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From the Editors' Desk...

Afghan Crisis: Pakistan's Prestige vs. Peoples Peril

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Afghanistan has been in a precarious situation even prior to its being abandoned by the US-led NATO forces. But what is seen in media reports about the unfolding humanitarian crisis since the Taliban takeover since 15th of August possibly presents but only a fraction of what Afghan people have been actually experiencing. Other than disappearing food, medicine and other daily necessities of life, most nations perceived Taliban mission and ideology as the anti-thesis of peace and prosperity. Even those making distinction between extending recognition to Taliban regime and providing urgently needed assistance to masses face the dilemma of such international aid being misused by Taliban to further strengthen its grip on hapless vulnerable masses.

Now positioning itself as a champion of Afghan interests and saviour of its masses, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on 19 December 2021, is hosting the 17th extraordinary meeting of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers. Frontloading this human face Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi says: "Afghanistan faces a serious humanitarian situation as millions of Afghans, including women and children, are confronted with an uncertain future due to a shortage of food, medicine, and other essential living supplies... The advent of winter has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis." He underlined how Pakistan, as a founding member of the OIC and part of the Islamic Ummah is "bound by fraternal bonds of amity and brotherhood with the people of Afghanistan."

While all this concern and hosting OIC are laudable, the ulterior motive seems becoming increasingly clear: to bring Taliban to the forum and to once again ignite a discussion on Kashmir. The convening of such a discussion has been a foremost priority for the Imran Khan government ever since India abrogated Article 370 that extended special status to Jammu and Kashmir. However, a consistent lack of success since the past one year has resulted in this desperate move to get the OIC together. Remember, in August 2021, Qureshi had even threatened to convene a meeting of Muslim nations outside the OIC format. This had achieved nothing but angered Saudi Arabia. Pakistan leaders have possibly forgotten the November 2020 OIC meeting. The OIC nations had in fact, focused on the subject of terrorism and the representatives present in that meeting had indicated their annoyance at Pakistan's lacklustre efforts in curbing terrorism, its discriminatory treatment of minorities and severe blasphemy laws.

The forthcoming OIC meeting of December 19, 2021 will witness the participation of several other nations as well. These may include delegations from the US, Russia, Britain, the European Union, the World Bank and other humanitarian organisations. India will be conspicuous by its absence. In spite of its being an important neighbour and stakeholder in the peace process and reconstruction of Afghanistan, India has deliberately not been invited. This only further betrays Pakistan's motives.

*Prof Swaran Singh
Prof Reena Marwah*

Continuity and Change in Afghanistan

The tale of Afghanistan is a tale of failed state-building. In 1996, the Taliban rose to power with the promise of bringing peace and order to this war-stricken nation. But it became a repressive regime in the name of a brutally strict



Carlos Miguel S. Oñate

interpretation of Shariah. In 2001, seeking accountability from Al-Qaeda for 9/11, the US toppled the Taliban due to their supposed association with terrorism. In 2021, the fall of Afghanistan's capital Kabul showed the world how twenty long years of state-building efforts crumbled down so easily. The truth is that Afghanistan under the United States was a ticking time bomb due to the erroneous notion of what a strong state "could be imposed from above" without due regard to the heterogeneity of the Afghan society. Elections were held with violence and fraud. Governments were formed with endemic corruption. All this amidst the unwavering Taliban adaptive insurgency. And so, when the foreign forces withdrew, the Taliban just needs to march forward.

The most urgent of Afghan challenges today lie in its impending humanitarian disaster caused by the Taliban takeover and the corresponding reaction of the international community. Due to their pessimism towards the legitimacy of the Taliban rule, most foreign donors have halted their donations to this nation that has always relied on foreign aid. As a result, commodity prices spiked, education and healthcare systems are on the brink, and both food and cash have become scarce. The Afghan central bank remains volatile with much of its reserves overseas and frozen. One way to send aid is for these hesitant foreign donors to funnel their resources through nongovernmental organisations and supranational institutions. While the Taliban had refused international aid before, it

cannot do the same today. The fundamental problem is that there is no clear government agenda. What we only know thus far is that an interim government is established with an all-male cabinet, many of which are Taliban founding members and hardliners. A closer look on its composition reveals that there could be minor positive signs with the inclusion of other ethnic groups, although Pashtuns remain the dominant majority, and some technocrats, although they are placed in less relevant ministries.

While these sanctions target the Taliban, they are inevitably taking a serious toll on Afghan people. As winter approaches, deaths due to freezing and famine become imminent.

