



## Challenge of a Reset

*Maleeha Lodhi 3 March 2025*

“Islamabad seeks to reconfigure ties with the US based on Pakistan’s intrinsic importance and not as a sub-set of America’s other concerns. But a reset faces many challenges. America’s top strategic priority is to contain China. Although Pakistan says it wants to balance relations between the US and China, it sees its strategic future to lie with China and will not be part of any anti-China coalition. This limits the space for Pakistan-US relations.”

Read More: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1895472>

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## Solidifying Pak-UAE Ties

*Muhammad Zahid Raffat 18 March 2025*

“The UAE has long been one of Pakistan’s biggest economic partners in the Middle East. It is not only a major trading ally but also a crucial source of remittances, given the large Pakistani workforce in the Emirates. The fact that the UAE continues to invest in Pakistan, despite the economic uncertainties, is proof that this is a relationship built on more than just business—it is one of brotherhood and shared aspirations.”

Read More: <https://www.nation.com.pk/18-Mar-2025/solidifying-pak-uae-ties>

## **Pakistan's Quest for Alliances and Evolving Relationship with Türkiye**

*Dr Shalini Chawla 22 March 2025*

“Türkiye’s diplomatic and strategic choices are shaped by the complexities of the geopolitical developments, its involvement in Syria, tensions with Russia and Iran, and also its eagerness to be close to the Organisation of Islamic Council (OIC). Ankara’s economic interest in Pakistan cannot be ignored and it potentially sees Pakistan as connector to Asia to expand its exports. Pakistan is trying to expand its alliances, create new relationships and nurture existing ties.”

**Read More:** <https://capsindia.org/pakistans-quest-for-alliances-and-evolving-relationship-with-turkiye/>

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## **Surge in Terrorism**

*Kamran Yousaf 24 March 2025*

“India always viewed the Afghan Taliban as Pakistan's proxy. At present, Pakistan is facing more risk from Afghanistan than India. One of the major reasons behind the strained ties is that Pakistan no longer follows the policy of appeasement to these groups. The Afghan Taliban want Pakistan to negotiate with the TTP and find a political solution. Pakistan on the other hand is adamant that it won't negotiate with terrorists.”

**Read More:** <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2536006/surge-in-terrorism>

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## **Balochistan – to Where from Here?**

*Dr Muhammad Ali Ehsan 16 March 2025*

“This incident has reignited intense debate on the issue of Balochistan, but unfortunately, the debate has revolved more around subjectivity and lacked the important element of objectivity. Pakistani politics cannot wish away the question of the full-blown insurgency it faces in Balochistan. Like East Pakistan, the problem in Balochistan is also political and warrants not a military but a political solution.”

**Read More:** <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2025/02/22/reclaiming-progress-and-the-future-of-pakistan/>

## **No Talks for Baloch**

*Arifa Noor 18 March 2025*

“On more occasion than one, the state has seen the TTP as an actor that can be spoken to and negotiated with, despite the organisation’s lack of support in the areas it operates in, but in Balochistan, this option is rarely ever seriously discussed, let alone exercised. In fact, as the political engineering in the province has grown, this idea has been further delegitimised.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dawn.com/news/1898649/no-talks-for-baloch>

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## **Battling Autocracy**

*Dr Niaz Murtaza 18 March 2025*

“Pakistan, unluckily, is among the few states that have mostly seen autocracy. The same face didn’t stay for decades but the same regime has stayed in various forms. Military rule changes into a light hybrid where polls may be fair but the establishment controls the core areas of security and external policy; or there may exist a deeper hybrid where polls are rigged and even politics and economics bend to the establishment’s will. Even top honchos can get fired by the selectorate in their ranks.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dawn.com/news/1898644/battling-autocracy>

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## **Pakistan’s ‘War on Terror’ Approach is Dangerous**

*Obaidullah Baheer 19 March 2025*

“The Pakistani authorities should learn from the American experience. They cannot feign ignorance about groups like TTP and BLA; they are dealing with their own citizens, who have clear grievances. Refusing to see the roots of insurgencies, using ‘terrorism’ labels, and scapegoating neighbours are not winning strategies. If the Pakistani military decides not to learn from recent history and follows in the footsteps of the United States, it is quite likely it is to meet its fate.”

**Read More:** <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2025/3/19/pakistans-war-on-terror-approach-is-dangerous>

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## **Every Action Counts**

*Ubaid Sahil 21 March 2025*

“The challenges of climate change in Pakistan might seem overwhelming, but they begin with choices that are close to home. Our daily habits, what we wear, what we throw away, and how we travel, are not just personal choices. They are collective actions that shape the future of our environment. We must remember that even small changes can make a big difference.”

