families and communities. This leads to social isolation and a sense of loss and abandonment. They may also miss out on education and employment opportunities, which can make it difficult to rebuild their lives after the conflict.

In the wake of Red Hand Day, the international community has pledged its responsibility to protect children from the use of child soldiers. This includes providing support to these children and ensuring that the programs built for their reintegration are run smoothly and efficiently. UNICEF works with government bodies to ensure transparency in funding and that the facilities in place are up and running.

***The United Nations defines a child soldier as any person below the age of 18 who is, or who has been, used in any capacity by an armed group. This includes fighters, cooks, porters, spies, or for sexual purposes.***



The importance of mental health for child soldiers cannot be overstated. The trauma they experience can have a lasting impact on their physical and emotional well-being. Children are not only subjected to the role of warriors in wars but some underaged females have also been reported to be used as sex slaves. Most of the children found in child militias are reported to have been threatened, coerced, abducted, or manipulated. Children are threatened with the security of their families or are driven by extreme poverty to maintain the income of their families. The induction of child soldiers is a grave violation of child rights and the International Humanitarian Law.



While some may make it out alive, many of the children face biases as these children are viewed with suspicion or outrightly rejected by communities as they are seen as dangerous people. "There is always a suspicion that [ex-child soldiers] are not good people," Tulieza remarked. Upon learning that they were once child soldiers, "organizations tend to discriminate against them and perceive them as criminals who must be kept out of society." Child soldiers usually end up in internally displaced camps and refugee-seeking arrangements where they usually survive off the ration kits provided by UNICEF. The places where they reside normally do not have the facilities to provide adequate income or income opportunities. Child soldiers who have been deprived of quality education for most of their lives cannot integrate into society and compete with non-combatants.



Non-combatants will always be happier individuals, having more access to quality education and stable livelihoods, while combatants that have been exposed to mass murder cannot be expected to compete together. A former child soldier said, "It's the undervaluing of survivors," he claimed. "Having survivors compete against non-survivors and viewing them as 'normal people.'" Child soldiers have been blacklisted by the government and their information has been stored in the government system, making it harder for them to have clearances by police. The prejudice is also observed in travel visa procedures, making it difficult for them to seek asylum and start a new life abroad.

In 2021, it was reported that 6,130 children were recruited by different militias across the world. According to the United Nations, Africa is home to about 40% of the world's child soldier population. About 30,000 of them are forced to work as slaves, soldiers, and laborers for armed organizations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo exclusively. In the spirit of Red Hand Day, Nigeria and Burkina Faso governments have withdrawn from their traditional practice of screening minors, but other African countries have yet to follow suit. Militant groups such as Boko Haram continue to recruit child soldiers and use them in Cameroon, Niger, and Chad.

Governments should work towards programs where these child soldiers can feel heard. The trauma of their experiences can result in PTSD. To cope with their trauma and learn to function in normal life, former child soldiers need to have access to psychological care. Both individual and group therapy, as well as community-based initiatives, can be used to provide this support. It is also important for governments to ensure that former child soldiers are protected from prejudice. Instances such as special screenings and fingerprint directories can cause immense amounts of trauma and humiliation for the former child soldier. Effective schooling programs are also essential for these child soldiers to have healthy interactions with their peers and develop skills so that they can compete with non-combatant children in their professional lives.

It is also very important for governments to cooperate with child soldiers and set up Microfinancing models for them to have businesses. This way poverty will never be a reason for them to join child militias. It is important to reintegrate former child soldiers into their communities in a way that is considerate of their needs and experiences. Community-based initiatives that foster tolerance and comprehension can do this. The media can also play a role in promoting tolerance and understanding of child soldiers. This includes responsible reporting on the issue, as well as the creation of positive portrayals of former child soldiers. Media can also help to raise awareness of the issue and the challenges faced by former child soldiers. They can use their platforms to raise awareness of the issue and to provide support to former child soldiers. Religious leaders can also help to challenge the stigma associated with child soldiers and to promote understanding of the challenges they face.

## 10- Africa Climate Summit: Accelerating Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for Africa and the World



On September 4-6, 2023, Nairobi, Kenya hosted the Africa Climate Summit, it coincided with Africa Climate Week. The Africa Climate Summit (ACS) brought international leaders, intergovernmental organizations, Regional Economic Communities, UN agencies, the private sector, civil society organizations, local communities, farmer organizations, children, youth, women, and academia to discuss Africa's climate change challenges and develop sustainable solutions. The theme of the Africa Climate Summit 2023 was "Driving Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for Africa and the World." The summit intended to accelerate climate action in Africa and mobilize the financial resources required to promote a just and equitable transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient future. Also, to consider ways to cut greenhouse gas emissions while also preparing for the growing effects of the climate catastrophe. On the last day of an important climate summit, African political and corporate leaders adopted a declaration to address climate concerns in Africa.

"Africa's youth is precisely the attribute that has inspired African leaders to imagine a future where Africa steps on to the stage as an economic and industrial power, an effective and positive actor in the global arena," said Kenyan President William Ruto. He said that the continent is ideally situated to take the lead in combating climate change, according to a number of factors. Ruto added, "Africa is the continent with 60% of the continent's renewable energy assets, including solar, wind, geothermal and hydropower." The President of the African Development Bank, Adesina, said "The Africa Climate Summit will shape the future pathway of Africa's development" and also praised Ruto for taking the initiative for organizing a conference.

The significance of climate justice for Africa was also emphasized at the conference. Despite making very little contribution to the world's greenhouse gas emissions, African nations are disproportionately impacted by the climate problem.





The leaders of Africa urged that developed countries take immediate action to cut carbon emissions and recommended a new financial framework to restructure Africa's debt and unleash funds for climate change. African leaders present at the inaugural Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, Kenya, emphasized the necessity of decarbonizing the global economy for equity and shared prosperity in a call to action. In order for the continent to move to low carbon development and make a contribution to global decarbonization, they asked for investment to support the sustainable use of Africa's natural resources. As a means of increasing climate funding and motivating nations to reduce emissions, the implementation of a worldwide carbon tax system is required.

From the United States, John Kerry, the special Presidential Envoy for climate change, as well as representatives from the Department of Energy, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) attended the Africa Climate Summit. At the Summit, the United States announced significant investments. According to the United States Department of State, U.S. intends to provide \$30 million to initiatives under President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE) in Africa.



An additional total of \$45 million will be given to the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI) Food Security Accelerator, which will accelerate and scale up private sector investments in climate resilient food security in Africa. The United States has also made a commitment to mobilize investments in African climate solutions, ecosystem conservation, and urban resilience. Through DFC and USAID initiatives, more than \$200 million in funding will be provided to increase access to renewable energy in Africa.



Global leaders utilized the Climate Summit to announce funding commitments for sustainable development and green growth. A wide spectrum of stakeholders was present at the conference to debate and make pledges regarding climate action in Africa. Now is the moment to put words into action. Aside from increasing political will for climate action, the Africa Climate Summit 2023 has the ability to increase awareness of the continent's climate action. There is a hope that the process of cutting greenhouse gas emissions will accelerate to tackle the effects of climate change, and creating a future for Africa and the world that is more climate resilient.





PakistanHouseOfficial



@Pakistanhouse11