

Population and Pakistan's development

By **Shahid Javed Burki**

The world is going through a serious demographic change that was predicted but not to the extent it is actually happening. These changes will have a number of important consequences; some positive, the other negative. The world population is expected to increase from 7.8 billion in 2020 to 9.9 billion by 2050. The current global total fertility rate is 2.3 births per woman. However, 91 countries have registered fertility levels below 2.1 which is the population replacement level. This means that these countries have entered the phase of population decline. The United States, most of Europe, and China now have declining populations.

In late April, the American Census Bureau began to release basic information from the population count conducted in 2020. The numbers confirmed what demographers have been warning for years. The US along with China and most of the countries in Europe is undergoing "demographic stagnation". These countries are transitioning from relatively fast-growing nations of young people to slow growing countries of older people. As Farhad Manjoo wrote in his column for The New York Times, "Demographic transition could bring its own costs, among them a steady reduction in dynamism, productivity and slowdown in national and individual prosperity." For the US and China this transition could mean a diminishment of global power.

The United States Census Bureau predicts that sometime in the next decade, Americans over 65 will outnumber those younger than 18 for the first time in the country's history. America will cross the 400-million population mark sometime in late 20-50s. By that time about half of Americans will be over the age of 45 years, and one-fifth will be older than 85. An aging and declining population could be catastrophic for the countries that are heading towards that situation. In a recent paper, Chad Jones, an economist at Stanford University, argues that a global population decline could reduce the fundamental innovativeness of mankind. If increased births are not a feasible option, the only other way is to bring in more people from the outside. In a recent report authored by Ali Noorani, the chief executive of the National Immigration Forum, and his coauthor Danilo Zak suggest that increasing legal migration by slightly more than a third each year would keep America's ratio of working young people to old people stable over the next half century. Those who should be brought in should come from the countries that have large surpluses of people to export and have the skills — or can be given the skills — that countries such the US and China need. This is where Pakistan enters the picture. To paint it I will present some vital population statistics about Pakistan.

Demography is one reason for rethinking Pakistan's economic priorities. The country stands out in the world that is now witnessing rapidly declining birth rates. There are now 14 countries that have more than 100 million people each. Pakistan, with 220 million people in 2021, is the fifth largest. Of the 14 largest, Pakistan, with a population growth rate of 2% a year, has the third highest growth rate. Only Nigeria and Ethiopia, both at 2.6% a year rate of population increase, have higher growth rates. A birth rate sustained at this level over a period of time means a very young population. World's median population is 30.6 years which means that one-half of the population is below that age. Pakistan's median age is only 23.8 years or 78% of the global average. The Pakistani population is very young.

How does the Pakistani demographic situation compare with that of some of the more populated countries? Three of the 10 largest countries in terms of the size of their population are in South Asia. Pakistan, with an estimated increase of 2% a year, is seeing its population growing at a rate twice as high as those of Bangladesh and India. That notwithstanding, the country, at 287 people per square kilometre, is the least densely populated of the three. Bangladesh has the highest density with 1,265 persons per square kilometre. The Indian density with 464 persons is considerably higher than that of Pakistan.

Of the 10 largest countries, six are net exporters of people. India with net outmigration of 533,000 people in 2020 is the largest exporter followed by Bangladesh at 370,000 and Pakistan at 233,000. These numbers translated in terms of the proportion of the population tell a different story. Bangladesh is exporting 0.2% of its population, twice as high as Pakistan's 0.1%. India sends abroad only 0.04% of its population. A very large proportion of South Asian outmigration is to the oil exporting countries in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia, with a population of 35 million, brings in 2.2 million people from the outside, mostly from South Asia and Egypt. United Arab Emirates, with a population of 10 million, has 84,000 foreigners being added every year. The US imports 955,000 people a year while four other English-speaking countries — the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand — also have large number of people moving in. Canada brings in 242,000 immigrants a year, Australia 158,000 and New Zealand 15,000.

These numbers mean that for Pakistan such a large and young population could become either a burden or an asset. To be the latter, public policy must be designed in a way that the youth could add to the country's economic strength. The youth's involvement in two sectors can produce this result. One is the development of information technology. The other is the development of small and medium enterprises that could enter global supply chains. Both need educated and well-trained workforces. Pakistan needs to invest in developing institutions both in the public and private sectors designed to produce such worker streams. Pakistan is in a position to take advantage of the developing demographic situation in the US.

