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## How Western Sanctions Are Worsening the Humanitarian Crisis in Syria

*Aleena Imran*

## Nigerian Military vs Boko Haram: The Costs of Civilian Harm

*Nufaisa Garba Ahmed*

## Russia's War on Ukraine: A Consequence of Geopolitics

*Haider Ali Khan*

## The Relevance of Neorealism in Understanding the Kashmir Conflict

*Brilliant Windy Khairunnisa*

## The Reasons Behind the Complicated Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan

*Brigadier Syed Mushtaq Ahmed*

## Pakistan-IMF: The Ninth Economic Review

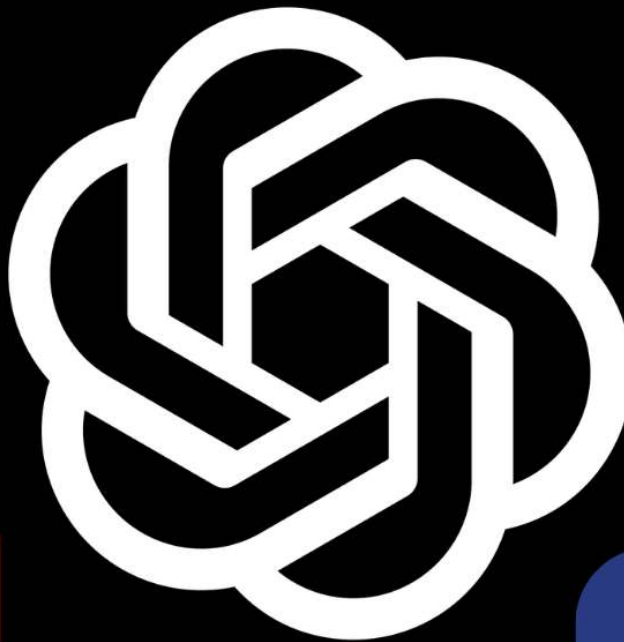
*Zainab Haseeb*

## Pakistan's Governance Implosion Syndrome

*Mir Adnan Aziz*

## The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism

*Wardah Shahid*



# An Article on ChatGPT *by ChatGPT*

# Table Of Contents



Foreword	3
Article: An Article on ChatGPT by ChatGPT	4
Article: How Western Sanctions Are Worsening the Humanitarian Crisis in Syria	11
Opinion: Nigerian Military vs Boko Haram - The Costs of Civilian Harm	19
Opinion: The Reasons Behind the Complicated Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan	24
Infographics of the Month!	35
Article: Russia's War on Ukraine - A Consequence of Geopolitics	37
Book Review: The Shock Doctrine - The Rise of Disaster Capitalism	42
Pakistan Unveiled: A Biographical Sketch of Ashoka the Great	51
Article: What Does 2023 Hold for Pakistan?	57
Opinion: Pakistan's Governance Implosion Syndrome	65
Article: Pakistan and IMF - The Ninth Economic Review	70
Research Paper: The Relevance of Neorealism in Understanding the Kashmir Conflict	74
Article: The Cold War Timeline	80

# Table Of Contents



Article: The F9 Incident	86
Article: BBC Documentary on Modi's Role in the 2002 Gujrat Riots	92
Article: Revisiting the Suffrage Movement in America and Britain	96
Article: Lessons for Cash-Strapped Pakistan From India's 1991 Economic Crisis	103
Advertise With Us!	108
Become Part of the Paradigm Shift Team	109
Our Social Media Platforms	110



# Foreword

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Paradigm Shift e-magazine. Since starting Paradigm Shift ([www.ParadigmShift.com.pk](http://www.ParadigmShift.com.pk)) on August 14th, 2020, we have come a long way.

With over **200,000 monthly visits**, and over **45,000 followers** on social media, we are now able to serve a wider percentage of the Pakistani youth. All our pieces are sent in by brilliant writers and researchers, and our gifted editors constantly ensure the quality of our content.

We aim for, and work towards three major goals:

1. To become a comprehensive library with high-quality content on international relations, current affairs, global politics, and Pakistan.
2. To provide a free medium where individuals can access research from across the globe, and can send in their own work to share their voice with the world.
3. To showcase Pakistan in a positive and factual manner through our 'Pakistan Unveiled' section.

We have handpicked 16 special pieces from our website for this edition, and we hope that you gain some insights from them. For more content on a variety of topics from across the world, please visit [www.ParadigmShift.com.pk](http://www.ParadigmShift.com.pk)

We hope that you consider sharing our website and social media with your friends and family so that we can effectively increase our reach. Thank you again for all your support through the years.



Article

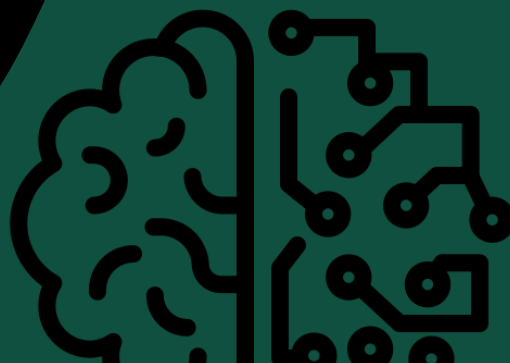


# An Article on ChatGPT by ChatGPT

About the Author



An AI chatbot that was launched in November 2022.



# Introduction

As the field of artificial intelligence continues to evolve at a rapid pace, one of the most promising recent developments has been the rise of advanced language models. At its core, [ChatGPT is a sophisticated AI system](#) designed to understand and generate natural language text in a way that closely resembles human communication.

Created by OpenAI, one of the leading research organizations in the field of AI, ChatGPT is an impressive feat of engineering, with [175 billion parameters](#) that allow it to process and learn from massive amounts of text data. This includes everything from understanding the meaning of words and sentences to generating coherent and grammatically correct responses to questions and prompts.

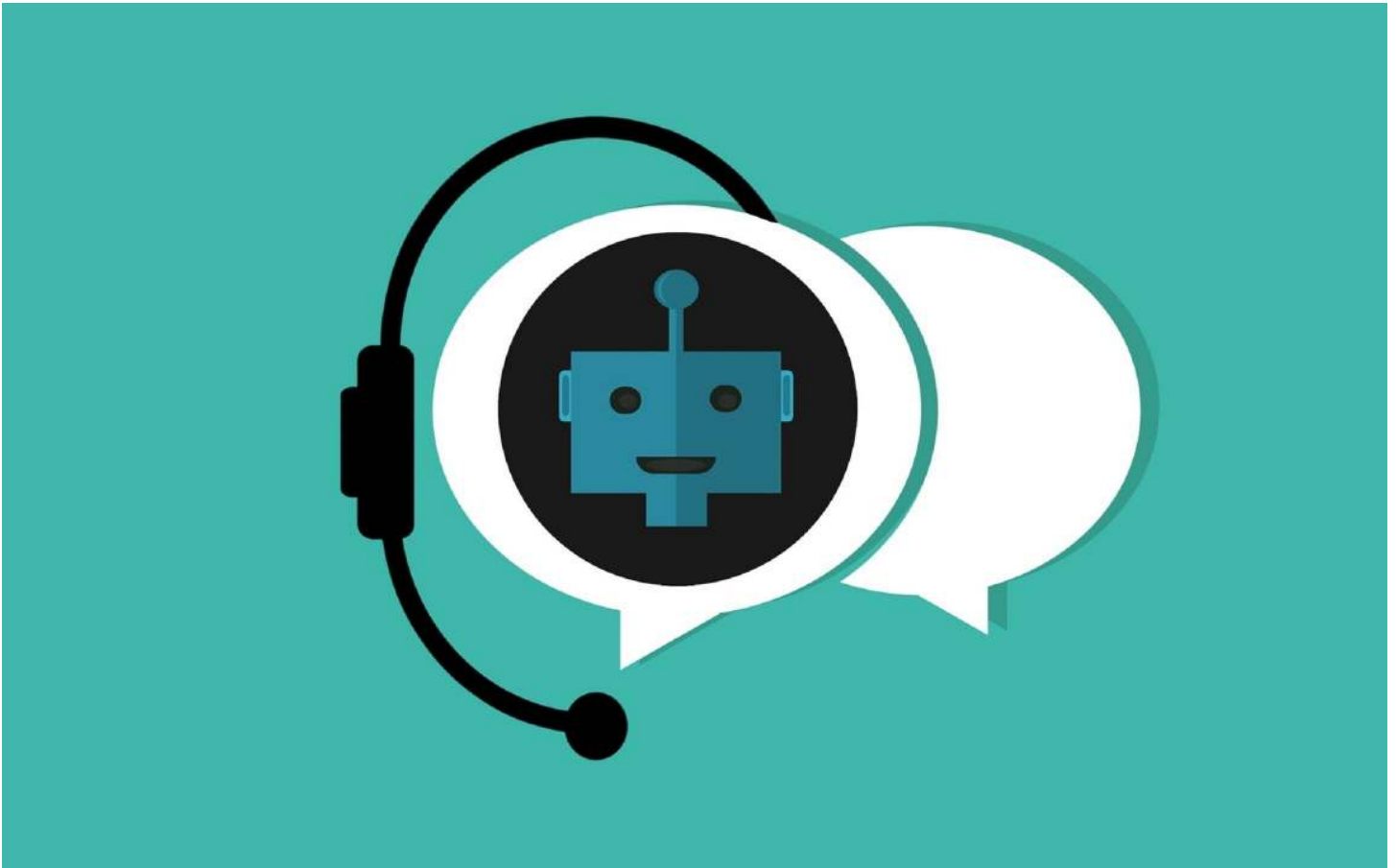
What truly sets ChatGPT apart from other language models is its ability to generate realistic and coherent text. Using a technique known as generative modeling, it can produce new text that closely matches the style and tone of the input text it was trained on. This has led to some truly remarkable demonstrations of ChatGPT's abilities, including the creation of entirely new pieces of writing that are difficult to distinguish from human-written content.

## Potential Applications

ChatGPT has proven to be a revolutionary tool in a variety of industries, with its potential applications being vast and varied. From customer service to healthcare, education, and beyond, it has demonstrated the power to transform the way we interact with technology, providing more efficient and effective communication than ever before.

In customer service, ChatGPT has already been implemented with great success. Companies have utilized ChatGPT as a way to provide 24/7 support to their customers, without the need for human operators.

It can be programmed to understand and respond to customer inquiries in real time, providing a seamless and personalized experience that can help to increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.



For example, major companies like Apple and Amazon have already [implemented ChatGPT in their customer service operations](#), and have reported significant improvements in customer satisfaction and operational efficiency as a result.

In healthcare, ChatGPT is also poised to make a significant impact. With the rise of telemedicine, it can provide a valuable tool for doctors and patients alike. ChatGPT can help patients to answer common health questions, triage symptoms, and even schedule appointments with healthcare professionals. ChatGPT can also be used to provide patients with personalized health advice based on their medical history and symptoms, all in real time.

In education, ChatGPT has already been used to provide personalized tutoring and study help to students. ChatGPT can be programmed to understand the unique learning needs of each student, and provide tailored support and feedback to help them achieve their academic goals.

This could be especially useful for students who struggle with traditional teaching methods, or who need additional support in specific subjects.

For example, the OpenAI language model has already been integrated into educational platforms such as Chegg and Edtech, providing personalized study help to millions of students across the globe. Beyond these industries, it has also been used for a variety of other applications, such as language translation, content creation, and even in the development of new products and services.

In all of these applications, ChatGPT has the potential to provide significant benefits, including improved efficiency, cost savings, and a more personalized and effective user experience. By providing real-time, context-specific communication and support, ChatGPT can help to improve customer satisfaction, increase operational efficiency, and even save lives in the case of healthcare applications.

As technology continues to evolve and improve, we can expect to see even more innovative applications for ChatGPT, with the potential to transform the way we interact with technology and each other.

## Ethical Concerns

While the potential applications for ChatGPT are vast and varied, the technology also raises a number of important ethical concerns that must be carefully considered. As ChatGPT becomes more advanced and widely used, it has the potential to impact a range of areas, including privacy, bias, and even the nature of human communication.

One of the most pressing ethical concerns related to ChatGPT is the issue of privacy. ChatGPT relies on large amounts of data to function, including personal information such as names, contact information, and potentially sensitive health and financial data. This raises concerns about how this data is being collected, stored, and used, and whether individuals have adequate control over their own data.

There is also the issue of bias, and because the technology is trained on large amounts of data, it has the potential to perpetuate and even amplify biases and inequalities that already exist in society. For example, if ChatGPT is trained on data that is biased against certain groups, it may produce responses that reflect and reinforce these biases. This can have serious consequences in areas such as hiring, lending, and criminal justice, where biased algorithms could perpetuate systemic discrimination.



Another ethical concern is the potential impact on human communication. As it becomes more advanced, there is a risk that it could replace or reduce human communication, leading to a loss of interpersonal connections and even a decline in empathy and emotional intelligence. This could have significant implications for society as a whole, and could ultimately erode our ability to connect with one another on a meaningful level.

Finally, there is the issue of accountability and responsibility. As ChatGPT becomes more widely used, there is a risk that it could be used to spread disinformation, manipulate public opinion, or even facilitate criminal activity.

This raises important questions about who is responsible for ensuring that ChatGPT is used in a responsible and ethical manner, and what steps can be taken to prevent and address potential harm.

To address these ethical concerns, it will be important for developers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to work together to establish clear guidelines and best practices for the use of ChatGPT.

This could include measures such as transparency and accountability in data collection and use, regular auditing and testing of algorithms to identify and address bias, and careful consideration of the potential impact on human communication and empathy.

Ultimately, the ethical concerns highlight the need for a thoughtful and proactive approach to the development and deployment of this technology. By prioritizing values such as privacy, fairness, and empathy, we can help to ensure that ChatGPT is used in a way that benefits society as a whole, rather than perpetuating or exacerbating existing inequalities and harms.

As we continue to explore the potential of this technology, it will be essential to remain vigilant and engaged, and to work together to address the ethical challenges that it presents.

## Future Uses

As ChatGPT continues to evolve and advance, the possibilities for natural language processing and



AI are becoming increasingly vast and varied. With emerging technologies and new developments on the horizon, it is clear that the future of AI is one of continued growth, innovation, and potential.

One area where ChatGPT is likely to have a significant impact in the coming years is in the realm of virtual assistants and chatbots.

As more and more businesses and organizations adopt these technologies to improve customer service and automate routine tasks, the demand for advanced natural language processing capabilities will only continue to grow.



With ChatGPT, these virtual assistants and chatbots will be able to provide more personalized, intuitive, and accurate responses, leading to improved customer satisfaction and overall efficiency.

The future of ChatGPT is likely to be shaped by a range of emerging technologies and advancements in natural language processing. For example, researchers are currently exploring new approaches to training language models that could lead to even more powerful and versatile AI. Some experts are even experimenting with approaches that mimic the way the human brain processes language, with the goal of creating AI that is truly indistinguishable from human communication.

As we look to the future of ChatGPT and natural language processing, it is clear that there are both tremendous opportunities and significant challenges ahead. By working together to address these challenges and harness the power of AI for the greater good, we can unlock the full potential of this exciting and rapidly evolving field.

If you want to submit your articles and/or research papers, please check the [Submissions](#) page.