Reminiscent of their previous rule, the Taliban has renewed their exclusion of Afghan women through various restrictions and impositions, punctuating it with their ongoing brutal crackdown on women's rights activists. While allowing women to resume their studies is a positive development, it is to proceed through gender segregation thereby raising questions on its feasibility such as whether they have enough classrooms or adequate female teachers for the women students. Beyond deprivation of opportunities, the continued infliction of violence of many forms upon women such as honour killing, rape, forced marriage, and public whipping, among others, is more alarming as the

reports of fatalities and injuries among women in Afghanistan are piling up with no clear accountability measures taken. Under these conditions of continuity and change, is there any hope for successful state-building in Afghanistan?

Worse is, the controversial Ministry of Virtues and Vice, known and feared for its religious police that carried out the harsh interpretation of Shariah. This has been Taliban's replacement for the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

The book *Fixing Failed States*, co-authored by the exiled Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, introduces a citizen-based framework for rebuilding failed states through a double compact: on citizenship rights and with the international community. The Taliban of today cannot be the Taliban of the mid-1990s. Its brutal interpretation of Shariah is not only irrational but unsustainable in the long run for it is only through inclusive institutions that elusive development can be achieved. And as it is under great pressure to address the humanitarian crisis and terrorism, among others, the Taliban will inevitably collaborate with the international community.

Conversely, these foreign partners shall not settle with mere financial aid but with innovation to jumpstart development and network to sustain the gains. If such a framework was adopted by the United States, its forces could have exited Afghanistan earlier and smoother—leaving the rest of state-building to a more disciplined and reliable Taliban. This is not mere water under the bridge now as both the Taliban and the world urgently take a chance on state-building once more.

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Taliban & IS-K — Foes rather than Friends

External and internal developments in Afghanistan have been at the top of most of the news headlines and no single day goes by without hearing the unfortunate happenings in the country. The recent incidents remind of one more episode in the ongoing crises that have gripped the country since the 1990s. The Islamic State – Khorasan (IS-K), an affiliate of the Raqqa-based Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, has revived executing attacks in public places like hospitals and even places of religious significance etc causing a huge number of casualties and insecurity for the Afghan civilians. Each day, one can witness disheartening news of people being killed in suicide bombings, gun violence and other violent attacks. However, even before the United States government began packing bags for their final withdrawal from Afghanistan, attacks on Jalalabad prison on 2nd August 2020, rocket attacks on Bagram airbase — which was the largest airbase of the US in Afghanistan — were planned and executed by IS-K. They had claimed responsibility for attacking a girls' school in Kabul in May 2021 and Hamid Karzai international airport soon after the US troops withdrew from Afghanistan.



Ms Meghna Manoj

in 2015 with Hafiz Saeed Khan as its first Emir pledging allegiance to Abu-Bakr Al Baghdadi. It consists of members from the Pakistan Taliban as well as senior leaders who defected from the Afghan Taliban. The Daesh intends to establish a global caliphate that extends from western parts of Asia, across the Khorasan regions which are inclusive of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Western province of China - Xinjiang, parts of Central and South Asia. They aim to impose Salafi traditions of Islam in both private and public spheres of life which causes a gross violation of human rights, including regional and global refugee crisis for which Afghanistan has been historically a source.

A significant number of Taliban defectors have been found taking membership in IS-K since they are apprehensive of the top Taliban leaders who talk and negotiate with governments of other states to win recognition and legitimacy for their government. What is more interesting is that the motives and intentions of IS-K and Taliban differ though their primary means the same: violence.

The US, in a joint operation with the Taliban, had once carried out strikes against ISIS affiliates in their stronghold areas of Nangarhar and Kunar. Many top leaders of the Afghan affiliate were captured in these joint operations. The US attacks had caused a fragmentation of the IS-K's centralised authority into several provinces. The affiliate suffered losses of territories, manpower and leadership. But there was no significant reduction in their militant activities. Once US troops withdrew, the IS-K members began once again to launch full-fledged operations independently in and around the capital. Islami State-Khorasan chapter of Daesh was established

With the newly formed government under the Taliban and their pro-Pashtun agenda, the country will witness a further deterioration of the condition of minorities and their interests. When the Taliban had bombed the one thousand five-hundred-year-old Buddha statues of Bamiyan

Valley in 2001, the world understood the Taliban's intention to destroy all symbols of heritage and history that once represented the diversity of Afghan society. The violent removal of Abdul Ali Mazar's statue situated in Bamiyan, a globally renowned Hazara political leader in August 2021 reflects the Pashtun majoritarian agenda of the Taliban. In July 2021, nine Hazaras were killed by Taliban fighters in south-eastern provinces. Hazaras are a Shiite minority group whose lineage traces back to the Mongolian and Central Asian descendants. This minority is at greater risk from both Taliban and IS-K because of their ethnic and religious identities.

Indeed, IS-K can be said to increasingly aim to undermine the Taliban regime — which is claiming to be a state actor — by challenging their ability to maintain security.