**Read More:** <https://www.nation.com.pk/21-Mar-2025/every-action-counts>

## **Talking to the Terrorists**

*M A Niazi 23 March 2025*

“Imran Khan is as transactional as Donald Trump. By preventing his party from attending the meeting of the National Security Committee, he showed that was more concerned about himself than the wave of terrorism that has been spreading through the country. That was probably no surprise to anyone who opposes Mr Khan, while it provides his supporters the opportunity to see that he has become another politician who believes that the national interest and his personal and political interest are one and the same thing.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dawn.com/news/1893732/scary-afghanistan>

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## **Beyond Policing: The Economic Roots of Crime in Pakistan**

*Dr Aneel Salman 25 March 2025*

“Pakistan's police force operates under severe financial constraints, reducing its ability to deter crime effectively. Response times have been affected, with reports indicating that emergency police response in high-crime areas often takes significantly longer than the global standard. The failure of deterrence in Pakistan can be attributed to the low probability of punishment. Economic evidence suggests that increasing the certainty of punishment has a stronger deterrent effect.”

**Read More:** <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2536010/beyond-policing-the-economic-roots-of-crime-in-pakistan>

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## **Strategic Statesmanship**

*Dr Moonis Ahmar 25 March 2025*

“If a country is blessed with leaders who possess visionary, strategic statesmanship and make correct and timely decisions, then it cannot end up as a failing or failed state. Strategic statesmanship is a quality which reflects a leadership's capability to pull a nation out from grave crisis and conflict. The absence of strategic leadership in Pakistan, despite the country's numerous qualities, aggravates its crises.”

**Read More:** <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2536230/strategic-statesmanship>

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## **The Taliban's Worst Nightmare**

*Shujauddin Amini 3 March 2025*

“Afghanistan under Taliban rule as the second or third largest arms seller in the world after the United States, a noteworthy and intriguing claim. In all three instances where Trump has mentioned reclaiming weapons, he has tied the issue to the delivery or non-delivery of funds to the Taliban, implying that the group cannot benefit from both privileges simultaneously and must choose between money or weapons. Both are considered vital lifelines for the Taliban.”

**Read More:** <https://8am.media/eng/the-talibans-worst-nightmare/>

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## **Afghanistan-Uzbekistan Relations: A New Era of Economic Cooperation**

*M. Abdullah Azzam 13 March 2025*

“After the fall of Kabul, Uzbekistan was one of the first countries to accept the Islamic Emirate’s ambassador, expanding its relations with the new government, especially in the economic sector. These ties reached new levels with high-ranking visits between the two countries. Given the current state of trade and economic relations between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, it is expected that the two countries will continue to expand their cooperation, particularly due to their shared religious, cultural, and linguistic ties.”

**Read More:** <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-193429>

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## **China Provides Certainty to the Uncertain World**

*Zhao Xing 23 March 2025*

“Afghanistan and China share a friendship that spans over a thousand years and are important neighbours to both countries. In 2024, China announced a zero-tariff policy on all products for Afghanistan, and bilateral trade exceeded US\$1.5 billion. On multilateral platforms, China has firmly advocated on behalf of Afghanistan, calling for the lifting of sanctions and the return of frozen overseas Afghan assets.”

**Read More:** <https://tolonews.com/index.php/opinion-193572>

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## **Is Bangladesh the Next Afghanistan?**

*Michael Rubin 18 March 2025*

“The new Bangladeshi regime has sprung Hizb-ut-Tahrir and Khelafat-e-Majlis terrorists from prison. Bangladesh today is like Afghanistan in 2000. Khelafat-e-Majlis, Allah’r Dal, and Ahle Hadith Andolon Bangladesh now coalesce under Heefazat-e-Islam to establish Islamic law throughout Bangladesh under the banner, ‘Bangladesh will become Afghanistan, and we will become Taliban’.”

**Read More:** <https://www.aei.org/op-eds/is-bangladesh-the-next-afghanistan/>

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## **What Could Have Been Better Than the Yunus Government?**

*Sohrab Hassan 22 March 2025*

“Many quarters complain that the government is not running the country properly. That is not a baseless contention. The inactivity of certain advisors is irksome. But the question is, could there have been any alternative to Muhammad Yunus as chief advisor? Could anyone else bring the conflicting parties to one table?”