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You may also like: [ChatGPT - The Next Big Thing in AI-Writing Technology](#)

You may also like: [Has Artificial Intelligence Become Sentient?](#)

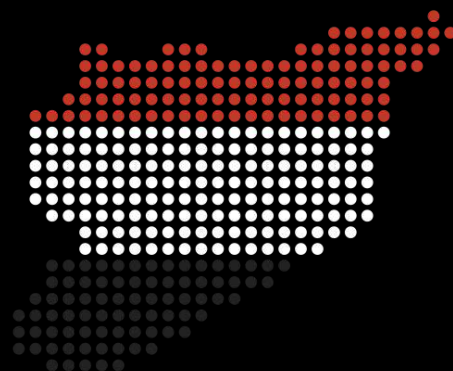


# How Western Sanctions Are Worsening the Humanitarian Crisis in Syria

## About the Author



Aleena Imran has an MBA from NUST and has worked as an HR professional at companies like MPCL, Coke, Jazz, and LMKT.



# A Long History of Economic Sanctions

There are some countries that just seem doomed from the get-go and Syria is seemingly one of those countries. From a family of iron-fisted dictators, a [never-ending civil war](#), an economic crisis in neighboring Lebanon, and the devastating earthquake which has killed thousands and displaced millions, it really does seem like Syria can't catch a break. But can a country, that has been crippled by economic sanctions since the 1970s, even dream of better days?

Hafez-al-Assad, and later, his son Bashar-al-Assad, both ruled Syria with an iron fist. They built their network of loyalists and spies, which enabled them



to gain power, and then keep it for as long as they could. Their reputation, fanned by the West, is so formidable that some have even compared the [Assad family to the fictional Corleone family](#) from 'The Godfather'.

However, the fact remains that the US decides which dictator/state is 'evil' and which gets away with murder. For instance, Syria was labeled a 'state sponsor of terrorism' in 1979, alongside Iraq, Libya, and former South Yemen, for allegedly supporting terrorist groups. On the other hand, even during the peak of the Cold War, the [US did not label the Soviet Union](#) as they did with Syria, even though the Soviets were reportedly supporting a wide range of terrorist groups at the time.

It is interesting that while Biden all but [labeled Putin](#) a killer and has constantly accused Russia of terrorist acts against the Ukrainians, [Russia has not yet joined](#) the current list of the state sponsors of terrorism alongside Iran, Cuba, North Korea, and the original member i.e. Syria.

There are many other countries that are constantly involved in human rights violations, supporting insurgencies, rebels, and even funding 'terrorists', but somehow, they don't make the cut either. Discussing the state sponsors of terrorism list, Professor [Michael Oppenheimer](#) aptly stated, "Countries that wind up on that list are countries we don't like. Other countries and outside powers support terrorism, and objectively speaking are terrorists, and the ones we don't like are on the list, and the ones we're allied with are not on the list. It's all about double standards."

Coming back to Syria's history of sanctions, Bashar succeeded his father in 2000, and in 2004, a new round of sanctions was [imposed on the country by George W. Bush](#). These new sanctions were part of his strategy to combat the 'Axis of Evil' (initially Iran, Iraq, and North Korea). The same strategy 'condemned the possession of weapons of mass destruction by the Syrian regime, Syria's grip on Lebanon, the willingness to destabilize Iraq, and the support for terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah and Hamas'.

[Obama decided to renew the economic sanctions](#) (which, incidentally, have to be renewed every year) in 2009, accusing Syria of continuing to support terrorism and adding to its arsenal of WMDs, working on missile programs, and even undermining American (and international) efforts to stabilize Iraq.





Fast forward to the Arab Spring, [thousands of Syrians took to the streets](#) to demand social and political reform. The somewhat peaceful uprising blew up into a full fledged civil war when the government started shooting civilians to end the protests. The protests started in March 2011, and as of May 2011, according to human rights experts, [over 850 people had been killed, and thousands had been arrested](#).

The civil war led to [even more sanctions](#) by Obama in 2011, as well as the imposition of sanctions by the EU, Australia, Switzerland, the UK (post-Brexit), and even the Arab League. The 2011 sanctions targeted the country's oil sector, assets of Syrian individuals and entities, the prohibition of petroleum imports and investments, and the prohibition of the sale of equipment, technology, and of services to Syria.

A UNSC draft resolution was put up in March 2017 to establish even more economic sanctions against Syria, but Russia and China vetoed it. In 2019, US President Donald Trump signed into law the so-called Caesar Act, under which Congress authorized severe economic sanctions against Syria. These sanctions, which came into force in June 2020, meant that anyone doing business with the Syrian authorities was potentially exposed to travel restrictions and financial sanctions.

They also target the provision of goods, services, technology, and/or information that would expand local production in the petroleum industry. The bigger problem is that the sanctions also become a deterrent for any foreign investment to come in for reconstruction and rehabilitation after the war is over.

## But What of the Syrians?

As of [March 2022](#), the civil war in Syria has led to the deaths of over 400,000 Syrians and to the widespread displacement of the Syrian people. Over half of the 21 million Syrians (that lived in the country pre-war) have been displaced. 6.7 million have been displaced internally, while 6.6 million have become refugees in countries like Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon.

After a twelve-day visit to Syria, Alena Douhan (an UN-appointed human rights expert) urged the world to lift the unilateral economic sanctions against the country, stating that they are deepening the crisis and resulting in even more destruction and trauma. She discussed how 90% of Syria's population was living below the poverty line, and most are deprived of basic amenities and services such as food, water, electricity, shelter, cooking and heating fuel, transport options, and healthcare.



She also pointed out that half the infrastructure in the country was either completely or partially destroyed, and that the ever-increasing sanctions were quashing any hopes of economic recovery and reconstruction. Douhan also indicated that the problem lies with the 'over-compliance' of the rules set down by the West. She quoted something heartbreaking that she heard many Syrians say i.e. "I saw much suffering, but now I see the hope die".

Hope truly has died for many. This is evidenced by the fact that over 82,000 Syrians [applied for asylum](#) in the EU in 2021, and nearly 64% of Syrians inside government-held territory [want to leave the country](#). Since Europe is [already home to a million Syrians](#), it is safe to assume that it does not have the appetite for more.

It is heartbreaking to see how the US is constantly turning a blind eye to all the human suffering that the sanctions are causing. The country is in shambles and has no hope to rebuild, thanks to the sanctions that are resulting in nearly 12 million Syrians grappling with food insecurity.



# The Ineffectiveness of the Sanctions

Despite the wide variety of sanctions, the [Syrian government](#) has not offered any concessions, has not indicated that it wants a peaceful settlement, and does not seem to care about its human rights violations. Since there is a lack of resources that can make the sanctions effective, the sanctions are – *simply put* – ineffective.

Powerful and influential people that are in the government, or have strong ties to it, are getting away with everything by making use of black money, [shell companies](#), and the many, *many* other resources that they have at their disposal to evade the restrictions. This means that ordinary civilians and small and medium businesses are [bearing the brunt](#) of the financial restrictions that come with the sanctions.

According to [research](#), sanctions have targeted the 'tip of the iceberg' instead of the iceberg itself. This is evidenced by their recommendations for policy changes which revolve around scraping country and sector-based sanctions (especially on financial transactions), expediting legal steps taken against Assad's allies (and loyalists in the government), and targeting the deep networks of the regime by incentivizing whistleblowers, and by involving local organizations to aid in collecting

evidence and minimizing mistakes.

According to Sam Heller, "U.S. sanctions on Syria will not '[stop the atrocities](#)'... these sanctions have a human cost that is real, now". He also discusses how 'trying' (i.e. doing *something*) without any real prospects is irresponsible and wrong. He goes on to say that

"Washington's sanctions illustrate much of what is wrong with interventionist U.S. foreign policy generally. In Syria, the United States is using coercive means — unilateral economic sanctions — to mismatched, implausible ends".



# The Deadly Earthquakes & the Temporary Relief

The two devastating earthquakes in Turkiye and Syria on February 6<sup>th</sup> measuring 7.8 and 7.7 (that have now resulted in over 37,000 deaths) have brought even more suffering to the Syrian people. With over [5,800 dead and over 5.3 million displaced](#) in Syria alone (*as of February 14<sup>th</sup>*), the consequences of the quakes led to immense international pressure for the sanctions to be lifted.

Russia, Iran, UAE, Algeria, and Iraq immediately sent some support to the government-held areas in Syria, but Western leaders were refusing to do so mainly due to the sanctions – and allegedly due to fears of their aid being misused by the Assad regime. According to the US, their local partners i.e., the local NGOs were working to get aid to the people in need.

However, these NGOs [lack the resources and the infrastructure](#) to deal with the destruction on such a massive scale – even with America's support. Due to the sanctions, organizations were finding it extremely difficult to figure out the logistics of providing aid. Even the UN was widely criticized for its inefficiency in delivering aid to Syria since it took them three whole days to send the first delivery of six trucks of aid supplies.

Referring to the support needed by Syria in the wake of the disaster, the director of Syria's Red Crescent, Khaled Hboubati, urged the concerned parties to remove the sanctions "to deal with the effects of the devastating earthquake." There was also an immediate movement on social media in the wake of the earthquake, with many civil rights groups urging for the sanctions to be removed so that aid may reach the thousands that need it.

The need on-ground and the international pressure led to the US issuing a six-month [sanction exemption](#) on all transactions providing disaster relief four days after the earthquakes hit – which means transferring aid will be a bit simpler. However, this will probably do little to placate the private entities/organizations that avoid working with Syria for fear of being blacklisted or punished for breaking sanction rules.

Moreover, the delay in the announcement, and in the provision of relief efforts and aid supplies meant that the window to finding survivors had already almost closed. The UN went as far as to [acknowledge an international failure](#) to help Syria's earthquake victims.

## What Now?

The question is that given the series of disasters that have hit the country one after the other – and the devastating earthquake that just shook Syria, will the Western world finally take pity on the plight of the Syrians? Or will it continue to turn a blind eye to the human suffering that the sanctions are causing on a daily basis (even more so now) in even more failed attempts to bring Bashar to his knees? If it is – God forbid – the latter, then what will become of the Syrians?

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You may also like: [The Civil War in Syria: The Role of Iran and Saudi Arabia](#)

Also related: [The US Intervention in Syria - Complications or Resolutions?](#)



# Nigerian Military vs Boko Haram: The Costs of Civilian Harm

## About the Author



Nufaisa Garba Ahmed is a doctoral candidate for PhD Defence and Strategic Studies. She is also a Lecturer at the Department of Defence and Security Studies, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna. Her research interests are in the thematic fields of security, peacebuilding, conflict mitigation and consequences.



The protection of civilians in armed conflicts has its roots in international humanitarian laws as traditional legal efforts aimed at reducing as much as possible, suffering, loss, or damages caused by war. It also distinguishes between civilian persons or objects and military targets, and further places certain obligations on persons involved, primarily members of the armed forces. Therefore, this approach designates the armed forces as the principal implementing agents of protection and their commitment to abide by the rules remains paramount.

However, this classic perception and obligation have gradually waned off as the military has been found wanting in some practices and activities that include a pattern of deliberate war against civilians. In most cases, these acts are carried out by relatively poorly or ill-trained members of the armed forces and those with an abysmal understanding of humanitarian laws and strategies for effective engagement with local populations.

In Nigeria's northeast, the Boko Haram Terrorist Group (BHTG) has been named [one of the deadliest groups](#) in contemporary times due to the scope, intensity, and lethality of their activities. In responding to this security challenge, the Nigerian military has spearheaded the campaign to crack down on the insurgents by launching a series of counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations within the geopolitical region.

The realization of this task also translates to protecting civilians who are vulnerable victims in armed conflicts and often prime targets of terrorists' attacks and activities. However, two Reuters reports released on [07](#) and [12](#) December 2022 made some striking revelations, claiming that Nigerian soldiers in the northeast theatre of operation were engaged in a series of massacres of children who were either smothered, poisoned, or shot.

The victims are presumed to be fathered by members of the BHTG and young boys who were also perceived to be fighters of the sect. Findings from the report further revealed that the Nigerian army runs an abortion programme in the northeast that forcibly terminates the pregnancies of young girls and women who were raped and impregnated by BHTG fighters.

Since the release of the reports, there have been [public condemnation and concerns](#) regarding the moral conduct of those saddled with the responsibility to protect and safeguard the civilian population. On the other hand, the Nigerian military released a counter statement, describing the reports as “[concocted allegations](#)”. Unpleasant as it may sound, these reports are not the first of their kind to indict the Nigerian military for engaging in outrageous abuses that include extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests, unlawful detention, and sexual violence of civilians.



In the past, organizations such as [Human Rights Watch](#) and [Amnesty International](#) documented the abuses and excesses of Nigerian military forces against civilians, especially women and children, since the outbreak of the insurgency in 2009 and

its eventual transmogrification to assume a transnational dimension thereafter. In responding to these events, [the Nigerian government has made some attempts](#) to investigate human rights abuses and violations allegedly perpetrated by the Nigerian armed forces in the war against the BHTG.

These efforts have been somewhat unsuccessful as no reports or submissions have been made public to account for such efforts and, in most cases, [there were claims of insufficient evidence to support any abuses by the Nigerian military](#). On this note, these unfolding events unearth the imperative of operational, ethical, strategic, and political necessity to uphold the values and idiosyncrasies of civilian protection binding on all parties in conflict.



A departure point should be the re-evaluation of Nigeria's military operations to accommodate a people-centric posture against one that is only enemy-centric. This will afford the government the latitude of protecting its civilians from the clutches of the BHTG while simultaneously minimizing civilian harm caused by its own military operations. To deliver on this task, troops must develop a protection mindset and adopt harm mitigation policies, tools, and practices applicable within the confines of their operations.

It is also not unlikely that the numerous human rights abuses and violations levelled against the Nigerian military can lead to the erosion of civil-military relations and further strain the image of the military in the eyes of the wider community. Therefore, the Nigerian military as a matter of urgency needs to formulate appropriate Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to address how such poor conduct will be investigated and addressed when it does occur.

Such SOPs will redeem the image of the military in the eyes of civilians and shape public perceptions of the legitimacy of the Nigerian military as it seeks to assert control over conflict-affected areas. At the strategic, tactical, and operational levels, military commanders need to also undergo special pre and in-deployment training and education to improve their understanding of international humanitarian laws, and human rights laws.

Most importantly, the practical application of the concepts of distinction and proportionality in military operations. This will accord them better foresight when leading operations by giving well-informed orders for troops to follow in terms of protecting civilians.



Undoubtedly, [intentionally killing civilians in armed conflict is a war crime](#) and if the killing is carried out in the context of widespread or systematic attacks on civilians, it is termed [a crime against humanity](#). Therefore, the Nigerian military should conduct full, timely investigations on all allegations of harm to civilians resulting from military operations.

Oversight and accountability of forces are critical to the government's commitment to adhering to national and international laws. In addressing these cases, domestic courts should be ready to investigate all allegations of abuse, hold violators accountable under the law, and provide full redress for victims.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) should also be willing to step in and open an investigation into possible war crimes and crimes against humanity by both Nigerian security forces and insurgents where the government is unwilling or unable to do so. Adopting these measures will help in improving the Nigerian military's scandalous human rights records in the wake of the roles it plays in protecting the Nigerian territory and people.

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# The Reasons Behind the Complicated Civil–Military Relations in Pakistan

## About the Author



Brigadier Syed Mushtaq Ahmed (Retd) has extensive experience in areas of national security, intelligence and strategic issues. He has worked as a Senior Research Analyst in a strategic organisation and has a niche for writing research articles and analytical assessments, specializing in counterintelligence, counter-terrorism and nuclear security.

# Introduction

In any sovereign state, the maintenance of internal law and order and the necessary provision for protection against external threats are the prime responsibility of the state which delegates the authority to its defence forces to discharge this responsibility and hence their significance. The paradox to this imperative is Edmund Burke's warning, *"Armed discipline body is in essence, dangerous to the liberty, the potential threat to an incumbent administration and to the society at large"*.