Nations in Afghanistan's proximity which includes Pakistan, the Central Asian republics, Iran, India, China and Russia have been in talks with the Taliban to ensure a power-sharing arrangement that does not conflict with any interests of Afghans and for the development of the region. Russia, China and India play an integral part in the establishment of peace in the country. Since IS-K has declared China their enemy openly, a peaceful Afghanistan is a necessity for Beijing to ensure that there is no spillover of militant activities into Xinjiang which is has been facing political and social instability. The Taliban needs greater economic and political backing from regional powers like China to legitimize their government. Despite the Taliban's assurance to China to not back militant groups fighting for the cause of Uighurs in Xinjiang, groups like Daesh and the Islamic State of Uzbekistan operate independently within Afghanistan and are willing to back such militants. For Russia, a chaotic Afghanistan is

bound to have an impact on the Central Asian region where it has a stronghold. Moreover, militants in Russian Chechnya, aided by other militant groups in Afghanistan, could regroup to execute violent attacks against the Russian Federation. Such a scenario will pose a major security threat to Moscow. Likewise for India, one of the major concerns remains the security situation in Kashmir. Though Afghanistan and India only share a border via Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), recent developments within Afghanistan have a direct implication on Kashmir's security.

IS-K's intention to destroy the security apparatus under the Taliban and inflict chaos and disturbance in the region is a cause of major concern for the people of Afghanistan. They seem to work on counter purposes. Taliban have been in talks with foreign governments to earn recognition and legitimacy. The Taliban and IS-K have differing agendas. While both resorts to violent tactics to instil fear among the people, the only difference between them is that the Taliban has captured Kabul and are seeking political legitimacy while the IS-K is using guerrilla tactics with a larger goal of establishing a caliphate in the heart of Asia.

China & Taliban: From Marines to the Centre Stage

Taliban took over power in Afghanistan in mid-August 2021. This return of the Taliban to power in Afghanistan was on expected lines according to most political pundits around the world. But, the speed of their return shook leading powers particularly the US which was



Bhavana Kumari

set to complete its troops' withdrawal after two decades of engaging in a war on Afghan soil. China, the world's second-largest economy and the arch competitor of the US has reached out to this changing political landscape of Afghanistan. China's reactions to the Taliban's comeback seem to be very calculated and come with preparedness. To begin with, China reacted calmly, as if she knew that the Taliban's return to power was inevitable after the complete withdrawal of US-led forces.

China's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying in an official statement said that "China respects the Afghan people's wishes and choices." China hopes that the "commitments will be implemented to ensure a steady transition of the situation in Afghanistan and contain all kinds of terrorism and crimes so that the Afghans can get away from the war and rebuild their beautiful homeland," Hua Chunying was to say all this in her press briefing in Beijing on August 16, 2021, soon after Taliban seizure of power in Afghanistan. ETIM has continued to be a serious security challenge for Beijing and is also listed as a terrorist organisation by the US State Department. China had refrained from recognising the Taliban regime in 1996 when the group came into political power for the first time. However, despite heavy reservations on the Taliban, China continued to maintain informal contacts and never tried to alienate it. In 2000, China's ambassador to Pakistan even met Mullah Omar, a Talibani leader, and

raised concerns about the rising extremist activities in the Xinjiang region. China also maintained relations with other governments in Afghanistan since 2001. China has trained Afghan forces, provided military aid, and also inked several crucial deals in the mining and oil field sectors. Afghanistan is also a formal member of Xi Jinping's flagship project Belt and Road Initiative.

However, since 2014, and more apparently since Trump's announcement of the complete withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan, China's role in the region became crucial. The pitch for the Taliban's return seemed to be set following a series of previous talks held at Doha, Qatar.

Historically, China has been uncomfortable with the Taliban's ideology and its way of ruling primarily because of its links with ETIM (East Turkestan Islamic Movement), an Uyghur Islamic separatists organisation formed in China's Xinjiang autonomous region.

China also played a major role in mediating between the several stakeholders of the Afghanistan political landscape including the Taliban, as she considers the latter an influential and major source of political and military power in the country. In June 2020, the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi formally welcomed the Taliban leader into mainstream politics and also hosted its top leaders

in Tianjin city, China, on 28 July 2021. The public announcement of the meeting confirmed China's active engagement with the Taliban and also boosted the latter's confidence to take on the Ghani regime which already started losing its support in the hinterlands of the country and was also accused of running a government with top down corruption in the system. Taliban 2.0 is more confident because this time it has the support of two major power rivalries of the US, that is, China and Russia. It has also promised to keep the interest of these nations into consideration and not allow Afghan soil to be used for any kind of terrorist activities against any foreign nation. If the promises are kept intact then China-Afghanistan relations are expected to reach new heights. Even though China has refuted the speculations of political pundits who believe that Beijing will exploit the power vacuum left by the US in Afghanistan to serve its economic and geo-strategic interests, Beijing's actions in the month of August-September 2021 when every other country were sending evacuation planes and shutting down their embassies and consulates offices in Kabul, presents a different picture. China decided not to evacuate her citizens and kept the Chinese embassy in Kabul open.