**Read More:** <https://en.prothomalo.com/opinion/bq0emwwwev>

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## **Breaking Free from Dynastic Politics**

*Darren Spinck | 03 February 2025*

“Bangladesh must encourage a political culture that values public service over personal or family gain, based on merit, integrity, and the ethos of serving people. Leaders must be held accountable not just by institutions but also by an engaged and informed electorate. Political parties must embrace internal democracy, allowing capable and committed individuals to rise based on merit rather than family connections.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dhakatribune.com/opinion/op-ed/376995/breaking-free-from-dynastic-politics>

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## **In the face of Trumponomics: Re-Orienting SL's Economic Ties**

*Dinouk Colombage 23 March 2025*

“Aside from the calls for the country to adopt an ambitious economic growth target over the next 30 years, the sustainability of Sri Lanka’s economic recovery hinges on the commitment to further liberalisation of the economy. A failure to do so will not only see the public once again burdened with a financial crisis far graver than what was experienced in 2022 but will also relegate Sri Lanka to a backseat as the economic tide swings in favour of Asia.”

**Read More:** <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/8GvAisdJ9HsWic4wk1Ls>

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## **Security and Freedom: Counter Terrorism Legislation in SL**

*Prof. G.L. Peiris 20 March 2025*

“The Government is committed to the early enactment of entirely new legislation in place of the existing Act. It is vital to appreciate that upgrading and modernising the law is only one component of the overall effort required. No law, however sound, will accomplish its objective unless it is accompanied by an honest attempt to further professionalise the intelligence services and to provide systematic training, access to technology and connectivity with institutions around the world.”

**Read More:** <https://www.themorning.lk/articles/62VGBMh7EsQOKTB3B4jq>

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## **What Can the Government Do with the Batalanda Report?**

*Mohamed Ayub 22 March 2025*

“Sri Lanka has a crooked history of commissions of inquiry, especially on human right violations. Successive Presidents have appointed at least nine commissions on disappearance of people during armed conflicts in North as well as South. Southern parts of the country have seen more disappearances than the North and the East had seen, despite the separatist war having prolonged for three decades whereas the southern insurrection in the late eighties had a life span of about three years.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/What-can-the-government-do-with-the-Batalanda-report/172-304935>

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## **Tug of War in Maldives**

*Smruti S Pattanaik 13 March 2025*

“Political crises involving the Supreme Court and the government have major implications for the country’s governance. Many of the laws in the past have been challenged in the Supreme Court. Each political party wants to stack the judiciary with loyal judges. Considering the Maldives’ nascent experiment with democracy, strengthening the judiciary and preventing executive interference will go a long way in building democratic institutions in the country.”

**Read More:** <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2025/03/13/tug-of-war-in-maldives>

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## **Political Turbulence in Nepal: Solution Through Dialogue, Not Defiance**

*Jiba Raj Pokharel 19 March 2025*

“The mid-term poll gave a mixed verdict, with no majority to any political party. Coalitions based on interest rather than principles were formed. It produced disenchantment, breeding political dissatisfaction, eventually giving rise to the People’s War. A fleeting glance at the aforementioned penta-decadal turbulences shows that the paradigmatic shift in the polity took place through confrontation rather than consultation. But the country cannot afford confrontations at any cost.”

**Read More:** <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/political-turbulence-in-nepal-solution-through-dialogue-not-defiance>

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## **Glacier Melting and the Way Forward**

*Keshab Sharma 23 March 2025*

“The rising temperatures driving glacier melt, and permafrost degradation is a global phenomenon, and reversing or halting these processes is beyond the practical scope of localized or national efforts. Reducing global warming or mitigating the effects of climate change is a long-term challenge, even with worldwide commitment and immediate action.”

**Read More:** <https://thehimalayantimes.com/opinion/glacier-melting-and-the-way-forward>

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## **The Shackles of Sanatan Secularism**

*CK Lal 25 March 2025*

“Those hankering for the declaration of Hindu Rashtra and the restoration of monarchy just want to ensure that the spirit of Article 4 of the Constitution of Nepal— “protection of religion, culture handed down from time immemorial”—be ensured! Just as Sanatan secularism is a contradiction in terms, a Hindu republic is culturally an oxymoron. Progressive voices need to explain republican secularism not just as a constitutional provision but also as an uncompromising ideological position.”