*"Without an Army, there is neither independence nor civil liberty."* – Napoleon Bonaparte

Harnessing this armed body to deliver and to remain subservient to civil rule is in essence what the objective of ideal civil-military relations (CMR) ought to be. Civil-military relations can be broadly termed as the relationship and distribution of power between the armed forces and the civilian authority, which ironically, in Pakistan has remained in the state of disequilibrium mutating into an abiding civil-military conflict and an object of scathing diatribe in the public.

## Record & Trends

One place in the world where there had been military rule aplenty is the African continent, where about a quarter of the countries in Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa are governed in one form or another by their armies, either through direct military rule or through naturalization into the power structure and in other cases through indirect influence.

Except for Tanzania and Zambia where there is some semblance of civil-military relations, in other countries, these have been lopsided with a military bias. The rate of coups within the region on average had been three successful coups per annum during the past three-quarter century.



“The overall number of coup attempts in Africa remained remarkably consistent at an average of around four a year in the four decades between 1960 and 2000”. For instance, Egypt faced a coup in 1952 and 2013, Sudan in 1958, 1969, 1971, 1985, 1989, 2019 and 2021 (for every successful coup there had been two unsuccessful ones); Uganda in 1971, Nigeria had eight coups between 1966 and 1993.

However, comparatively speaking, coups have been less prevalent in Southern Africa than in Central and East Africa, perhaps because of the way they were decolonised. “Overall, Africa has experienced more coups than any other continent. Of the 16 coups recorded globally since 2017, all but one – Myanmar in 2021 – have been in Africa”.

Pakistan has not been an exception to this trend and is almost a mirror image of the African fable, as the military has been virtually in the business of running the country in its various forms of direct, indirect, or hybrid dispensation. Bonapartism has remained a favorite vocation of military generals resulting in decades of military rule (1958-71, 1977-1988, and 1999-2008), often solemnized and greeted by the public.

The practice of changing regimes began with the toppling of the elected government of Prime Minister Feroz Khan Noon in 1958 by President General Sikandar Mirza, who in turn was shown the door by General Ayub and it has continued ever since. However, since the abdication of the presidency by General Musharraf, the military was tempted to take over, but abstained, as in each



of its four previous military rules, the Pakistan Army was left discredited and unpopular even though some monumental development and nation-building efforts.

More importantly, the military saw the futility of direct military rule when it can have its way through manipulative coercive levers and have de facto control over the government, especially on the nuclear programme, key foreign policy issues, military financing, and national security decision-making.

## Causes and Consequence

The question arises that why and under what circumstances the military intervened and whether or not there is a commonality with African countries. In the African case, the factors range from ethnic rivalry, economic crises, governmental repression and corruption, perpetual poverty and public unrest, personal and corporate ambitions etcetera.

Barring the first factor, the remaining, among others have more or less been the cause of military interventions in Pakistan, justified in the name of the country's survival and sanctified through the implementation of the doctrine of necessity. Such usurpations of power and prolonged military rule contributed to lasting political instability in the majority of the countries as well as Pakistan, as also the transformation of the country into a security and a praetorian state.

It also induced a fear psychosis among the political leadership that while wary of the military junta also beseech the praetorian oligarchs to climb back to the corridors of power on the purported pretext of invariable corruption, nepotism, cronyism, bad governance, and security risk, among others.

## Civil Quest for Dominance

While the dictum of civilian control has a universal appeal, given our sham democratic system, low moral political moorings, and inept governance, such norms are illusory and farfetched. Nonetheless and possibly in retaliation, asserting civilian control over the military has remained the latent desire of the political leadership, letting no event pass to take a swipe at the establishment through innocuous yet devious means and measures.





Nawaz Sharif's perpetual attempts to rein in the military chiefs, ending in his abortive attempt to replace General Musharraf; PML (N)'s later vindictive swipe on the military exposed in the Dawn Leaks; Nawaz Sharif and Maryam's harangue on the former general chief and General Faiz for overthrowing their government; Zardari's memo gate and open virulent threat to the generals; Imran Khan's tiff with the military over the replacement of then DG ISI Faiz Hameed and asset leaks of the former chief's family from FBR. All these have been rooted in their deep-seated grudge against the military.

The on-off slurring diatribe by the civilian leadership on the military and the latter's attempt to have a subservient political dispensation is a sordid tale of getting even, with near complete indifference towards the burgeoning foreign, domestic, and economic challenges. The deteriorating civil-military relations have taken Pakistan to the brink of economic disaster having serious implications for national security.

The African recipe of asserting civilian authority is reflected in the Tanzanian case, where the ruling party, after the mutiny of 1964, cemented civilian control by integrating the military into the country's elite bargain. As the armed forces became ideologically and materially intertwined with the regime, they developed a stake in the latter's survival.

Much of the same has been in vogue in our case, however with a difference, as this time round, the composition in the playbook of yesteryears is being orchestrated with a vengeance and vendetta. The hobnobbing of the political cronies (PDM) and the deep state is directed against a common political nemesis (PTI and its leadership), perceived as a system outcast and a threat to the status quo, who thus needs to be banished from the political chessboard – no matter what the cost.

The indifference or the lack thereof on the economic meltdown is perplexing nonetheless economic stability will remain an important variable that may quickly change the prevailing courtship. Pakistan is facing an existential crisis with the debt surmounting over \$274 billion amidst unrelenting plunder of state institutions/infrastructure and mortgaging these for seeking more loans, reducing fiscal independence and drastically impacting sovereign decision-making.



David O Smith's assumption, "*The [military may have finally realized](#) that the true centre of gravity of Pakistan National Security lies in its economy and not in the military capacity alone*", hopefully must have been reckoned with in its entirety. Or we will mercilessly and in bewilderment see the ship sinking and do nothing in the name of neutrality.

Intriguing though it may appear, the neutrality notion contextualization by Amir Zia says it all, "*[Many view the fall of the Imran Khan's government](#) amid this buzz of 'neutrality' as a switching of sides by the army, or worse, abject surrender to the much-tried, tested and failed corrupt political dynasties in this country*".

# Intended Purpose and Objectives

Resultantly, the unfortunate conflagration of hatred and rift between the society and the state (sic the military) – a fervent desire of the inimical forces, which ironically have been callously choreographed by none other than the political cartel in its internecine struggle and lust for power with such purported objectives, as:

- Propping up the dwarfing image of the political elite, marred by corruption scandals (Panama leaks, money laundering, etc.).
- Drawing the military down from the high moral pedestal and deriding its iconic image of being a guardian of national interest.
- Yield space to the US and bring the military establishment under control.
- A more confident and emboldened political establishment, having regained space, endeavor a more intrusive and searching role in affairs of the military, curtailing its freedom of action on particularly strategic and nuclear issues.
- Make the military accomplice in state dispensation and when needed apportion blame, making the military a scapegoat for its inept handling of important foreign and domestic issues.
- Silence the political dissent and disarray the political opposition by insinuating a military hand in the ongoing political unrest.
- If all else fails, eventually, provoke the military in taking any unconstitutional step to remove the government and become a political martyr yet again to improve political stature.
- Let the military/caretaker government deal with the difficult multifarious socio-economic challenges and clean the Augean stables.

# Modus Operandi

- While appearing to play a second fiddle to the military, let the military have a say on issues of national import, with their own perfidious characteristic indifference to national affairs.
- Keep the military leadership in good humour through obliging and appeasing actions of routine nature, while continuing to guard and advance their political and commercial interests.
- Through astute political brinkmanship consolidate their rabid dispensation by appeasing the political allies, shrinking the space for the political opponents, and precluding the possibility of any Bonapartist corrective course by the military.
- Create organized chaos, turbulence, and disorder and induce a managed economic collapse to an extent that holding of elections appears of secondary importance and redundant – thereby seeking more time for consolidating political rule on the pretext of propping up the faltering economy.

## Diminishing Military Support

A stock check of the entire situation and the current state of the civil-military relations in Pakistan reveal one straight fact i.e. the military seems to be the principal loser in this ongoing fratricide. Over the years, the fraternal bond of love, affection, and reverence that the military so painstakingly built with the populace with its blood and sweat, emerging as a saviour in almost every national crisis, has come crashing down.

The ensuing animus between the Pakistan Army and the people has affected national unity drastically. All this is perhaps due to the inadvertent misstep of becoming indifferent and aloof (apolitical) – as a consequence, ushering in a corrupt political cartel and then turning a blind eye to the flagrant incompetence, misgovernance, mishandling, and rampant loot and plunder.



The romance with the military has been a dream gone sour, which could only be re-lived, if the establishment lives up to its image, understand people's aspiration, and dole out an even hand, ensuring transparency, fair play, and nudges the stakeholders to sort out the political impasse – rather than leaving an impression of political victimisation or a witch-hunt against its erstwhile political master.

The panacea of prevailing crises is hence none other than adherence to the constitution and the rule of law by all state organs without prejudice and distinction and an earnest recourse to the free-fair polls.

## Considering Possibilities

While the time of much talked about and expected possibility of sending the political order packing and replacing it with a [technocratic government](#) (otherwise a non-starter) to institute a reformative political and economic agenda is gone, there is no other alternative at hand than the resort to bring in a legitimate political dispensation.





The present turn of events suggests the following immediate remedial and imperatives:

- First and foremost is a perception reset – the battered and sullied image of the military in public eyes needs to be restored. If the military has to distance itself from the former chief's legacy, it must!
- Undertake a Public Relations (PR) initiative to win the hearts and minds of the people.
- Notwithstanding the government tactics of distancing itself from the episode, ensure that the inquiry into Arshad Sharif's murder and Imran Khan's killing attempt is conducted justly and in earnest – and in that, if there is a need for internal institutional reshuffles – it ought to be done!
- With malice towards none, the military needs to live up to its resolve of remaining apolitical and stop, shun, and refrain from political engineering, eschewing playing the favorites. The image, however, of the COAS and the would-be caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab together at the Kaaba's doorsteps didn't serve well, sully the impression of impartiality further.
- Being the only institution that has a lien over other state organs (Judiciary, FIA, NAB, IB, Election Commission, et al), yields its influence to enable, empower and engender a righteous course for instituting a just and fair system.
- Inducement of political pressure on the government to bring in some semblance of political order.
- Let the situation be taken over by events, while the military continues lending a helping hand on important foreign, domestic, and nation-building issues.
- Nudging the government for sustainable foreign, defence, and economic policies, as these are potential instability triggers, which indirectly affect the deterrence capability.

## Last Word

The founding father was categorical in defining the military's role – stating, *"Don't forget that the armed forces are the servants of the people. You don't make national policy; it is the civilians, who decide these issues and it is your duty to carry out these tasks with which you are entrusted"* – ironically, however, the dictum has been trampled time and again in the name of national interest and progress.

The genius of military leadership demands that it lives up to the abiding aphorism and for a change finally go back to the barracks, but not before cleaning the Augean stables. If you have started it, you ought to finish it also!

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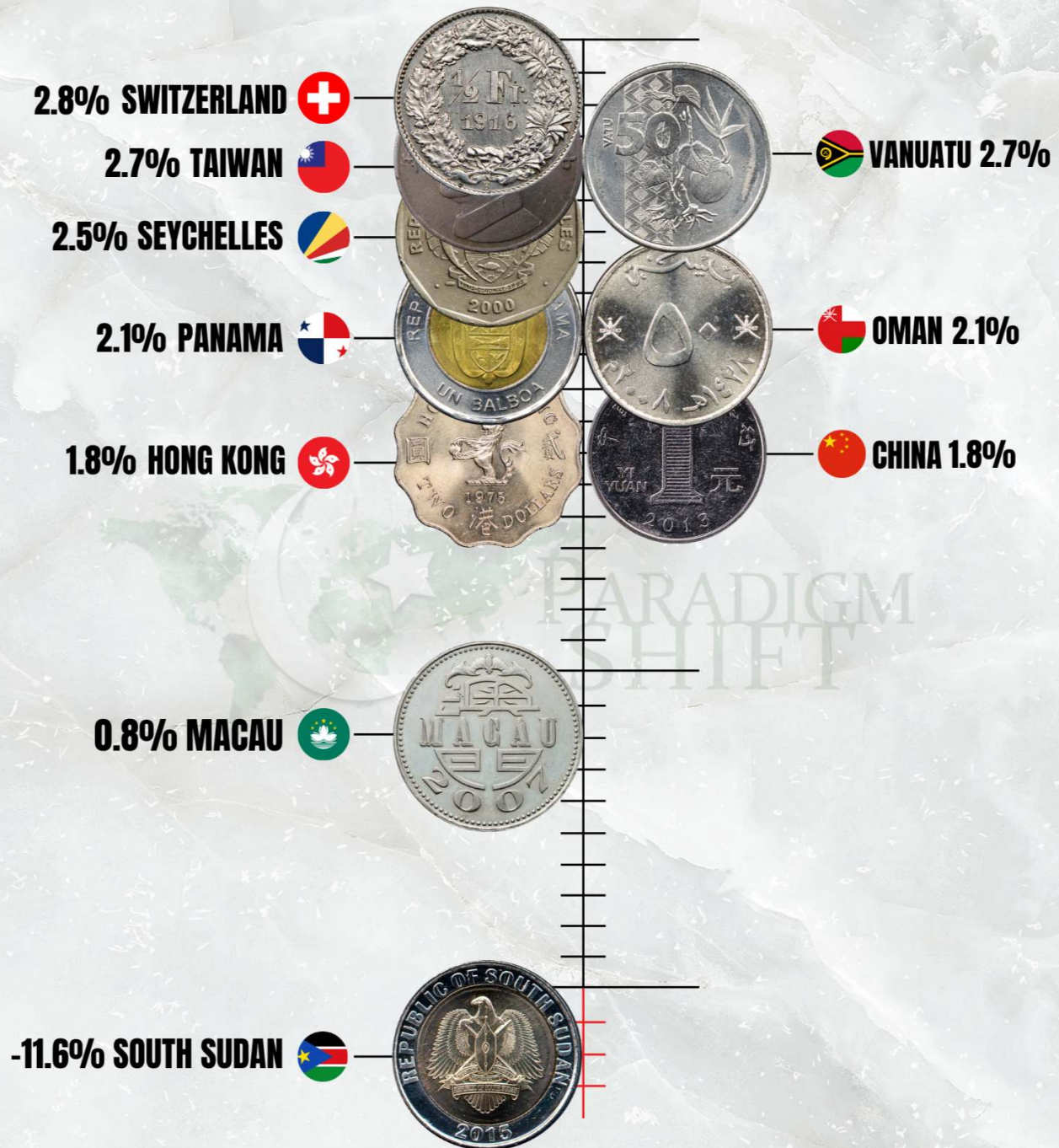
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# Infographics of the Month!