The heavy presence of the US-led NATO nations and India's close ties with the post-2001 Afghan governments somewhat sidelined the Chinese interests.

Earlier, Taliban spokesperson Suhail Shaheen had acknowledged China as a "friendly neighbour" and welcomed its investment for reconstructing the country. All these present a different picture for political strategists and make China's influence in Taliban's Afghanistan highly uncertain. For the Taliban, which is still struggling for its political legitimacy and international recognition, China is

a new patron that has both monetary and diplomatic power from regional to international institutions.

Sun Zi once wrote, "we cannot enter into alliances until we are acquainted with the designs of our neighbours" (Sun Zi Art of War, p. 38). Both Taliban and China are still in process of understanding each other and China will not ally with the former unless she is sure of its political conduct and international behaviour. China also does not intend to abandon the Western grouping on Afghanistan.

So far, China has taken initial steps of supporting Taliban-led Afghanistan by extending \$31million in emergency aid on humanitarian grounds. China has supplied blankets, jackets, food, and other essentials including the Covid-19 vaccines and other healthcare essentials to the war-torn country.

Lastly, whether or not China exploits the political and economic opportunity available in Afghanistan under Taliban rule becomes a thing to watch in coming years, but it is certain that in no circumstances China would want to see an unstable and peace-ridden Afghanistan. China's active engagement with the Taliban and advocating with the international community to recognise and support the Taliban government shows Beijing's urgency to calm the region and kick start the economic and strategic business deals.

“International Law Aspects of the Afghan Crisis” by Prof Cassio Eduardo Zen



Association of ASIA SCHOLARS **MILLENNIAL ASIA**
The International Association of Asian Studies

AAS Webinar Series (every 1st & 3rd Wednesday): Session 55
17 November 2021 (Wednesday), 05:30 PM- 07:00 PM (IST)

INTERNATIONAL LAW ASPECTS OF THE AFGHAN CRISIS

Speaker:
Prof Cassio Eduardo Zen
Professor of Law,
Universidade de Sao Paulo,
Brazil

Chair:
Prof Swaran Singh
President, AAS

Registration FREE

Webinar Host: Prof. Reena Marwah, Secretary-General, AAS

Register in advance for this meeting @ rb.gy/ethrpa

*Participants will be given E- Certificate on request, who either made comments or asked questions during webinar

The Speaker began by talking about the Soviet rule in Afghanistan, where they tried to propagate atheism, by blocking any religious manifestations. This created cultural grievances in the population. Then, for expelling the Soviets from Afghanistan, the US and other countries started to foment to give incentives to religious groups to arm themselves with religion and expel the Soviets. But the US did not have a specific plan for Afghanistan and the war was not well planned. The speaker went on to talk about the situation in Afghanistan during the Taliban rule and post the rule, once the US intervened. The speaker also spoke about Afghanistan's policies and the various international conventions it was a part of, such as 11 of the 18 basic core instruments on human rights, while even countries like India, China and US are parties to fewer instruments. It was pointed out that any actions in Afghanistan prior to US's intervention and post the intervention was still subject to these conventions, however, proper investigations were not carried out by the International Courts, despite it being a member of the Rome Statute. This was also due to the US threatening to impose sanctions on ICC officials.

It was further stated that during the Taliban rule there were various crimes by the Taliban, NATO and third parties that went uninvestigated and this is the history of how international law had not been followed there. The speaker further went on to point out that even now, Afghanistan has to adhere to these Conventions, and the Taliban government must respect these documents. The duty is on all States to respect international law and for the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan to take action and protect refugees, also owing to the principle of non-refoulment. Further, the Taliban will follow Sharia rule, though there are different interpretations and some of them are not compatible with human rights. Further, it was also said that the right in international law to leave the country has not been respected in Afghanistan and the future of what would be followed or not followed is unknown. Therefore, the speaker pointed out that, it was important for international law to be respected during conflicts and that we should respect basic human dignity. The speaker also said that the neighbouring countries must have a look at refugee rights, such as education, food, shelter, etc. and help those in need.

by Neeraj Singh Manhas

“Has China's Manufacturing Peaked?” by Prof Munim Kumar Barai



Association of ASIA SCHOLARS **MILLENNIAL ASIA**
An International Journal of Asian Studies

*Participants will be given E-Certificate on request, who either made comments or asked questions during webinar

AAS Webinar Series (every 1st & 3rd Wednesday): Session 56
01 December 2021 (Wednesday), 05:30 PM- 07:00 PM (IST)

HAS CHINA'S MANUFACTURING PEAKED?