**Read More:** <https://kathmandupost.com/columns/2025/03/25/the-shackles-of-sanatan-secularism>

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## **C5+ Solution: Japan’s Minilateral Diplomacy and Central Asia’s Balancing Act**

*Miras Zhiyenbayev 6 March 2025*

“As great power competition intensifies globally, the lessons of the C5+ format are increasingly relevant. It demonstrates the power of minilateralism as a tool for flexible foreign policy, particularly for regions seeking to navigate complex geopolitical landscapes. Japan’s quiet innovation in Central Asia has inadvertently provided a valuable template for effective engagement in a multipolar world – one that prioritizes pragmatism, issue-specificity, and the agency of smaller states.”

**Read More:** <https://astanatimes.com/2025/03/c5-solution-japans-minilateral-diplomacy-and-central-asias-balancing-act/>

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## **New Silk Road? Malaysia–Kazakhstan’s Next Chapter in Religious Governance**

*Shakila Yacob 7 March 2025*

“History has handed Malaysia and Kazakhstan a second chance to walk the Silk Road—not as mere travellers, but as architects of a new era. As Kazakhstan charts its post-secular path and Malaysia refines its model of Islamic governance, the two nations have a rare opportunity to redefine what it means to be Muslim in the modern world. By leveraging platforms like the BRI and their memberships in the OIC and World Islamic Economic Forum, Malaysia and Kazakhstan have the potential to lead efforts toward greater cohesion.”

**Read More:** <https://astanatimes.com/2025/03/new-silk-road-malaysia-kazakhstans-next-chapter-in-religious-governance/>

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## **Strengthening Caucasus: Azerbaijan-Türkiye Alliance in a Changing World**

*Cavid Veliyev 27 March 2025*

“Azerbaijan and Türkiye took on important roles in the South Caucasus, specifically through various forms of joint cooperation. The main reason behind Aliyev's visit to Türkiye was to strengthen the alliance amid the changing global order. It should also be pointed out that Türkiye and Azerbaijan also feel the need to unite with their other allies in this direction.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/strengthening-caucasus-azerbaijan-turkiye-alliance-in-a-changing-world>

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## **Ideology vs. Survival: Iran’s High-Stakes Game in the Face of Military Threats**

*Dr. Majid Rafizadeh 12 March 2025*

“Iran is trapped between ideology and pragmatism, navigating a precarious path where both extremes present existential risks. If it remains rigidly committed to its revolutionary principles, it may find itself isolated, economically crippled, and vulnerable to military action. Yet, if it fully embraces pragmatism and seeks a rapprochement with the US, it risks eroding the very foundation upon which its authority rests.”

**Read More:** <https://english.alarabiya.net/views/2025/03/12/ideology-vs-survival-iran-s-high-stakes-game-in-the-face-of-military-threats>

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## **Netanyahu’s Nuclear Gamble: The Risks of Escalation with Iran**

*Oral Toğa 27 March 2025*

“The Netanyahu government cannot end Iran’s nuclear capacity by striking nuclear facilities. However, the basic strategy is to completely paralyze Iran by directly targeting the regime and rendering all its activities, from ballistic missiles to nuclear, from proxy forces to drone work, dysfunctional. This situation can open Pandora’s box. If things don’t go as planned and Iran enters a total war by mobilizing all its available means.”

**Read More:** <https://www.dailysabah.com/opinion/op-ed/netanyahus-nuclear-gamble-the-risks-of-escalation-with-iran>

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## REGION IN PICTURES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, among other distinguished delegates, at the family picture for the 10th edition of the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi on March 17, 2025.



Pic Credits: Forbes India

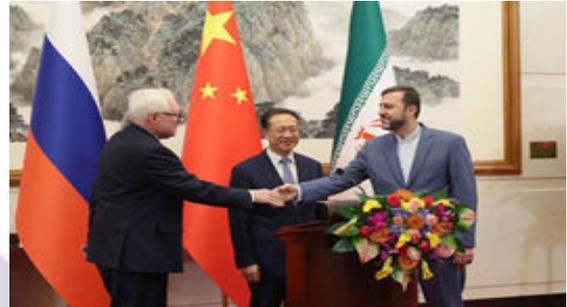
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On 18 March 2025 the European Commissioner for International Partnerships Jozef Síkela met President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Uzbekistan to strengthen the growing partnership between Uzbekistan and the European Union.



Pic Credits: The Times of Central Asia

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi shake hands as Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu looks at Diaoyutai State Guest House, Beijing, China on 14 March 2025.



Pic Credits: Al Jazeera

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Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 20 March 2025.



Pic Credits: The Express Tribune



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