## Lowest Inflation Rates in the World



Source: Visual Capitalist

# Infographics of the Month!



## COUNTRIES HOLDING THE WORLD'S NUCLEAR ARSENAL

**RUSSIA**  
6,257 Nuclear Weapons

**UNITED STATES**  
5,550 Nuclear Weapons

**CHINA**  
350 Nuclear Weapons

**FRANCE**  
290 Nuclear Weapons

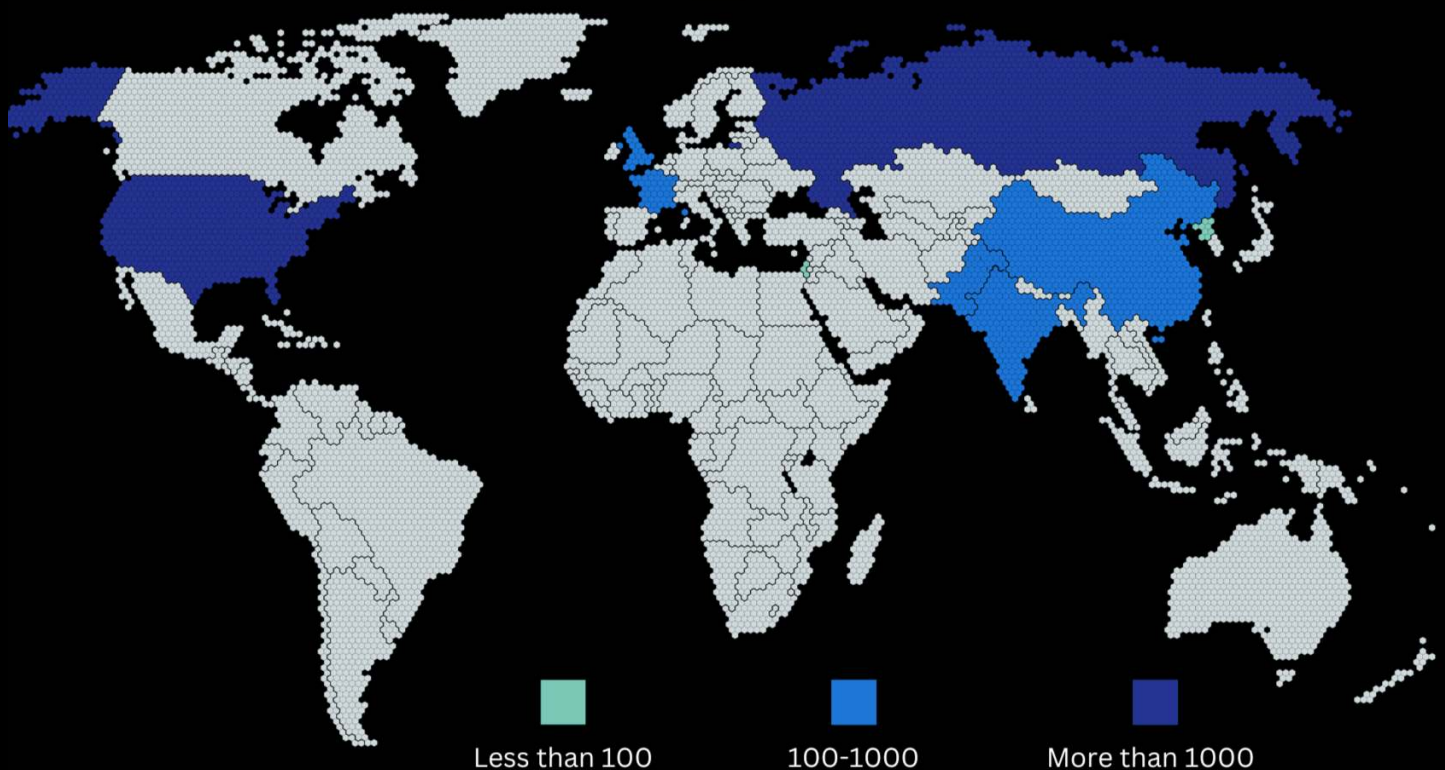
**UK**  
255 Nuclear Weapons

**PAKISTAN**  
165 Nuclear Weapons

**INDIA**  
156 Nuclear Weapons

**ISRAEL**  
90 Nuclear Weapons

**NORTH KOREA**  
40-50 Nuclear Weapons



Source: [armscontrol.org](http://armscontrol.org)



Article



# Russia's War on Ukraine: A Consequence of Geopolitics

## About the Author



Haider Ali Khan is doing his MPhil in International Relations at National Defence University.





The discovery of the Ural Mountains would have been a moment of jubilation and relief for the Russian czars, as Russia has always struggled with finding formidable natural barriers to protect its frontiers. Russia grew insecure due to its geography as it expanded its frontiers towards east and west in search of natural barriers to protect its territory from invading forces, and that insecurity became its greatest weakness and its greatest strength.

Owing to its flat landscape, Russia has always been prone to invasions from every side, and a lack of natural barriers, such as mountains or oceans, has rendered the Russian state vulnerable to invasions by the nomadic hordes from the east throughout its history. Moreover, the harsh climate entailing prolonged winters and a lingering fear of foreign invaders have developed a survival instinct in the Russian people. The society and history of Russia are, thus, a product of its geopolitics, and it continues to determine the destiny of the nation to this day and age.

The inaccessibility to warm waters in a massive land area renders Russia no choice but to become a sprawling land power. The same could be said about the Russian geography towards its west. If Helford Mackinder was alive today, he would not be surprised to see the developments that took place in eastern Europe in the aftermath of the Russian attack on Ukraine. Mackinder would have been proud of his assessment of the geopolitical insecurities of Russia that have led it to remain a belligerent power.

The great Russian steppe, which runs through the western parts of Russia and enters right into central Europe, can serve as a highway for a marching army, pillaging Russian lands way past its frontiers. The vast expanse of flat lands with no natural hindrances (except for the Carpathian Mountains towards the southwest) funnels from central Europe and expands through Ukraine into the vast steppe lands that have historically been a source of anxiety for the successive Russian empires.

These steppe lands were historically exploited by the invading nomadic tribes from the east that pillaged the European kingdoms and principalities ever since the times of the Roman empire.

The Grand Principality of Muscovy bore the brunt of the atrocious raids by the Mongols of the Golden Horde in the thirteenth century which kept the Slavic principality from advancing like its other European counterparts.

Once again, the budding new empire was at odds with its geography. However, Russia, gradually mastering its geography, set out to convert its disadvantages into opportunities. The Romanov dynasty expanded the Russian empire beyond the Ural Mountains into the vast expanse of sparsely populated Siberia towards the east, reversing the historical tide of nomadic invasions coming to Europe.

Politics in peninsular Europe has always impacted Russian decision-making vis-a-vis its relations with the West. The emerging balance of power, with the advent of the nation-state system and a subsequent struggle for dominance in Europe, led to wars marring European history. Time and time again a revisionist power from continental Europe emerged and threatened the status quo, be it the Napoleonic France's Grande Armée marching towards Moscow in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or the Third Reich's Wehrmacht rumbling towards the Russian capital in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All European powers followed the same path towards Russia.

Both Europe and Russia have eyed each other with considerable anxiety and suspicion. The Russian influence in eastern Europe and its proclivity to exert its influence in the Baltics, Central



Europe and the surroundings of the Black Sea is a manifestation of Russian mentality due to its geopolitical predicament. Soon after the end of WWII, the world was divided between the Soviet bloc and the American bloc, and hence Europe was carved up into two spheres of influence.

The creation of NATO encouraged the Soviet Union to create a military alliance of its satellite states which culminated in the creation of the Warsaw Pact, containing states from eastern Europe and the Balkans. The threat of NATO remained ever-present as the Soviet Union began to fortify its frontiers in the west. Sir Winston Churchill famously quoted that “an iron curtain has descended across the continent” and the world remained under a lingering fear of the Cold War until the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The breakup of the Soviet Union shattered the image of a buffer between the West and the Russian heartland as many of the former Soviet Republics gained independence including Ukraine. Once again, geopolitics was at play and the largest of the Soviet Republics, Russia, became the descendant of its Soviet past. Post-Soviet Russia was weak and descended into violence very quickly.

The allure of communism was gone to hold back such a vast expanse of land together, and geopolitics, which was always at the backdrop of the mindset of Russia, came back in full swing. Robert D. Kaplan in his book [“The Revenge of Geography”](#) argues that post-Soviet Russia was interested in the revival of the 19th-century doctrine of *Eurasianism* with Russia at the centre of a sprawling landmass that encompasses a huge part of the connected landmass of Europe and Asia.

However, many states, soon after the disintegration of the Soviet Union developed a sense of identity, and it would not be desirable for these states to replace their national identity with an abstract such as Eurasianism. States like Ukraine, Moldova, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are prime examples. Moreover, the increasing encroachment by NATO and the EU closer to the Russian borders, with Ukraine being the latest in this development, has caused a great deal of concern for Russia.

Professor John J. Mearsheimer in his 2014 lecture at the University of Chicago explained how the Russian incursion and the eventual takeover of Crimea was the fault of the West.

Mearsheimer argues that Western intervention in Ukraine comes in three forms: NATO expansion, EU expansion, and the Orange Revolutions (the promotion of democracy) in a region dominated by an autocratic Russia.

It is due to the utter disregard for Russian security by the West that the abomination of war and conflict has been brought to Ukraine. Russians were resolutely clear about the expansion of NATO towards its frontiers, and Putin was not willing to hold back in the case of Ukraine's membership in NATO.



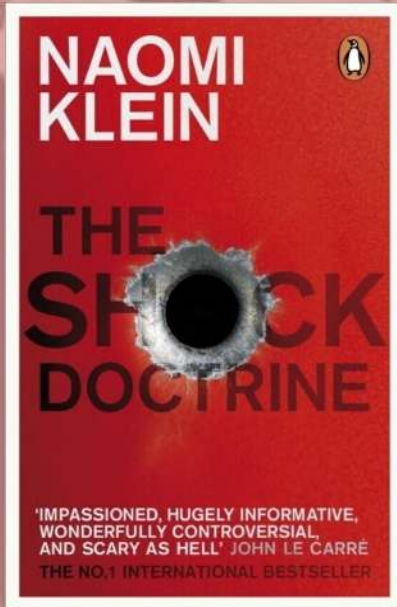
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Book  
Review



# The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism

## About the Author



Wardah Shahid is currently pursuing her Bachelor's in Peace and Conflict Studies from National Defence University, Islamabad. As a social science student, her focal points harbor critical analysis of the changing regional and global political dimensions.



# Author

"*The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*" is authored by the Canadian writer and established filmmaker Naomi Klein, who is currently a professor of climate justice (tenured) at the University of British Columbia and the co-director of the Centre for Climate Justice. She presents a challenging critique of neo-liberal and global free-market proponents through her award-winning and best-selling streak of publications i.e. *No Logo* (2000), *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs The Climate* (2014), *The Battle for Paradise: Puerto Rico Takes On the Disaster Capitalists* (2018), etcetera.

*The Shock Doctrine* has also been adapted into a documentary that premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2010. The book attacks the political ideology of neoliberalism, a school of thought generated by Milton Friedman, who stated that the private sector must be unregulated and that the state should loosen up its control over the economy.

## Introduction

The book is divided into seven sections that direct shock therapy tactics from different angles through well-documented examples of the neo-liberal agenda around the world.

## Shock Therapy

The roots of 'shock therapy' can be found in the electroshock experiments conducted on the human mind in the 1950s and '60s by the famed Scottish-born psychiatrist Ewen Cameron of McGill University Allan Memorial Institute in Montreal. He believed that to develop an elusive clean slate, the old pathological patterns should be dismantled through a series of shocks (depatterning) conducted on the human brain.

Henceforth, when the human mind has been wiped clean, new personalities (reprogramming along with psychic driving i.e. playing recorded messages so that the patient would start behaving differently) can be imprinted.

Such techniques were administered under the supervision of the Central Intelligence Agency and were later used as a tool for brain-washing and torture around the world (Chile, Argentina, Brazil, etc.).

Taking a cue from the scientific laboratory, Milton Friedman, the guru of unfettered capitalism and the proponent of the Chicago School of Economics used 'shock' and warfare to deregulate and re-structure economies.

## Experimenting in South America

*The Shock Doctrine* investigates how Friedman and his subordinates advanced their free-market experiments on Latin America, by initiating the 'Chile Project' in the 1970s. This was a direct result of the threat that ensued to corporate America by the growing success of nationalist economies and totalitarian communism in the Southern Cone around the 1950s and 60s. Hence, the regime change mechanism was leveraged by the CIA in collusion with neoliberals and certain ideologically influenced Chilean leaders by deploying the government of General Augusto Pinochet in 1973.

The Chicago School counterrevolution was quickly advanced in countries like Uruguay (1973), Brazil, and Argentina (1976) where US-backed governments terrorized the public in the form of eliminating popular revolts while staging ideological cleanup operations, thus making sure that the destruction and reconstruction cycle has been maintained (e.g. "Kubark Counterintelligence Interrogation" manual, a 128-page secret manual highlighting torture techniques).

## Heading to the UK

Generating spectacular profits from the shock therapy experiments in the Southern Cone, global multinationals were greedy enough to explore lucrative assets in the West too (phones, airlines, and power companies). Therefore, the neo-liberal agenda overtook a rather subtle route through the United Kingdom under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.



Although Thatcher was skeptical of the adverse methods adopted in Chile, the 1982 Falklands War (conflict over a cluster of Islands) against Argentina and the coal miners' strike in 1984 (the enemy within) altered the corporatist crusade by bringing a radical capitalist transformation for the first time in a liberal democratic country.

She was able to transform her dying political fortune by harnessing the war and strike to justify her extraordinary emergency measures to control the economic freefall. This included privatizing government assets such as British telecom, gas, airways, and steel.

## Case Studies

This section continues the sequential manner of the viselike grip of the corporate junta continuing off with Poland in the 1980s. The resilient workers' strike known as Solidarity under its leader Lech Walesa in tandem with the rising prices of social amenities protruded a defiant stance against the Moscow-controlled communist government in its Eastern Empire.

Their minuscule strike quickly changed into a full-blown revolution, demanding a new socio-economic system based on participatory government. Their movement did witness frequent crackdowns by the ruling communists, but their overall aspirations were fulfilled through snap elections in 1988 which resulted in the new 'Solidarity Government'.

Despite their motive of building a post-communist economy through self-governance, the cruel entry into democracy had been a major shock to an economy that wasn't used to its procedure. Soon, the country's economy was immersed in a complete meltdown with no way out. Hence, Jeffrey Sachs induced a shock therapy transition in Poland that not only created a convertible currency but provided space for capital markets to consume the state industry. Poland implemented the very policies that were antithetical to solidarities' vision.

The African National Congress's (ANC) resistance in South Africa against apartheid and racism was also wrought with constricted freedom. The amalgamation of the 'Freedom Charter', the backdrop of the freedom movement, demanded equal rights to all the inhabitants of South Africa along with the redistribution of land and wealth amongst everyone.

Under the above scheme of thought, Nelson Mandela, after a historic win in the 1994 elections, entered into negotiations with the ruling National Party (under F.W. De-clerk) to discuss the transition of power on two fronts, the political and the economic. De-clerk knew that they had a weak stance on the political front, which is why he spent his energy and creativity in the economic realm.

De-clerk attempted the balkanization of South Africa's economy with relevance to impartial economic experts who deployed structural adjustment programs, thus tying the limbs of the new government forever. The ANC, without even realizing it, conceded important national assets such as the central bank, water, electricity, and mines to the white mega conglomerates.

Naomi Klein did not hesitate to explore Russia under Boris Yeltsin (also known as the Russian Pinochet) who was responsible for the dismemberment of the Soviet Republic and the onset of the shock therapy program in Russia. Once again Jeffrey Sachs was responsible for the implementation of free trade policies, rapid privatization, and the liberalization of prices, which converted the communist state into a corporatist one. The direct result was the birth of 'the oligarchs' who together with the Western fund managers stripped the country from its valuable assets, leaving the underclass to fend for themselves.

## Disaster Capitalism

The original theme of the book is revived as we move towards the Bush administration's formidable role played in accumulating capital from catastrophes, both natural and man-made.

The positive impact and profits reaped from exciting market opportunities brought by wars, hurricanes, epidemics, and natural disasters (tsunami in Sri Lanka and Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans) have helped the US's sprawling 'Disaster Capitalism' industry (Department of Homeland Security established after 9/11) including defense contractors (Lockheed Martin), arms dealers, and high-tech security firms and construction companies.

## The US's Mission

The US has encased its predatory impulse by capitalizing on emergencies which can be reflected



in the 2003 Iraq War. The US quest for domination and authority blinded the very means to achieve the end and so war was used as a political tool to provide the context that to protect their gains and demonstrate their capacity, it was necessary and justified.