Speaker:
Prof Munim Kumar Barai
Professor of Finance at the Graduate School of Management, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University (APU), Japan

Chair:
Prof Reena Marwah
Secretary General, AAS

Registration FREE

Webinar Host: Prof. Swaran Singh, President , AAS
Register in advance for this meeting @ rb.gy/mtbhlh

Prof Barai started by sharing that China had been in the news for some time for both good and bad reasons. What would be the future direction of China in the short and long-run? Prof. Barai, through his presentation, spoke about why there was a need to talk about China's manufacturing issue? China is now popularly known as the "Manufacturing house of the world" or the "World's factory." This Chineseization of the global manufacturing/production order began in 1978 with the opening of its economy. China's manufacturing competitiveness and its rise to the present state have been highly influenced by its decision to join the WTO in 2001. China's development can also be an example of Lewis's two-sector model theory.

Significant electronic equipment manufacturers source about 40% of their parts from China. The pharmaceutical company has also taken the lead as well as AI. China is also the largest trading partner of more than 120 countries and has \$1.77 trillion FDI stock. However, China faces a critical time facing domestic headwinds and global geo-economic challenges.

There is no direct answer to whether China has reached its manufacturing peak. Prof Barai suggested discussing China's present economic crisis on these three factors - 1. The Real State crisis, 2. Energy crisis, 3. Covid-19 disruption of the global supply chain. It is estimated that China has about 272 real estate companies with a combined debt of 5 trillion dollars, most of which are facing bankruptcy. All these factors have created havoc in China. China's multi-month energy crisis is deepening and hurting the manufacturing process.

Prof Barai then talked about the repercussions of Chinese development to the global market. A Chinese property slump threatens to wipe \$1 trillion off global growth; Swiss bank UBS has estimated that a slowdown in China's property market is likely to wipe 0.5% points off the growth rate of \$95 trillion global economies. After that Q&A session followed the session.

By Shivangi Singh

“The Global Democratic Recession and How To Reverse It?” by Prof. Larry Diamond



Association of ASIA SCHOLARS **MILLENNIAL ASIA**
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AAS Webinar Series (every 1st & 3rd Wednesday): Session 57
15 December 2021 (Wednesday), 11:00 AM- 12:30 PM (IST)

THE GLOBAL DEMOCRATIC RECESSION AND HOW TO REVERSE IT?

Speaker:
Prof Larry Diamond
Sr. Fellow, Hoover Institution,
Sr. Fellow, Freeman Spogli Inst.
for International Studies,
Stanford University (USA)

Chair:
Prof Swaran Singh
President, AAS

Webinar Host: Prof. Reena Marwah, Secretary-General, AAS

Registration FREE
Register in advance for this meeting @ rb.gy/urufg7

The fifty-seventh session was held on 15 December from 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM on the topic “The Global Democratic Recession And How To Reverse It?” The speaker was Prof Larry Diamond, the senior fellow at Hoover Institution and Freeman Spogli Institution for International Studies, Stanford University (USA).

He discussed the key elements of liberal democracy and its recession. Democracy is the rule of the majority which is based on popular sovereignty, electoral competition and political participation. However, it also acknowledges the rights of minority be it ethnic, religious or regional. It has attributes like rule of law, equality, checks and balances.

He emphasised the trends associated with the democratic recession like the decline in global levels of freedom and democracy, rise in illiberal populism, increasing polarization and intolerance etc. In addition, he classified regimes into – liberal democracy, electoral democracy, competitive authoritarian and ruthless dictatorships.