Although the history of South Asian migration to the US is not as long and intense as that of the Chinese, the Sub-continent has one of the fastest growing population groups in the country. The number of South Asians in the country has increased from 2.2 million in 2000 to 4.9 million in 2015. In the six years since then, another 1.4 million South Asians came in, bringing the total to 6.3 million. The Indians have 70% of the South Asian migrants in the US. Pakistanis, with 700,000 people, has the second largest South Asian group. Those from Bangladesh number 182,000. South Asians including Pakistanis have high concentrations in the coastal cities of America; on the East and West coasts as well as on the coastal states in the country's south.

It is important for the Pakistani policymakers to work with those already living in the US to develop a working plan to facilitate the migration of Pakistanis to the US. The Pakistani diaspora could help out in making the Pakistani youth major contributors to the country's growth.

The writer is a former caretaker finance minister and served as vice-president at the World Bank
Published in The Express Tribune

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BUREAUCRACY

New Session for CSS and PMS has been started

SUBJECTS OFFERED ARE:

• All Compulsory	• Political Science
• International Relations	• Gender Studies
• Criminology	• US History
• Indo Pak History	• Psychology
• Sociology	• Punjabi
• Business Administration	• Journalism
Fee Per Month : 6000Rs. (for all subjects)	Duration: 4 months

3 Days free Demo classes

For Registration: Contact 03314599096

The melting pot of Pak-US relations

By **Najm us Saqib**

A deep sense of urgency in striking a good bargain seems to have engulfed Islamabad. The aftermath of the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan is causing all sorts of concerns ranging from the return of the Taliban to power, redefining the stabilisation of Afghanistan to setting the stage for gaining a strategic advantage beyond controlling Kabul. For some, besides posing serious challenges, the murky political landscape offers an opportunity of securing future economic gains if the service providers are able to strike a desirable deal. The good news came in with Prime Minister Imran Khan's appreciation of ISI's 'diligent efforts' in the security domain.

In between telephonic talks held between the two Foreign Ministers, General Qamar Javed Bajwa and Secretary Defence Lloyd Austin, the two National Security Advisors, met in Geneva on May 23. Supplementary to regional security issues including Afghanistan and India, the nature, extent and scope of future Pak-US relations were also discussed, including bilateral economic relations, a subject hitherto considered to be dealt with by the respective representatives of the line Ministries. As occasions of bilateral contact are rare and episodic, and considering that the prevalent pandemic has affected international ambiance, Pakistan seems to have decided to avail every opportunity to discuss the entire gamut of relations regardless of the level and designation of the officials representing Islamabad.

In response to Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi's desire to base bilateral relations on close economic cooperation, enhanced regional connectivity and a common vision for a peaceful South Asia, Secretary Antony Blinken's focus remained on the emerging situation in Afghanistan and the withdrawal of foreign troops from the war ravaged country. Even on Afghanistan, the request of a 'responsible withdrawal' was ostensibly not accepted as the US would like to go ahead with its own strategy which might have a different characterisation of the withdrawal plan. It is, however, unthinkable that the US, being an extremely responsible state, would leave Afghanistan in an irresponsible manner. In fact, strictly speaking, in diplomatic norms, asking a state to be responsible might generate some unnecessary offensive vibes.

Pak-US ties, especially since 9/11, have been characterised as a serrated relationship whereby the former, while looking confident of its strategically important disposition, would be seen making only requests. The latter would respond by reiterating its demand of 'do more' after providing or promising some greenbacks. In enjoying such an uneven relationship, expecting Washington to safeguard the interests of Pakistan before, during and after its withdrawal from Afghanistan is at best wishful thinking.

Both sides have emphasised the indispensability of reduction in violence, a permanent ceasefire and securing an inclusive, broad-based and political settlement of the Afghan conflict. Neither a reduction in violence nor a permanent ceasefire is in the hands of either Pakistan or the US. Evidently, these cherished objectives could not be achieved otherwise, why would Washington wait for twenty years to call it a day and leave Afghanistan empty handed? Similarly, all relevant and not-so-relevant stakeholders have failed to realise their dream of achieving a broad-based political settlement of the Afghan conflict mainly because of consistently ignoring history lessons and ground realities.