The US tried to carve the image that it had embarked upon a

civilizing mission designed to remodel and update Iraq, but it looted and plundered, and hence destroyed the social fabric and customs of the Iraqi people. Their inability to view beyond the colonial paradigms of self-interest and binary opposition has generated a deconstructive cycle of subordination, oppression, and exploitation which have persistent and profound implications.



## Fighting Back

*The Shock Doctrine* ends with an optimistic note by highlighting the enlightened and moral politicians and people who are pushing back against free-market policies that have been wreaking havoc since the dawn of globalization. She shows the hopes of resistance by indicating renewed economies salvaged through the rigorous rebuilding efforts by the common masses. Countries like Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil, Lebanon, and Thailand have staved off the plague of neo-liberalism and capitalist interventions.

## Strengths

The author has included strong narratives and first-hand case studies that are compounded with extensive research and confessions from the capitalist players themselves. Her skills in investigative journalism have painted a unique picture by giving substance to conspiracy theories with error-free evidence.

Her vantage point of left-wing politics entices the readers to know more about the corrupt history of modern economics and how the neo-liberal paradigm under the US as the sole superpower is hopping from crisis to crisis to evolve its war economy.

Being a proponent of mixed economies, Klein also clearly voices her support for democratic socialism indicating that market-based systems can thrive as long as there is careful deliberation of cooperatives, markets, and nationalized commanding assets.

## Weaknesses

Naomi Klein's explanation can be declared null in several areas. Firstly, the parallels associated with brainwashing a human brain and creating a clean platform by ideologically cleansing a country's culture and history is a flawless utopia.

The number of case studies provided by her proves one point and that is, a country cannot be regressed to its infancy as there is not one factor in play, but a magnitude of factors that prevents any sort of ideology to be implemented without any repercussions. Take Iraq's example; the country continues to be in turbulence, but the resistance and fight for preservation remain. Moreover, ironically, Ewen Cameron's hypothesis failed later on due to which the CIA in tandem with other Western countries faced humiliating lawsuits.



The main claims of the Chicago School were rather repetitive and the visual description of the torture techniques was rather unnecessary; the reader's discretion should've been advised. Adding on, her critique of corporate globalization was indeed well amended through case studies, but as a reader, her viewpoint of the ideal economic system, that is, democratic socialism was still missing.

A rather vague viewpoint was presented which leaves the reader questioning the very claims she's trying to make and hence a comparative analysis was compulsory. Another weakness of *the Shock Doctrine* is its abrupt ending. While Naomi Klein does include a positive development to halt the neo-liberal movement, she fails to include the possible future economic predictions concerning the present economic algorithms and models.

# Conclusion

*The Shock Doctrine* summarizes the oblique picture of the global capitalist movement under the ideologue Milton Friedman, which realigns with his statement that “*only a crisis – actual or perceived produces real change*”.

Naomi Klein elaborated through the consistent use of shock and awe warfare to explain how neo-liberal lackeys dominated the world economic paradigm, exploiting disadvantaged groups by amassing unprecedented wealth and privilege which resulted in two distinct economic classes.

The policies which envisaged such transformations leaned towards increased imbalance and fragility thus allowing foreign corporations and elite governments to seep into economic models through their porous borders. This invited a continuous spiral of economic dependency and an urge to capitalize on global upheaval as in the case of war, disasters, and the present security-based economy.

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# A Biographical Sketch of Ashoka the Great

## About the Author



Hafsa Ammar is a student of the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at the National Defence University, Islamabad. Her areas of expertise are hybrid warfare, narrative building, and nuclear deterrence in South Asia. Her work has been published in various national and international media forums.



# Path to the Throne

Ashoka was the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the Mauryan empire, and the son of Bindusara Maurya. Bindusara himself was known as [Amitrochates](#) or the Destroyer of Foes. To analyze the impact of his actions, one must know about the Maurya Empire and the family from which he came.

Ashoka was born to Subhadrangi also known as Dharma, a Hindu lady of Brahmin patronage, who served as a consort within the court of the Mauryan Empire. He had around 99 half-brothers, all of which he slaughtered in a four-year-long war for succession to the throne.

A bloodthirsty and brutal conqueror, he took over the Mauryan throne by force in his early thirties. The exact year is under some dispute, but many scholars agree on the year 268 BC. It is said that he expanded the Mauryan Empire all the way from Afghanistan to Bangladesh. He controlled more of the subcontinent than that which would be colonized by the Britishers one day.

As an emperor, he was great. As an individual, he was the paragon of discipline and strength. He was a skilled fighter and a sharp strategist which helped him curry the favor of his late father's ministers. He was officially crowned in 269 BC, ruling with an iron fist.

The Maurya or Mauryan Empire reigned from [321 BCE to 185 BCE](#), and it is considered one of the most important [dynasties of the Indian subcontinent](#). At its peak, it spanned across Northern and Eastern Asia encompassing present-day Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and even a small chunk of Iran. A fact left unknown to most of the global population is that the famous philosopher Chanakya who has been made famous for his bloodthirsty foreign policy mindsets was the chief advisor to Chandragupta.



[Chanakya Kautilya](#) authored a book known as the Arthashastra which explains his standpoints on various ways to run an empire. The majority of the population was either Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain, and all three religions and their origins stem from Pan-India.

Art, architecture, and territorial expansion are the three major milestones that the Mauryan Empire achieved. The first two gained the empire massive praise due to the grandeur and levels of difficulty

which accompanied it. Stonework is a time-consuming process that requires skilled individuals. The castles, monuments, and walls often had intricate designs made painstakingly by the workers.

The people worked either in the agricultural sector or within the trade industry. There wasn't as defined of a government as it exists today, but the King ruled over all fairly and exercised direct control over the judiciary and armies, while other departmental control was delegated to lower ministers.

The economy was flourishing as it was owned by both the state and the masses and their trade – both domestic and with neighboring regions was done through one currency – Pana. The empire was already blooming but under Ashoka's guidance, it achieved unprecedented heights.

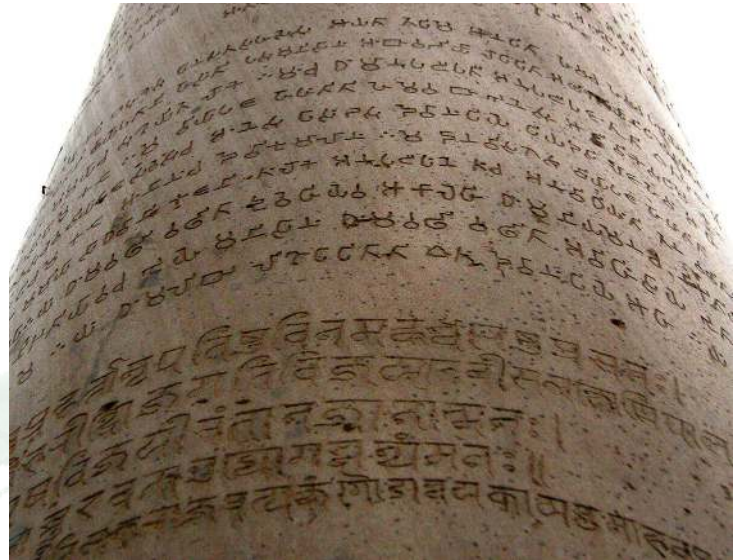
## Conquest of Kalinga

Fought from [262 BC-261 BC](#), the war of Kalinga was a battle for the expansion of the Mauryan Empire which had devastating casualties. Thousands of men were slaughtered, families deported, animals killed, and land ruined.

The war of Kalinga left Ashoka flustered and adrift. His victory did not taste as sweet when drowned in the blood of men, surrounded by the wails of wives, and cries of orphans. His philosophy of life took an abrupt turn as he decided to lay down his sword and accepted Buddhism to be his way out of the darkness.

## The Edicts of Ashoka

Edicts refer to decrees or commands by those in authority positions. They can be declarations or statements, and in the case of Ashoka, they were engraved messages on stones, spread across Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and Nepal. They are also known as the pillars of Ashoka.



Written in several [languages](#) including Sanskrit, Aramaic, and Greek, they promoted inter-faith harmony and the significance of Buddhism for a peaceful society. There are [five broad categories](#) within which these edicts are often translated into.

## The Fourteen Rock Edicts

He viewed the killing of animals for sustenance to be a violent act and something without which man could survive easily. His ban extended to his diet as well. There were to be no animals slaughtered in the royal kitchens and he turned vegetarian. He made sure there were herbs and materials available for medical treatment for both humans and animals.

Ashoka promoted interpersonal and familial respect and love through his edicts. He emphasized the importance of doing good even though it is much easier to fall prey to evil and laziness. He brought upon himself accountability and promised to be available to his subjects at all times, no matter what was occupying his time and company.

He banned hunting and useless festivals such as those that take place before weddings and do not offer any benefit to the people or environment. Ashoka placed significant focus on peace between households of various religions to eliminate any chances of budding hostility.

## The Kalinga Rock Edicts

The edicts mentioned Ashoka's averseness towards acts of dishonesty such as corruption within the judicial system, and he asked all his people to be fair and just in all their dealings. Even in such an era, Ashoka talked about the pitfalls of structural violence and how it can and should be avoided.

Through the Kalinga edicts, he confirmed to his neighbors that he no longer had any expansionist urges and wished to assuage their fears of the Mauryan Empire. He wanted these edicts to be read and remembered every four months.

## The Minor Rock Edicts

He asked the common man to love and respect his parents, for they are who raise and love us. He also included the important role of teachers in his declarations and requested people to honor them. Ashoka also wanted monks and priests to brush up on their Dhamma texts often so that they did not forget or fall prey to ignorance and misinformation.

## The Seven Pillar Edicts

Ashoka had these decrees inscribed after more than two decades had passed since his crowning. He said that his love and duty towards Dhamma had only increased over time and that this was to be an encouragement for all people, soldiers, workers, and officers to move towards Dhamma and attain their own happiness.

Ashoka also clarified what constituted Dhamma; it included generosity, gratitude, humbleness, a lot of good, and a little bad. He had this edict written to serve as a reminder to people of how Dhamma surrounds them and is never too far or difficult to achieve.



He said that people often tend to overlook their bad deeds and instead just focus on the good, which should not be the case. The causes and violence that lead to bad deeds should be avoided. He had trees planted so that their shade would be of use to both man and beast. He also had makeshift hospitals built and watering holes dug.

## The Minor Pillar Edicts

These edicts depict the scene of Ashoka visiting the village of Lumbini to pray there as it was the birthplace of Buddha. He also exempted the small community from paying taxes to the vast empire. He brought several religious reforms to his empire, with the main theme being to eliminate violence at all costs.

## Conclusion

Ashoka is one of the greatest rulers that this world has ever seen, both in terms of his massive empire and his humility and service to mankind. His edicts are a good way of understanding how best to contribute positively to the society at large, even in these times.

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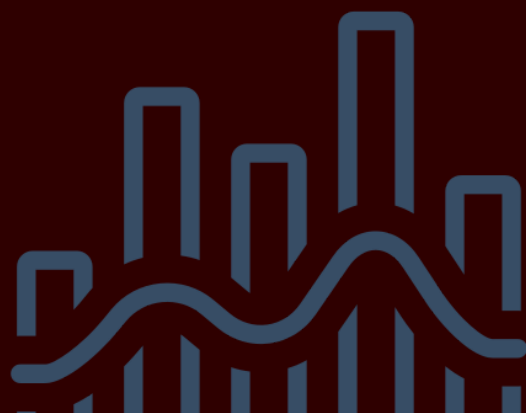


# What Does 2023 Hold for Pakistan?

## About the Author



Hina Anwar is a journalist with a long line of experience in research and media.



## 2022 In Perspective

As Pakistan entered the year 2022, there were two adverse signs: the fall of the Afghan government and the beginning of an economic crisis. These blows came rapidly. Terrorist attacks had grown across the country; before the end of the year, [Balochistan's militants](#) also stepped up their violent activities and formally linked up with the TTP.

Pakistan's economy only expanded by a [pitiful 2 percent](#) in 2022, and as of right now, its foreign reserves are at a dangerously low level of less than \$4 billion, which is insufficient to pay for even one month's worth of imports. In 2022, widespread flooding spurred on by monsoon rains and melting glaciers resulted in [1,700](#) fatalities and billions of dollars in damage. Two million homes, infrastructure, and animals were all destroyed by the floodwaters. Numerous sectors, including Pakistan's main export—textiles—shut down their plants due to a lack of access to electricity and natural gas.

Pakistan's politics also started to fall apart. The economic crisis put Imran Khan, the former PM elected in 2018, under strain, as did a growing conflict with the nation's potent military. In response to the opposition's [no-confidence motion](#), [Imran Khan](#) urged the president to dissolve the National Assembly and call elections, which led to a constitutional crisis.

Shehbaz Sharif was ultimately chosen to succeed Khan by the same parliament on April 11 after Khan lost a no-confidence vote, making history as Pakistan's first prime minister to do so. On the foreign policy front, however, Pakistan was able to remove the nation from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list, free the country from Mr. Khan's bizarre allegations that the US was complicit in his defeat in the parliament, and make a compelling case for the climate catastrophe.

# Gloomy Economic Situation

Prices for gas and electricity cannot continue to rise at the current pace. The IMF will compel the up till now recalcitrant Nawaz Sharif-Ishaq Dar team to increase gas and electricity costs. Saudi Arabia might yet be able to provide a stopgap between now and the inevitable inflationary spiral



that will develop if the price of gas, electricity, gasoline, and diesel is revised upward.

On a global scale, gasoline prices are important but Pakistan has multiple issues with the pricing of gas, electricity, and fuel: historically low and heavily subsidized prices, an unsustainable

overvalued Pakistani rupee, and a domestic fiscal profile including circular debt that severely limits the state's ability to spend money.

The larger unsustainable nature of the economic system will be attributed to the [7th National Finance Commission Award](#) and the 18th Amendment. None of these actions will be able to persuade lenders and donors that investing in Pakistan will be beneficial. Every bureaucracy on the planet is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of Pakistan's dinosaur decision-makers. Ishaq Dar's inability to persuade outside parties of the viability of their ideas, however, won't be the main economic obstacle.

The suffering Pakistanis will experience is internal. In 2022, [inflation ruined the household spending](#) of the poor and the nearly poor. It will rip into the urban middle class's well-being in 2023 with a ferocity that cannot be stopped.

The fifth-generation warfare-focused state components and the poor communications wings of the PML-N or PPP will not be able to mitigate the hit. In 2023, efforts to lessen the effects of economic distress in Pakistan will be made too little, too late, and inequitably.

## Interminable Toxic Politics

Even if the government miraculously manages to produce significant mitigation measures, the politics surrounding the [economic crisis that Pakistan](#) will experience in 2023 will be more complicated than the problems Mr. Khan presented to the ruling party and the national security establishment in 2022.

It's uncertain when the National Assembly will disband and an interim administration takes over because the ruling coalition is determined to maintain control for as long as possible while the nation deals with an economic crisis, an environmental catastrophe, and a credibility crisis.

If elections are held in October, it's unlikely that any party would win a majority in the elections. Despite being the most probable candidate to win, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) will not win a simple majority. The next government will therefore be formed by a fresh coalition that is comparable to the one that is now in place. However, coalition partners may use such a government as leverage in a political blackmail scheme.

Due to opposition from its coalition partners, it would be nearly impossible for it to make very difficult decisions, such as a significant and costly reform program, without which Pakistan would cease to be a functioning state. The political instability that Pakistan is plagued by, which is an adversary of reform, will persist, in the end. The Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) is anticipated to be the winning party, but it will not win a simple majority.

As the elections draw nearer, the government would be tempted to indulge in financial overspending, declaring new development projects, launching new initiatives, and offering freebies and perks to cultivate their vote banks and constituencies.