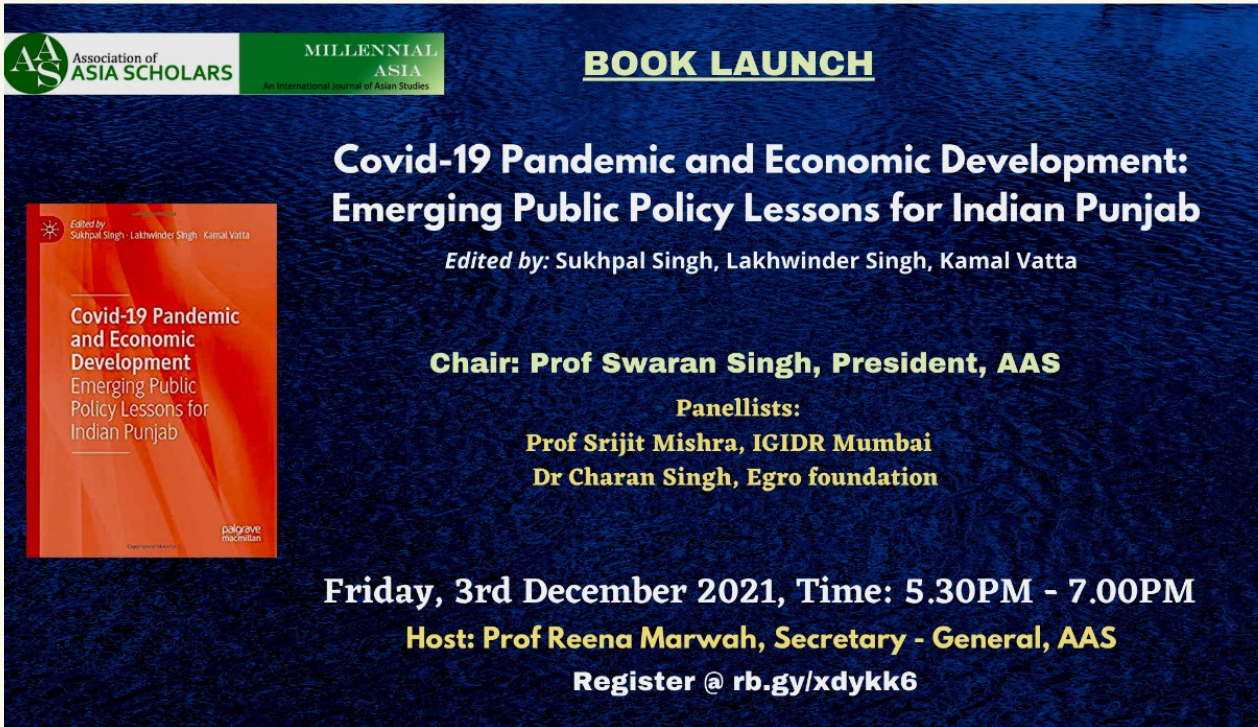
The key causes for democratic recession are the weak political institutions that aren’t able to protect the rule of law. Social media accelerate disinformation which leads to polarization, citizen alienation and distrust in the society. There has been a decline in fascination with the ideas promoted by the West such as democracy and rule of law. Other factors which have contributed are the rise of autocrats like China and Russia and the pandemic which made it worse.

Later he explained how authoritarian regimes curb the freedoms available to civil society. He enumerated multiple instances of such restrictions, for eg. Restrictions on free expression and media, financial restrictions with reference to NGOs etc. He discussed the concept of authoritarian sharp power and the increased cooperation between authoritarian states as examples of dangers to democracy. In conclusion, this talk emphasized the need for democracy assistance and the importance of the defence of civic space to safeguard democratic principles.

Book Discussion: December 3, 2021

[Link to book launch here](#)

“Covid-19 Pandemic and Economic Development: Emerging Public Policy Lessons for Indian Punjab”



Association of ASIA SCHOLARS **MILLENNIAL ASIA** **BOOK LAUNCH**
An International Journal of Asian Studies

**Covid-19 Pandemic and Economic Development:
Emerging Public Policy Lessons for Indian Punjab**
Edited by: Sukhpal Singh, Lakhwinder Singh, Kamal Vatta


Chair: Prof Swaran Singh, President, AAS
Panellists:
Prof Srijit Mishra, IGIDR Mumbai
Dr Charan Singh, Egro foundation

Friday, 3rd December 2021, Time: 5.30PM - 7.00PM
Host: Prof Reena Marwah, Secretary - General, AAS
Register @ rb.gy/xdykk6

A Book Discussion was organized by the Association of Asia Scholars on December 3, 2021. In addition to the editors, the book was discussed by Prof. Srijit Mishra and Dr Charan Singh. The discussion revolved around an analysis of the pre-Covid-19 and post-Covid-19 situation and public policy measures needed to revive the economy in light of the recent initiatives by the state government. The sectors discussed included agriculture including the dairy sector and agricultural markets, industry, services, education, health, besides fiscal, banking, diaspora, gender, governance, and sustainability challenges the state economy faces. Sector-specific issues as well as ways forward for the betterment of livelihoods of those engaged, especially farmers and industrial and service sector informal workers were also discussed. The issues around the farm laws and the difficulties caused to the farmers were also deliberated on.

Book Discussion: December 13, 2021

“The Kathmandu Dilemma: Resetting Indo-Nepal Ties” by Amb. Ranjit Rae



Ambassador Ranjit Rae introduced his book on resetting Indo- Nepal relations and he spoke about Kathmandu Dilemma from India's perspective and how India deals with Nepal. He pointed out the presence of many dilemmas and objectives in the unique relationship of India-Nepal which is mutualistic in nature. He viewed Stability as one of the most important objectives in their relationship. According to Amb. Rae, Nepal is a diverse country, and unequal development in the past led to controlling the political arena and countries' resources by stratified groups. He highlighted the indication of inclusiveness in the contemporary history of Nepal which has paved the path to greater sharing of political and economical resources of the country.

He stated that there is a quest for a more inclusive society in Nepal. He analyzed India's assessment that a more inclusive Nepal was required for better stability in the region and to counter other critical issues like Maoist insurgency in the region. He added that this was more obviously reflected in the constitution of Nepal but leadership in Nepal has a

difference of opinion with this assessment of India in Nepal. They saw it is not the best way to go forward and sharing power with other communities is as zero some game i.e if they share power with other community, their own role and share would get diluted. Even though Nepal is committed to other communities with several agreements but this dilemma created a push back in the process of a more inclusive Nepal.

Also, this dilemma has become an excuse for Nepal to turn toward China. India has to step back from its inclusive policy in order to counter the growing Chinese footprint in Nepal. Our certain objectives might lead to policy objectives that could be in conflict with the other policy framework. There is constant struggle and reaction toward modulating policy approaches. He talked about Common interest areas like hydropower business and investment in the same. He uncovers other dilemmas like involvement and interest of another partner in the region which can create security tensions. These are some of the dilemmas and objectives in Indo-Nepal relations which he shared from his book.

By Disha Garg

DECEMBER IN ASIAN HISTORY

by Dr Chaitra C

1 DECEMBER

1942- The Communist Party of Thailand is founded by Indian born Prasert Sapsunthorn.

2013- Anti-government protests results in Yingluck Shinawatra fleeing to a secret location.

2 DECEMBER

1908- Pu Yi, aged less than three years assumes throne as Chinese emperor.

1975- Laotian Civil War ends, thereby abolishing monarchy.

1988- Benazir Bhutto sworn in as the first woman Prime Minister of Pakistan.

3 DECEMBER

1978- Union Carbide methyl isocyanate leakage in India results in more than 3000 casualties.

2007- Pro-democracy activist, Anson Chan wins Hong Kong's landmark by-election.

4 DECEMBER

1884- Gapsin Revolution erupts in Korea.

1971- Operation Trident between India and Pakistan opens up amid Indo-Pakistan War of 1971.

5 DECEMBER

1950- By India- Sikkim Peace Treaty, the kingdom becomes a protectorate of India.

1971- Battle of Longewala between India and Pakistan during the ongoing liberation war of Bangladesh.

1978- Soviet Union and Afghanistan sign a treaty of friendship, good neighborliness and cooperation.

6 DECEMBER

1971- President Park Chun-hee proclaims state of emergency in South Korea anticipating invasion by North Korea.

1981- Communist Party of Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) is dissolved and replaced by the Party of Democratic Kampuchea.

7 DECEMBER

1975- Operation Lotus begins wherein Indonesia invades East Timor.

2000- President Joseph Estrada faces 23-days impeachment trial in Philippines.

2018- Hamid Karzai inaugurates the High Peace Council to handle the Talibans.

8 DECEMBER

1965- Operation Tiger Hound launched to interdict flow of People's Army of Vietnam supplies on Ho Chi Minh trail from North Vietnam.

1971- Operation Python launched by Indian navy on Karachi amid Indo-Pakistan War, 1971.

9 DECEMBER

1935- Mass protest by students erupts in Beijing demanding Chinese government actively resist Japanese aggression.

2016- President Park Geun-hye is impeached by South Korea's National Assembly.

10 DECEMBER

1510- Afonso de Albuquerque captures Goa resulting 451 years of Portuguese colonial rule.

1932- Siamese revolution results in Thailand emerging a constitutional monarchy.

11 DECEMBER

1929- The Baise Uprising against Chiang Kai Shek and the Kuomintang led by Deng Xiaoping begins.

1950- Battle of Chosin Reservoir ends; China emerges victorious over the US.

2019- In her first speech at ICJ, Aung San Suu Kyi denies charges of genocide in Myanmar.

12 DECEMBER

1948- Batang Kali massacre during Malayan Emergency results in death of 24 unarmed villagers.

1996- India and Bangladesh sign the sharing of Ganges water treaty.

13 DECEMBER

1991- North Korea and South Korea sign a pact renouncing force in a step to unity after 46 years of conflict.

1937- Nanjing massacre/genocide by Imperial Japanese army over Chinese civilians.

2001- Indian Parliament attacked by Kashmiri militants results in 12 deaths.

14 DECEMBER

1955- Cambodia becomes a UN member.

2016- Satellite photos show weapons built on Spratly islands amid South China sea disputes.

15 DECEMBER

1986- Doi Moi, set of economic reforms launched in Vietnam.