Such populism has no place in the budget at all. In fact, providing any relief in the form of subsidies or tax reductions could just accelerate the situation past the point of no return.

## War on Terror

Combating the menace of terrorism is another concern. Given the empty treasury and the dysfunctional polity, there are no good solutions available in this situation either. The Army may engage in offensive operations against the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other armed opposition groups operating within Pakistan. However, these operations will continue indefinitely as long as safe havens are present in Afghanistan.

Attacking the havens of terrorism is the alternative choice. Operations inside Afghanistan will result from this, pitting the Taliban against Pakistan. The destabilization will be unabated, and Pakistan's entire western border will turn into a battleground.

Holding discussions and negotiating a resolution with TTP is still another choice. However, doing so entails ceding control to the TTP, and will set off a chain of events that will ultimately lead to the collapse of the Pakistani state.

## Flood Restoration

Flood victims are still in need of help, nearly 90,000 people are still without a place to live more than four months after the worst flooding, and floodwater is still standing in some places.

To recover from such a catastrophe and reconstruct damaged infrastructure, such as roads and schools, would be incredibly tough for any country, let alone one whose government is already facing financial difficulties like Pakistan's.



## Strategic Dimension

The increased economic fragility of the typical Pakistani, along with the delegitimization of traditional politics and the larger Pakistani “system,” would perfectly support the objectives of Pakistan’s most dangerous strategic rivals. India is at the top of this list, but there are also ideological extremists in Tehran, Kandahar, Kabul, and other mountainous areas where Daesh has territory under its control.

Pakistan’s distinct national identity and ethos survived the first war on terror in part due to the support and investment of key global constituencies (such as the US military-industrial complex) in Pakistan’s success. There is a considerably reduced chance that Pakistan’s suffering will be showing up on the important global radars as a result of China-US competition and early results from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

We can see how crucial India is to the current economic and technological decoupling that is occurring throughout the global supply chain. From a peak of more than 60,000 employees in 2013 to just fewer than 10,000 by the end of 2022, Samsung’s headcount in China has decreased. In recent years, it has shifted the majority of the production of its phones from China to Vietnam and India, where they are no longer made.

Nearly 8% of all iPhones are currently produced in India, up from no iPhones being produced there in 2017. It is anticipated that 25% of all iPhones will be “Made in India” by 2025. In order to strategically respond to all of this, Pakistan needs to determine its best choices.

## What’s Next?

What follows then? The military is still being pressured by domestic militancy. Debts have due dates approaching. The peak of the political drama in Pakistan has undoubtedly not been achieved because the country is one of many scheduled to have national elections in 2023, somewhere between August and October. The general public has already begun to prepare for another season of harsh weather.



In 2023, it's likely that things will be considerably worse for the people of Pakistan. Given that this is expected to be an election year, the chances of the economy improving or even stabilizing are almost nonexistent. Politicians don't seem to have any ideas about how to improve the situation, much less a plan.

It appears that the government is only capable of making minor adjustments to the issues rather than implementing reform that will save the situation. The Army, which will be engaged in combat on both the political and militant fronts, will be closely monitoring the state's ongoing decline with great anxiety.

There won't be much done to help the flood-affected communities, in part because there isn't any money and in part, because the majority of those areas don't really matter politically or economically and can therefore be disregarded.

## Conclusion

The outlook for 2023 is significantly worse. The state is trapped in a maze as a result of attacks by the Baloch separatists and the Pakistani Taliban and their supporters. In the current year, state authority, legitimacy, and resources will be put under extreme strain. To address the interconnected political, economic, and security imbroglio, Pakistan will need visionary leadership, a functioning parliament, fundamental policy reforms, and some level of sacrifice from its elites in 2023.

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Opinion

# Pakistan's Governance Implosion Syndrome

About the Author



Mir Adnan Aziz is a freelance contributor.





## Upsetting News

In the last few weeks, 41 passengers were burnt to death in a Karachi-bound bus from Khuzdar carrying smuggled Iranian diesel oil, 20 people including 18 children died of toxic factory emissions in Kemari, 84 people were martyred in a [Peshawar suicide attack](#), and 52, including 49 children between the ages of 8 to 14, perished in the frigid waters of Kohat's Tanda Dam.

A woman was raped at gunpoint in Islamabad's F9 Park as was a newly married by armed men who barged into her home, again within the federal capital's jurisdiction. A bus hostess faced the same harrowing ordeal in the moving vehicle. Meanwhile what we, the forsaken always had and are supposed to be content with is a myriad of sound bites where, as Camus put it, tyrants conduct monologues above a million solitudes.

The concerned district officials (understandably) denied that the ill-fated bus was carrying smuggled oil. The Peshawar incident remains limited to hyperbole and political point-scoring. The apathy can be judged from the fact that only 28 lawmakers were in attendance in the National Assembly for the third day running to discuss the tragedy.

As for the innocent children who had joyously ventured for a picnic, their heart-wrenching end merited nothing but a few heartless tweets. If women are not safe in Islamabad, that too in a park right opposite the Air HQ and defense residences, what chance does a bus hostess in Vehari have who might have been the sole bread earner of her family?

## Politicians' Apathy

Today, as we remain mired in the excruciating mini-budget and other negatives, these travesties have been, as expected, completely forgotten. Political theorist Edmund Burke wrote: "It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters".

Our [dire security](#) and economic predicament is not a recent phenomenon. It is ever-looming; the wages of an unfettered self-serving power elite. Military dictators chose to shove Pakistan into the devastating vortex of alien wars; civilian autocrats remained ever-seduced by self-serving passions. Corruption, misplaced priorities, and an absolute lack of accountability only enriched and benefitted the power elite. It bartered away our sovereignty to merit dollars and their status as Washington's un-expendables.

It was no surprise that the Abbottabad Commission investigating the US raid on Osama bin Laden's hideout in Abbottabad during PPP's tenure reportedly found "a shocking state of affairs". It noted that local governance had completely collapsed, as had the ability of respective institutions. The findings were so stark that page 87 of its report labeled Pakistan to have a "Governance Implosion Syndrome".

The APS tragedy in 2014 evoked the dictum "we shall not forget". This proved a misnomer given how NAP and NACTA were reduced to the status of stillborn. NACTA, mandated to be the intelligence-sharing fulcrum of our 26 spy and law enforcement agencies, was to formulate a comprehensive national anti-terrorism policy and spearhead it.

The frivolous attitude can be gauged from the fact that only 60 of the 206 sanctioned posts in NACTA were occupied. To top it off, 50 posts were occupied by clerical staff and 10 by officers. It is also a matter of record that Ishaq Dar starved NACTA of funds with no provision in the 2015 budget.



The PML-N government Interior Secretary Shahid Khan lamented that the dearth of funds compounded by procedural hurdles had reduced NACTA to a paper tiger. Conversely, billions were doled out for the Metro Bus and Orange Train projects. The latter, now a subsidized white elephant, was built for a whopping 1,625 million dollars. Its track length of 26.2 kilometers cost an average of nearly 62 million dollars per kilometer.

On his most recent foray to his much-visited Washington, Bilawal Bhutto met US State Department's counselor Derek Chollet to discuss "anti-terror" collaboration. The latter assured him



that the US stood firm with Pakistan in "combating terrorism". Pakistan's role as a partner and logistics conduit for the US-led blood and gore war in Afghanistan (for the second time) has been Washington's kiss of

death for us. The fuel for this destructive inferno has been the unfettered passions and apathy of our power elite.

## The People's Despair

Yeats is known to have said, "I took satisfaction in certain public disasters, felt sort of ecstasy at the contemplation of ruin." The ruling dispensations in [Pakistan, both military and civilian](#) alike, have resulted in a governance implosion syndrome; if pointed out, umbrage is taken. We have been an IMF surrogate since 1958; 65 years on, we remain its fourth largest debtor. The question that goes abegging is about the (non-existent) national outcome of the billions taken in loans, aid, and grants.

Today, we are totally devoid of a sustainable economic base. No wonder, an arm-twisting IMF demands its pound of flesh and fire sale privatization from a feeble and totally non-representative government albeit with an 85-member strong cabinet. Empirical evidence proves that the feeding ground for crony capitalism was established in the privatization round of the first Nawaz Sharif government.

No power center holds itself accountable; none takes responsibility for our beggared status. However, all proclaim to be our hallowed saviors; a self-ordained title thrust upon us to be defended by any means at all costs. Foolishly one expects, if anything, an iota of remorse; only retribution is forthcoming. Nothing will change till this mindset persists in our power elite of unfettered passions.

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Article

# Pakistan-IMF: The Ninth Economic Review

## About the Author



Zainab Haseeb is studying IR at Kinnaird College for Women, Lahore. She has previously participated in WWF's Eco-internship.



# Introduction

One of the core ingredients of the West's liberal order is that of liberal institutionalism. The phenomenon aims to introduce institutes of economic and political nature in order to reduce anarchy in the world. An important institute in this regard is the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

IMF is known for having far-reaching impacts on global and national economic growth. At times of financial distress, the IMF comes to aid the states through the introduction of macroeconomic reforms. Moreover, it sanctions funds on the bases of conditions that significantly impact the economic future of the states. The developing world has become increasingly dependent on IMF over the past few years.

## Pakistan's Economic History

In order to understand the current economic position of Pakistan, it is necessary to understand its journey. Pakistan saw reforms in the financial sector in the 1990s for increasing the monitoring and supervision of financial institutions. In 2004, the State Bank passed an order for banks to introduce an increase in minimum capital requirement.

Between 2007 and 2018, there was a rise of 421% in loans and advances, but the profitability was reduced. The return on average equity fell by 1.69% to 0.80%. That is when the State Bank of Pakistan began to implement Basel regulations for aligning with the international community. The Basel II and Basel III regulations were implemented in 2006 and 2013 respectively. The regulations had an increasing impact on the profitability of commercial banks.

## The Ninth Economic Review

The ninth economic review was supported by the extended fund facility arrangement. In these dealings, it was decided that negotiations could not become functional until the state provided an economic framework. The executive board of the IMF completed the ninth economic review of Pakistan to evaluate its economic performance under a 36-month program.



The IMF team arrived in Pakistan on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2023 to discuss the ninth review of the \$7 billion extended fund facility. The main agenda was to hold technical talks based on economic data

given by different departments. The focus of the mission remained the inducement of policies for restoring domestic and external policies guaranteeing sustainable growth. That includes strengthening the fiscal position of the state through high-quality measures that are durable.

In consideration of the economic losses inflicted by the [2022 floods](#), IMF is making efforts to remain engaged with the state of Pakistan. The authorities, under the current program, are supporting the endeavor to introduce relief to the vulnerable affected by the floods. Other objectives of the visit include advancing reconstruction efforts and sustainable policies. The team aims to restore the [viability of the power sector](#) and reverse debt accumulation.

## Challenges

According to the Finance Division, there have been policy slippages by the government which can further delay the dealings between IMF and Pakistan. Differences have been observed in the GDP projections of the Planning Ministry and Finance Division, and the inclusion of post-flood data is what is leading to the difference. [Based upon these changes](#), a growth of 2.3% was proposed by the Planning Ministry, while the Finance Division proposed a growth of 2.8%.

# Tasks

The discussions revolved around the \$6 billion bailout package that was taken in 2019. A year later, \$1 billion was added to this package. As per the ninth review, Ishaq Dar, the Finance Minister of Pakistan, has [agreed to implement the fiscal measures](#) demanded by IMF which include raising 170 billion PKR through new taxes that will be imposed in the coming year.

Another provision of the deal is the implementation of a hike in fuel prices. The diesel levies are to double to around 5 PKR a Liter from the month of March, with the second hike to start from 1<sup>st</sup> April. Apart from these targets, there was an emphasis laid during the meetings on revenue collection, phasing out the untargeted subsidies, and non-interference with the exchange rate.

## What Next?

The visit of the IMF was completed after 10 days of talks without reaching a staff-level agreement. However, Pakistani officials have expressed determination to complete the conditions of the program. Moreover, Dar showcased his aims for [bridging the fiscal gap](#), stabilizing the exchange rate, and regulating the energy sector.

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You may also like: [The Ill-Fated Relationship Between Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund \(IMF\)](#)

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# The Relevance of Neorealism in Understanding the Kashmir Conflict

## About the Author



Brilliant Windy Khairunnisa is pursuing her Master's in International Relations and Diplomacy from Khazar University, Azerbaijan under the Nailakhanim scholarship.



# Introduction

The position of the Kashmir region between Pakistan and India and the fact that the United Kingdom did not make a substantial decision regarding it before leaving are the primary causes of the conflict between the two nations. If they are owned, Kashmir's natural resources could be considered extremely advantageous in abundant areas, including tourism and the economy.

The conflict between the two nations has gotten worse as a consequence of tensions between religions, particularly in Kashmir, where the bulk of the population is Muslim but the ruler is Hindu. Attempts to mend relations between the two nations were made once more in the presence of Donald Trump, the president of the United States, who volunteered to serve as a mediator.



India did not appreciate this attempt because it felt that if the United States acted as a mediator in the dispute over the Kashmir area, it would act in a biased manner and it would jeopardise India's national interests (Gul & Ahmad, 2020). The pressure for peace has been widely carried out by several international parties. The rise of the globalisation age has had a discernible impact, making it increasingly unlikely that these issues will be resolved. However, conflict resolution could be much more readily carried out if technology in this period is utilised.

In the study of international relations, the theory of neorealism is inseparable from discussions related to conflicts, especially the Kashmir conflict that has occurred between Pakistan and India. Kenneth Waltz stated that the causes of war can be observed through several levels including individuals, countries and communities, as well as the international system.



Conflicts can occur due to the fact that basically all countries compete with each other to continue to survive and achieve their national interests. Neorealism also states that the powerful will continue to monopolise the world, while the weak will continue to be sidelined and become the prey of the strong. Thus, the Kashmir conflict will continue until the ultimate goal of the two countries is achieved.

## Literature and Research

Due to globalisation, mediators face challenges in carrying out their duties (Khairunnisa, 2021). However, the underlying notion of nationality is losing its meaning as a result of globalisation, affecting people's sense of nationality (Hippler & Ahmed, 2022). Due to competing national agendas, security programs might be confusing, inefficient, or futile, all at the same time. Domestic causes, according to this logic, are majorly responsible for the tension (Simón, 2017).

This study utilises descriptive qualitative research methods that can describe the results of research without statistics or figures. The data was provided through literature reviews of previous studies or papers, which are then reviewed and assisted by theories and concepts. Moreover, the triangulation approach has been utilised to examine the accuracy of the study data.

## Commencing Point of the Kashmir Conflict

From a historical perspective, the struggle for the Kashmir region began when the British divided



the Indian state into two parts, India with a majority Hindu population, and Pakistan with a majority Muslim population. Nevertheless, the division of the country left the ownership of the Kashmir region. Thus, this ownerless territory has led to the occurrence of conflicts (Rizvi, 2019).

The Kashmir region is affluent in natural resources and has a stable agricultural economy (Sheikh, 2018). Several rivers flow from the Kashmir region to Pakistan and India, which has made agricultural land in the two countries dependent on it (Tabbasum, 2012). Moreover, the natural beauty that is owned by the Kashmir region can attract a plethora of tourists to the international scene. Furthermore, the existence of the national interest concept has become critically important in issuing a foreign policy.

Unlike realism, which believes that power is the ultimate objective that must be accomplished, neorealism believes that power is one of the means to fulfil a country's national interest in terms of both security and survival. In other words, if a country collaborates with other countries, neorealism contends that the activity is only carried out to obtain benefits from other parties that benefit the country's own.