16 DECEMBER

1962- Nepalese Constitution is promulgated by King Mahendra.
 1971- Surrender of Pakistan Armed Forces Eastern Command and creation of the nation of Bangladesh-Victory Day
 2008- ASEAN Charter comes into effect.
 2015- Obama administration signs USD 1.83b arms deal with Taiwan, drawing Chinese opposition.

17 DECEMBER

1907- Wangchuck royal family assumes throne in Bhutan.
 2019- Pervez Mushraf is sentenced to death for high treason.

18 DECEMBER

1271- Kublai Khan renames his empire, Yuan Dynasty.
 1956- Japan joins the UN.
 1965- UNSC Resolution 2079(XX) condemns violation of basic rights of Tibetans.
 1978- Four Modernization programmes launched by Deng Xiaoping.
 1980- Vietnam adopts a new Constitution.
 2013- Little India riots erupt in Singapore, worst in more than 40 years.

19 DECEMBER

1961- India annexes Goa, Daman & Diu, part of Portuguese India.
 1984- Zia Ul Haq gains approval to Islamization program in Pakistan.

20 DECEMBER

1938- Bo Aung Kyaw, first death of a student leader in the independence struggle of Myanmar.
 1941- Flying Tigers, first battle of American Volunteer Group in China begins.
 1977- Vietnam becomes a member of the UN.

21 DECEMBER

1923- Nepal-Britain treaty comes into effect recognizing Nepal as a sovereign state.
 2010- Thailand lifts the emergency, imposed in the wake of red-shirt protesters.

23 DECEMBER

1979- Soviet forces occupy the Afghan capital, Kabul.
 2011- Tiananmen and Jasmine revolution activist, Chen Wei is jailed for 9 years.

24 DECEMBER

1948- UNSC orders a ceasefire to the Netherlands and the liberation of Indonesia.

25 DECEMBER

2015- Narendra Modi inaugurates Afghanistan's parliament building in Kabul.
 2017- China and Russia oppose UN Resolution on Rohingya and appoints a special envoy to Myanmar.

27 DECEMBER

1911- The national anthem of India is sung at the Calcutta session of Indian National Congress.
 1949- Indonesian National Revolution results in Dutch recognition of the United States of Indonesia.

28 DECEMBER

1885- Indian National Congress is founded.
 2014- NATO's combat mission in Afghanistan ends and a new Resolute Support plan resumes.

29 DECEMBER

1930- Sir Muhamad Iqbal introduces two-nation theory and envisions creation of Pakistan.
 2011- Kim Jong-un becomes the supreme leader of North Korea.

30 DECEMBER

1949- India recognizes the People's Republic of China.
 1985- The martial law imposed in Pakistan in 1977 is repealed and the 1973 Constitution is restored.

31 DECEMBER

1960- A bill in Sri Lanka is passed making Sinhalese the only official language evoking Tamil protests.

News in Pictures



President Xi Jinping announced that China is prepared to sign the ASEAN's nuclear arms-free zone treaty- November 22, 2021 Source: Nikkei Asia



COP26: A watered-down deal as deal chokes - 15th November - 2021 Source: BBC



US President Joe Biden meets virtually with Chinese President Xi-Jinping amid the mounting tension between the two nation. Source: Firstpost



Central Pollution Control Board subcommittee order to shut down all schools and colleges in Delhi and nearby cities as air turns toxic. Source: India Today



US is considering diplomatic boycott of Beijing Olympics. Source: The New York Times



Indian PM Narendra Modi announced the repeal of controversial three farm laws - 19th November 2021 Source: The Hindu



Hong Kong jails 20-year-old Pro-Democracy activist under National Law Security. Source: CNN



India reports 17+ Omicron cases - 5th November, 2021 Source: The Hindu



50th Victory Day of Bangladesh: President Kovind to joined celebrations. Source: IndiaNews



Myanmar army truck runs down protestors - 6th December 2021 Source: The Washington Post

Feedback

"This was the first webinar I attended at the AAS, but it will not be the last, as not only a professional speaker was invited to speak, but the fact that the program was free and certified made it more useful to me. Managing the webinar and allocating question and answer time and respect for the participants are other good points of AAS' programs. Thank You for all."

*Maryam Nouri,
M.A. in Regional Studies of ECO College of Allame Tabataba'i university and
Moscow State Linguistic University*

"Following the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, I participated in a number of webinars held around the world. However, attending this specific webinar on November 17, 2021, was an amazing experience due to the professionalism and excellent coordination. A new piece of information is always a welcome note for a researcher. With Prof. Cassio Zen's unique perspective, I was able to discern the problem through a new lens. The information gained from this webinar will assist me in writing a couple more articles about international law vis-a-vis the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. The entire AAS Academic Committee team deserves special appreciation for arranging this event."

*Dr Seema Khan
Director, Pakistan Institute of Trade and Development,
Ministry of Commerce,
Government of Pakistan*

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