Although it is frequently utilised to research interstate conflicts in other regions of the world, neorealism prefers to explain interstate conflict by concentrating more on the fundamental origins of interstate conflict than on individual disputes. Neorealism, therefore, anticipates that international limitations will restrict the options for nations.

Due to the fact that structural constraints have a widespread impact, neorealism seeks to explain general policies rather than specific policies in its view. The few incidents in terms of conflict are often limited to examples, therefore the neorealism approach is too uncertain to become a general theory of foreign policy or state behaviour.

Nevertheless, neorealism must be able to account for international outcomes, and this perspective expects states to be concerned about possible adversaries and seeks to balance them, even if such efforts are not always successful (Mehsud et al., 2021). This illustrates that neorealism emphasises the state as an actor in international politics, which tends to work with other countries to strengthen its power and achieve national interests (Napang et al., 2019).

According to neorealism, the major goal of the Kashmir conflict between Pakistan and India is to advance their respective national interests. The country that possesses the territory will observe significant growth in its GDP due to its natural resources. Its natural beauty can also draw tourists, boosting the economy in the tourism and hospitality sectors while attracting foreign investors to invest in the area.

## Conclusion

In light of this evidence, it is crystal clear that neorealism dictates that the Kashmir conflict continues because both Pakistan and India desire to secure their national interests through this conflict. Neorealism also maintains that power is not the main objective; it is only a tool to gain national interest. In this case, Pakistan and India are fighting over Kashmir to gain its natural resources which could increase both countries' GDP through trade and tourism.

As for the political aspect, the Kashmir region can expand the two nations' territories and increase the number of Hindu adherents, which is of much interest to India. Nevertheless, conflict resolution must still be carried out because the people of Kashmir would suffer numerous losses as a result of this dispute.

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Article

# The Cold War Timeline

## About the Author



Wania Waseem is studying Media and Communication at Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU).





# Introduction

The events of the Cold War, as vicious as they were, had happened to be the irrefutable harbinger of change, conditioning the course of political history, and garnering much scrutiny as a result of its influence. Countries were either edging closer to pandemonium or basking in the summits of glory—the latter mainly associated with the first world countries, namely, the United States and the Soviet Union (now Russia).

## Communism vs Capitalism: Which Will It Be?

If we delve deeper into the roots of the rivalry, we'd discover the dichotomy between the US and the Soviet Union, [specifically their political stances](#) and how other countries were drawn into espousing such a stance through either genuine consideration or coercion. The United States was steadfast in its capitalistic agenda, whereas the Soviet Union had dived head-first into a communist regime after the eradication of the Russian monarchy.

The US wanted to dispose of communism from every nook and cranny of the world. The Soviet Union was undaunted, and far from being budged, it further campaigned communism, largely through arms and subjugation. Even China had come under the [wing of communism](#) long before the events of the Cold War.

## Truman Doctrine

A political turnabout had emerged within the US which shaped world affairs rather profoundly. On March 12th, 1947, Harry Truman, the president of the United States, [brought forward the Truman Doctrine](#), a move that would obstruct and contain communistic sentiments and takeovers. This policy led to the US's involvement in the Korean War and Vietnam War. Truman justified his clauses in order to impede a potential communist victory in the Greek Civil War.

# The Advent of NATO and the Warsaw Pact

Britain, France, the United States, Canada, and other eight western European countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty of April 1949, establishing the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). An organization formed to fortify collective



security to the signed countries, swearing to defend one another.

A political maneuver to oversee and check the imposing threat of the Soviet Union amidst the Cold War. Six years later, a communist alliance took place as a response to NATO; the Warsaw Pact was signed in Warsaw, with the Soviet Union, Albania, Poland, Romania, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria as members. The pact called on the member states to come to the defense of any member attacked by an outside force while setting up a unified military command.

## Korean War, Vietnam War & Third-World Escalations

Amidst the Cold War, the Soviet Union occupied North Korea, cementing it as a communist state. On the other hand, the United States occupied South Korea, dividing the country into two portions and announcing the beginning of the Korean War. As it turned out, the split is effectively still intact.

Communist forces in Cuba had ousted the incumbent regime, thus becoming a communist state. South Vietnam was subjected to a communist takeover as well.

## Iron Curtain

The term 'iron curtain' was coined which illustrated the Soviet Union's establishment of a firm division of Europe. Great Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill had addressed his Iron Curtain speech in Missouri, alerting Americans of the division between the Soviet Union and the Western allies, and criticizing the endeavor.

## Invasion of Grenada

The United States had invaded Grenada, a Caribbean country comprising a main island, under the guise of securing the safety of the American nationals. Their central objective was to dispose of communism and install a capitalist system.

## Gorbachev's Reforms

A political move instigated by the new General Secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev, was set in motion in order to counter the corruption and transparency within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Investigations were carried out, revealing a modicum of instances of power abuse. Gorbachev ameliorated the relationship between the Soviet Union and the western countries by increasing contact.

## Fall of Berlin Wall

The wall, erected to separate the communist East Berlin from the democratic West Berlin, stood untouched and impervious for almost 30 years. As the [Berlin wall fell](#) on the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, 1980, it took the communist regime along with it. Thus, marking the collapse of communist states in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Benin, Mozambique, Nicaragua, and Yemen.





# Dissolution of the Soviet Union

Communism began to fade away from Europe while Gorbachev's reforms exceptionally weakened the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The dissolution was seen as inevitable, and speculations were soon proven to be true as the Communist Party surrendered its power, ending the 'Iron Curtain'.

The new President-elect Boris Yeltsin issues a ban on the Communist Party. Communism soon ended in Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Congo, Kenya, Yugoslavia, and other nations. China, Cuba, Laos, and Vietnam, however, remained under communist rule.

North Korea continues to perpetuate communism, but the government doesn't overtly refer to the country as a communist. On 26th December, 1991, the Soviet Union effectively dissolved, closing the final chapter of the Cold War.

## Anything but a Conclusion

The war was indeed over. The United States had thoroughly driven out Russian forces from Afghanistan, offsetting the invasion. Noor Taraki, who had ties with the Soviet Union, was overthrown from power and executed by Amin. This couldn't have been achievable without the



insurgencies of the Afghan Mujahideen who were backed by America, the UK, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. They were given ammunition and financial support to oust the communist regime, replacing it with an Islamic revolution.

Pakistan was a neighboring country that readily provided its airspace and navy to the cause of the Afghan Mujahideen, even going as far as shooting Soviet Union aircraft and storing ammunition for Afghanistan. The Soviet Union forces withdrew from Afghanistan which manifests that the US had defeated Russia, putting an end to the war.

While the Cold War may have ended with Russia on its knees, the aggression of that time still exists. Under the command of Vladimir Putin, Russia invaded Ukraine on this day a year ago, to settle old feuds. The Cold War indeed concluded for America, the West, and the third-world countries, but for Russia, it never was.

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Article

# The F9 Incident

## About the Author



Ms Afifa Iqbal has a keen interest in identity politics, colonialism and post-colonial development. She is currently working as a Research Assistant at ITU while pursuing her postgraduate studies in Development, Technology and Policy. She is a Gold Medalist in Political Science from the University of Punjab.

# Introduction

“Abandon all hope ye who enter here”. Dante might as well have said it for women in Pakistan. Gender-based violence, be it sexual, psychological, or physical, cuts across every boundary of class, caste, region, and religion in Pakistan. It is, in fact, the defining feature of the lived experiences of the majority of women.



While it can be argued that indexes like Gender Parity Index are descriptive and do not capture every detail of women's experiences, they can still provide policymakers with a

general idea of the state of affairs.

Pakistan's constant ranking as the worst or second worst in the Global Gender Gap Report should have been the clarion call for urgent action. However, the recent incident in which two men gang-raped a woman in one of the most prominent and supposedly safe parks in the country tells a somber story of criminal negligence and inaction.

That the rapists were then killed in a [police encounter](#) makes the matter even worse. If they were an unfortunate casualty, then, they died without facing the music, but if their demise was attributable to encounter killing, then it is a damning indictment of our justice system that has failed victims of gender-based violence time and again.

## F9 Incident: The Tangible and the Intangible

Every act of gender-based violence has two components: the actual, tangible, and in-the-flesh act, and the intangible that stretches far and wide in the temporal plane. It is relatively easy (or one can argue less difficult) to identify the physical act of violence as compared to the intangible convictions and ideas that drive it.

There is agreement that **two men raped a woman** on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February in Fatima Jinnah Park (otherwise known as F9 Park). It has also been established that the men used a gun to threaten and force the victim to comply, and further threatened to “invite” their friends to rape her if she did not stop resisting and screaming.

Everybody is also in agreement that after raping her, the perpetrators offered her 1000 rupees to stop her from reporting the crime and told her that she should not have been out in the park in the late hours. However, that’s where the agreements as well as the “facts” of the case end. Where the “facts” end, the reality of women’s lived experiences in this country begins.

The intangible beliefs—formed over centuries—that drive gender-based violence attempt to paint the incident as an unfortunate confluence of a few factors: the perfect victim, the perpetrators, and the opportunity to act out the criminal intentions. The repressive cultural practices and distorted religious notions about women’s social positioning, which have formed the collective memory and entitled attitude of most men towards women, are brushed off as inconsequential abstractions cooked up by western-funded feminists. That, of course, is hardly the case.

The belief that men are the grand patrons of women is one of the chief drivers of gender-based violence, particularly sexual violence. This belief stems from the notion that men occupy a superior social and intellectual position as compared to women leading to the sub-humanization of women. This belief also means that the only women considered worthy of ‘patronage and protection’ are those related to the man.

The behavior of the rapists personified this belief. To them, the woman was not human enough, as reflected in their degrading actions. She also was not related to them so they could violate her without having it on their conscience, and they were also patronizing towards her in stating that she should not be out at that late hour.

The warped notion of respectability is another belief that perpetuates gender-based violence. Day in and day out, women in professional settings and domestic spaces, are reminded of their good fortune for being born in the East, where men are still '*ghairatmand*' and know how to show respect to women. What is left out of these reminders is that men do not show 'unconditional' respect to women. Rather, they only respect women who embody a certain notion of '*sharafat*': *shalwar-kameez* clad with *dupatta* aesthetically draped on their heads, minimal make-up, and confined within the four walls of their homes.

For working women, the notion of '*sharafat*' dictates that they should not work late or stay out after Maghreb. The woman in the F9 incident defied these diktats and dared go for a stroll in the park at night and that too with a male colleague. This pushed her out of the respectability bracket for the rapists as well as the ensuing public opinion. To put it bluntly, what happened to her was wrong, but she was asking for it by staying out late.

What Sojourner Truth [said](#) in 1851 still rings true for Pakistani women in 2023:

"That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well! And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman?"

# Rethinking Public Spaces for Women's Safety

Every now and then, high-profile cases of gender-based violence lead to a plethora of op-eds, editorials, and talk shows focused on pushing for top-down reforms to curb the ever-increasing incidents of gender-based violence. There are protests and calls for urgent action as well. However, nothing substantial ever comes out of such efforts.

To pacify public outrage, cosmetic measures are implemented without addressing the deep-seated issues gnawing away at the humanity of women. The top-down approach to implementing reforms and carving out a space for women is not going to work. The substantial changes instrumental in changing the social positioning of women have to be brought up from the grass-roots level.

The manner in which gender-based violence, particularly incidents of sexual violence like rape, is talked about needs to change. It goes without saying that the mainstream media must stop sensationalizing such crimes. However, discussions about these incidents at dining tables, in drawing rooms, and around coffee must also be different. The use of passive voice to describe such incidents shifts the focus onto the victims, while the perpetrators conveniently fade into the background in public memory. As a result, these incidents remain forever associated with the victims, haunting them for the rest of their lives.

There needs to be a shift in the public discourse around these incidents. The intentional use of imperatives does not entail that the change has to happen overnight and all of a sudden, it entails that it has to start *now*. The self-righteous and entitled attitude of most men is partly a product of the higher value assigned to their actions and decisions at home, which then extends into the public sphere.



Many men feel entitled to women's reproductive labor at home and productive labor in the workplace. In the words of Mary Wollstonecraft; "Who made man the exclusive judge, if woman partakes with him the gift of reason? In this style, argue tyrants of every denomination, from the weak king to the weak father of a family; they are all eager to crush reason; yet always assert that they usurp its throne only to be useful."

Finally, women's "[right to the city](#)" must be acknowledged and promoted. Women not only have a right to access public spaces but also to shape and create those spaces according to their needs and desires. '[Girls at Dhabas](#)' was a wonderful initiative and so was the [reclamation of F-9 Park](#) by protestors in the wake of the F-9 incident.

"The [right to the city](#) is like a cry and a demand...cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right... It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed right to urban life..."

## Conclusion

The women of Pakistan have lived in fear for decades, fearing for their lives, livelihoods, and survival. This fear stems from social structures that have elevated men to a position where they feel entitled to perpetrate acts of gender-based violence with impunity. This needs to end, but change must come from the grassroots level. Trickle-down change, like trickle-down economics, is not going to work.

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# BBC Documentary on Modi's Role in the 2002 Gujarat Riots

## About the Author



Areej Haider is studying International Relations at National Defence University Islamabad. She has a keen interest in national and international politics, especially South Asian and Middle Eastern politics.

## The Two-Part Series

The BBC documentary is a two-part series titled "[India: The Modi Question](#)". To hide the reality of the 2002 Gujrat riots from the public, silence the criticism, and maintain the legitimacy of the rule, the authorities have banned the screening and sharing of the documentary on social media and elsewhere. The links have also been removed from various sites on Twitter and YouTube.

However, the BBC documentary on Modi has gotten much more public attention as a result of its ban. It is important to note that since the year [PM Modi came into power, press freedom in India](#) has declined significantly, according to Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders.

The first part of the BBC documentary comprises the interviews of the victims and some journalists who consider Modi as the perpetrator of the violence. The whole "climate of impunity" was created due to the encouragement of bloodshed. The second part of the documentary shows an examination of the track record of the Modi government since its victory in the 2019 re-elections. The government has little to say about the violation of the human rights of minorities, especially Muslims, and has invoked emergency laws to avoid criticism.

The documentary concludes that Modi is "directly responsible" for human and other losses. It also openly claims that the violence was directed at the Muslims with the aim "to purge Muslims from Hindu areas" and had all the "hallmarks of an ethnic cleansing."

## Crackdown

With the ban on the documentary, tensions have flared and various types of reactions have come from the public who intended to watch the documentary including students of various universities and colleges. For instance, when a group of students at Jamia Millia University planned to watch the banned movie, police equipped with weapons detained some of the students.



According to the remarks of a 20-year-old geography student, “This is the time for [Indian youth to put up the truth](#) which everybody knows. We know what the prime minister is doing to the society.” Likewise, another incident happened at Jawaharlal Nehru University when the power and internet were cut off amid the plan of watching the banned documentary.

## Criticism

The opposition leader Rahul Gandhi has said that “[You can ban, you can suppress](#) the press, you can control the institutions but the truth is the truth. It has a nasty habit of coming out.” In the southern state of Kerala, the broadcasting of the program was challenged by the rival political parties’ students. When they screened the documentary, it led to many protests and rallies by pro-government workers.

India’s Foreign Ministry has called the documentary a “[propaganda piece designed](#) to push a particularly discredited narrative” and slammed it for “bias” and “a continuing colonial mindset.”

In reaction to that, the BBC, in a statement, said the documentary was “rigorously researched” and involved a wide range of voices and opinions, “We offered the Indian Government a right to reply to the matters raised in the series — it declined to respond”.

Moreover, the ban on the documentary is the reflection of a broader crackdown on minorities as claimed by Human Rights Watch. Mahua Moitra, a lawmaker from the Trinamool Congress political party, said in her tweet, “Good, bad, or ugly — we decide. Govt doesn’t tell us what to watch.” Summing up, the government’s step to ban the documentary has risen many questions and has attracted much more viewers than it could do otherwise.

Hartosh Singh Bal, the political editor of Indian magazine The Caravan, who also appears in the documentary as a commentator, said, “Frankly, the ban has been pretty stupid because it’s attracted far more attention to the documentary than would have been otherwise possible.” He adds that it is now being screened across school campuses as “an act of resistance” among teenagers who previously viewed these events as a dated chapter in history.

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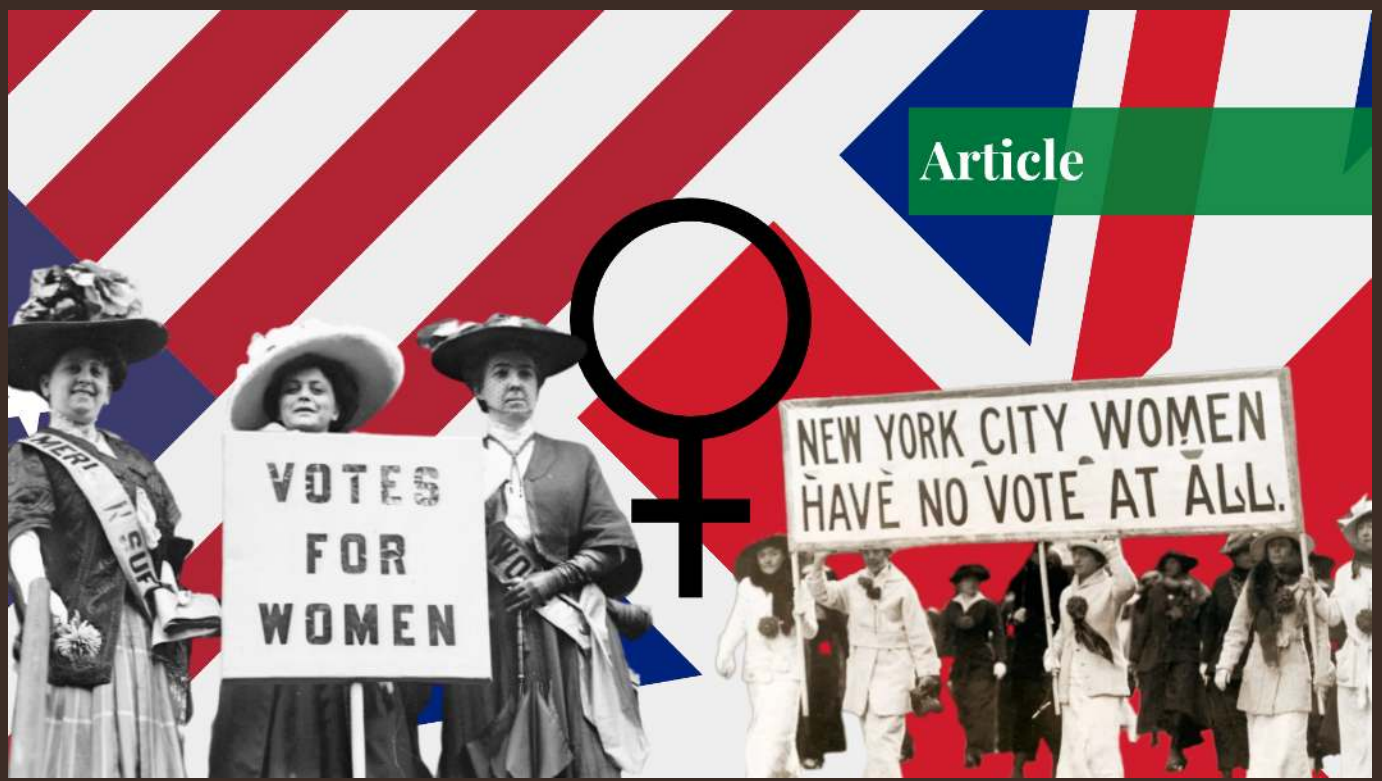
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# Revisiting the Suffrage Movement in America and Britain

## About the Author



Malik Mashhood is a Political Science and Media Studies graduate from the Lahore School of Economics. He is currently a student of MPhil Development Studies. He is also working as a Research Assistant.

# Introduction

In November 1913, during her fundraising tour in America, Emmeline Pankhurst, a pioneer leader of the suffrage movement in Britain, spoke at Hartford, Connecticut on the issue of women's rightst to vote. Her speech was called '[freedom or death](#)' and remains one of the most powerful speeches to date. Initially, political reasons such as the right to vote brought women out to demonstrate. Later, the focus gradually shifted to other issues such as family roles and workplace rights.

## Suffrage Movement in America

The commencement of the first women's rights movement in America is often traced back to the [Seneca Falls Convention](#) of 1848. However, it is pertinent to mention that long before this convention the seeds for women's equal rights were already sworn at the time of the US's independence.

In New York, the participation of three hundred people, both men and women, in the Seneca Falls Conference of 1848, organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, officially initiated the suffrage movement. This movement was a seven-decade-long struggle by women to achieve their voting rights in the United States. It was preceded by the [American Civil War](#).

Almost a decade later when the civil war began, women civil war activists such as [Mary Church Terrell](#) also came to the forefront. Terrell became the first African American woman to be



appointed to the education board of the District of Columbia. Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony founded the National Woman's Suffrage Association with their aim to fight for the voting rights of all women, including Africans.

In the wake of demonstrations and protests, women were finally given the right to vote in the US a few years later. In 1869, initially, it was the state of Wyoming that passed the first women's suffrage law, giving women their right to vote. The 19<sup>th</sup> amendment was later introduced to the US constitution which prohibited the denial of a vote on the basis of sex.

## Suffrage Movement in Britain

The suffrage movement had entered Britain by the 1870s. Author Mary Wollstonecraft is often regarded as the first one in Britain to have brought up the issue of equal rights with her work '[Vindication of the Rights of Women](#)' (1792). Having taught at a school, she criticized the education system, asserting that women were rational human beings, equal to men, but deliberately kept incapable and in subordinate positions by the education system.

It was soon that the women's plea for equal rights was able to reach those in positions of power, the British Parliament. A number of petitions were

presented by various advocates of women's rights before the House of Commons. In 1832, the first petition before the parliament was brought by Mary Smith, a woman from Yorkshire. She stated that women should '[have a voice in the election of Members \[of Parliament\]](#)'. This was presented in the parliament by MP Henry Hunt.





A few years later, English philosopher and Member of Parliament, [John Stuart Mill presented the suffrage petition, containing over 1500 signatures](#), before the House of Commons. Mill also wrote an essay called '[Subjection of Women](#)' in which he contested the subordination of women and emphasized that there should be legal and social equality between both genders.

In 1902, women textile workers from Northern England gathered and came up with a petition that contained over 37000 signatures, demanding votes for women. These events proved to be a cornerstone for women's right to vote in Britain. Gradually, a number of organizations were also formed which included the National Society for Women's Suffrage and the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU).

In 1870, the Married Women's Property Act was introduced by the parliament which made women the legal owners of their property, something which wasn't the case previously. In March 1907, the women's enfranchisement bill failed, causing a very intense reaction from the suffragists. Finally, in 1918, [the representation of peoples' bill](#) was passed, but it gave only women older than 30 years of age the right to vote. Later, in 1928, every individual above 21 years of age was granted the right to vote.

The [women's liberation movement](#) resurfaced in the 1960s and 70s since women in Britain still felt unequal to men in political, economic, and social spheres. Simultaneously, there was a large gap between men and women at educational institutions and workplaces. A very significant point in the women's liberation movement came in 1968 when around [190 women, working at the Ford Motor Company](#), went on a strike, demanding equal pay. This came to be known as The Ford Women's Strike of 1968.

This event also set forth the demand for equal pay at the workplace that was presented by women in the subsequent years at different conferences and gatherings. It must be asserted that the women's liberation movement in the UK was derived and catalyzed by working-class women since they wanted equality in the workplace.

## Similarities

It can be stated that in both America and Britain, the women's movement emerged alongside various other movements. In Britain, the women's liberation movement began in the wake of protests by working-class women for fair working conditions. Hence their protests soon became part of the large-scale second-wave feminist movement. Similarly, in America, the women's liberation movement had been going on alongside the civil rights movement.

Even the civil rights movement itself began due to the protests by women on the unjust treatment of an African American woman named Rosa Parks. The [Rosa Parks case](#) became one of the most significant cases in American history in the 1950s.

Another significant similarity between the two women's movements was the role of women's organizations. It appears that in both places women had realized that they needed a platform of their own through which they could raise their voices and put forward their demands for equal rights. Hence, in America, the National Woman's Suffrage Association was formed in 1869, the National American Women's Suffrage Association in 1890, and the National Women's Party in 1906.

Similarly, in Britain, there was the National Union of Women's Suffrage Society (NUWSS) formed in 1897, and the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) formed in 1903. These organizations played a very key role in both countries for women's rights.

## Differences

Despite numerous similarities between the two movements prevailing in two distinct parts of the world, there did exist some visible differences between the two. Primarily, the women's movements in Britain often resorted to violence when they perceived that nothing of substance was being achieved. This can be analyzed in both the suffrage movement of the 1800s and the women's liberation movement of the 1970s.



For instance, when the women's enfranchisement bill 1907 was deliberately rejected in the House of Commons, almost 75 suffragists tried to storm the parliament's building and were eventually



arrested. There is no doubt that these movements helped women achieve quite a lot. However, the criticism was that the women's movement in the 1960s and 70s focused too much on white and middle-class women.

It is important to mention that by this time, debate on 'political correctness' was also initiated. It was being argued that those expressions which marginalized or insulted a particular community must be avoided or 'corrected'. In both America and Britain, this movement remained impactful. In 1991, a business campaign termed 'Opportunities 2000' was launched with an aim to rebalance the workforce in such a way that an increased number of opportunities were created for the employment of women.

In the USA, the year 1992 remains very significant because four females were able to get elected to the US Senate for the first time in history, thus 1992 came to be known as the 'year of women' in the US.

Then in 1994, one of the most significant acts, the [Violence against Women Act](#) was passed in the United States which prohibited crimes against women including domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence. According to the US Justice Department, a sizable decline in the cases of domestic violence was witnessed in the US subsequently.

Since the 1800s, when the first women's rights movement began in both America and Britain, one can say that women have been able to come a long way in their quest for equal rights in both countries. However, it wouldn't be wrong to state that despite these few notable examples, the overall situation of women across the globe still calls for immense improvement.

It is ironic that the US is still among the [only seven countries](#) that are not a party to what is considered one of the most crucial conventions on women to date, '[The Convention on The Elimination of Discrimination Against Women](#)' (CEDAW), opted by the UN in 1979. This treaty is often termed the only near-universal treaty that protects the human rights of women all across the globe.

Being among the foremost players in international politics, the US's failure to ratify one of the most essential treaties safeguarding women's rights poses a question mark on its dedication to improving the conditions of women.

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# Lessons for Cash-Strapped Pakistan From India's 1991 Economic Crisis

## About the Author



Sarmad Ishfaq is an independent researcher and writer whose work has been published by The Diplomat, Harvard Kennedy School Review, Open Democracy, Paradigm Shift, and Eurasia Review to name a few. He has also been published by several international journals such as Taylor and Francis' Social Identities. He has also worked as a research fellow for LCPR. He has a master's degree in IR from the UoWD where he was recognized as the 'Top Graduate'.



Pakistan's economy has severely taken a turn for the worst in the past year. The Russia-Ukraine crisis, the recent [devastating floods in Pakistan](#), and uncontrolled external debt has caused a steep rise in prices of commodities. [Industries have scaled down or terminated](#) operations entirely causing the unemployment of hundreds of thousands. Inflation might reach 33% by the end of the current fiscal year. The rupee has depreciated by around [44% since April 2022](#).

Fitch, Moody, and S&P have all downgraded Pakistan's rating 7 times in the last 10 months – unprecedented for the country. The external debt stands at around [\\$126.3 billion](#). The forex reserves stand at a feeble \$3 billion which means the country is severely [close to defaulting](#). The IMF is forcing the government to adopt tougher taxation policies for a bailout, which will irk the populace further. The situation is so dire that around [800,000 Pakistani professionals](#) exited the country in 2022 primarily due to a lack of jobs and the stifling prices of everyday commodities.

However, what is transpiring in Pakistan is not a unique phenomenon. In fact, its arch-nemesis and neighbor India went through a similar and in many ways worse, ordeal in 1991.

## India in 1991

In 1991, India was suffering a twin deficit where its fiscal deficit was around 8.4% of its GDP and its current account deficit was [around 3% of the GDP](#). India's forex reserves were stagnating between [\\$1.3 to \\$1.5 billion](#), and at the time, this meant that it would be unable to meet its import requirements for even three weeks. The low reserves led to a sharp depreciation of the Indian rupee as well.

During this time, the total external debt had risen to over \$70 billion (one of the highest in the world then). Akin to Pakistan's current crisis, India too was downgraded by Moody. The situation became so catastrophic that the Chandra Shekhar government could not even pass the budget in February 1991. The downgrading by Moody also meant that borrowing from international creditors had become more costly. Inflation hovered high around [14% followed](#) by low growth and rising unemployment.



To stay afloat, the country needed an emergency IMF bailout. It did this by desperately pledging



its gold reserves – initially 20 tonnes of gold was sent abroad to raise \$234 million. Later, India's RBI surreptitiously airlifted 47 tonnes of gold to [the Bank of England to secure \\$400 million](#). When the public discovered this, there was massive outrage and the Chandra Shekhar government crumbled soon after.

## Indian Recovery: A Few Good Men

After Chandra Shekhar's government fell, a minority government of Narasimha Rao entered. Manmohan Singh was made finance minister on June 24, 1991 and was pivotal in changing the course of Indian history. One of the major moves the new government made was depreciating the Indian rupee in two phases – first by [9% and later by 11%](#). There was significant opposition to this move but it was needed.

Singh took tough decisions, and initiated economic [liberalization](#) with structural reforms, which laid the foundations of a modern India. One way this happened was via a complete revamp of India's existing trade policy framework – the goal was to produce an export-oriented economy. India augmented trade relations with its neighbors, including China, as well as other South Asian countries.



Even during these reforms, India had to pledge gold 3 times so it did not default. The PM gave the finance ministry the autonomy it needed to make decisions that might have been unpopular politically but essential economically.

Taxes were decreased while the country's economy was opened up for foreign direct investments, by:

- 1) Dismantling the chronic [license Raj](#).
- 2) Abolition of monopolies & restrictive trade laws.
- 3) Privatization of state-owned entities.

These liberalization policies helped the country bolster its forex reserves – the result was that before the year's end, India had paid off its loans for which the [gold had been pledged](#). These reforms eventually shaped the juggernaut that became the Indian IT sector and the Indian economy in general.

## Lessons for Pakistan

The main takeaway for Pakistan is that it is possible to come out of this economic crisis. Although there is no one-size-fits all solution for Pakistan, there are important lessons from India's 1991 economic crisis:

- 1) Bringing in patriotic and competent people so that tough decisions can be made.



2) Desperate times call for desperate measures. Pakistan needs a bailout, whether from China and/or the IMF so the country does not default and hence has space to improve its economy. This is a double-edged sword however.

3) Essential economic reforms must be undertaken to reshape Pakistan's economy. This includes removing red tape (to attract FDI and local startups), digitalization, and utilizing natural resources such as gas, gold, copper, and oil so a valuable export-oriented economy is created.

4) This crisis will take its time to placate especially in the midst of such political and public outrage, therefore, equanimity is required. A great example of this is Manmohan Singh shrugging off all pressures from the Indian bureaucracy when they opposed his reforms.

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