Clearly, the recent frequent contacts at the level of Foreign Ministers, Security Advisors and Military Leadership have been made to primarily share views and strategise on the sensitive and grave imminent situation in the region after the foreign troops leave Afghanistan. For Pakistan, it is important to know some details of the US strategy of keeping a tab on Afghanistan and the surrounding planes from nearby hideouts. Simultaneously, one feels the terms and conditions from Pakistan's side for its future cooperation with US have also been conveyed perhaps in the form of a package involving mainly some economic incentives. In view of the importance of the next few months in the context of the regional security paradigm, it is expected that the Embassy of Pakistan in Washington would finally be able to arrange a telephone call between Prime Minister Imran Khan and President Joe Biden. Such a contact at the highest level is not only overdue but also desirable in the context of overall bilateral relations.

Presently, as at similar junctures in the past, the real challenge for Islamabad does not lie in providing air and ground access to Washington. One could easily take out an agreement of sorts from the archives to satisfy the people of Pakistan on providing the requested access. Neither is it the US apprehensions on Pak-Russia or Sino-Pak relations, including the CPEC, as these issues could be handled by using the usual talking points available in the files on matters of national interest. Nor does it lie in the realm of bilateral trade as the US is still Pakistan's largest export destination. The real challenge for Islamabad lies in convincing Washington on the sequence of priorities of the two countries on the negotiating table and to be an important bilateral partner instead of being seen only in the context of Afghanistan and counterterrorism.

Washington's list of priorities with regard to Islamabad begins with Afghanistan's stabilisation efforts to counterterrorism, energy, trade and investment. On the other hand, Islamabad's list of priorities seems to be in the reverse order and starts with increased economic cooperation, investment and trade before reaching Afghanistan or counterterrorism. Given the nature and history of Pak-US relations since 9/11, only a dispositional optimist would foresee Islamabad succeeding in getting the desired package from Washington or bringing Washington's priority list in line with that of its own.

Nevertheless, in the process of getting one's act together, besides keeping the strategic and economic interests in mind, two factors may be accorded due importance after

carefully considering the pros and cons threadbare. Firstly, that there should not be any compromise on CPEC and China must be taken on board with regard to providing any air or ground access. Secondly, if one fails again in getting the desired economic benefits out of the equation, one may strive to fail in a respectable manner this time.

Published in Daily Nation

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BUREAUCRACY

New Session for CSS and PMS has been started

SUBJECTS OFFERED ARE:

• All Compulsory	• Political Science
• International Relations	• Gender Studies
• Criminology	• US History
• Indo Pak History	• Psychology
• Sociology	• Punjabi
• Business Administration	• Journalism
Fee Per Month : 6000Rs. (for all subjects)	Duration: 4 months

3 Days free Demo classes

For Registration: Contact 03314599096

US' new foreign policy

By **Sheikh Jawad Hussain**

America has announced a major shift in its foreign policy. It seems to be a positive change but its impact and real features will become clear in the coming days. According to a report of the British newspaper, Daily Telegraph, Joe Biden has been highlighting human rights during his election campaign. Right after assuming power, he issued seventeen executive orders; the most important was to lift travel restrictions for Muslim countries like Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen.

A while ago, the American government, while setting direction for its foreign policy, revealed more features that included having zero tolerance for provocative actions of Russia but continuing diplomatic discourse with it. This is completely different from the last government's decision because Trump always talked of moving ahead, taking Russia along. The stance of the present government about Russia seems more aggressive. Not only this, but America has also invited China to work together but at the same time as per its tradition, termed China's economic development as economic exploitation. This stance is similar to the policies of the Trump era. In this regard, China has already cleared its position that it wants a balance of power in the world. In fact, this is a reaction to America's defeat in the economic war which compels America to take a harsh position vis-a-vis China. Similarly, the refusal to sell modern weapons to Saudi Arabia and Yemen, the defence of Saudi Arabia and proclaiming support for Yemen in the Yemen war are also part of new American foreign policy. The issue of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi is also under discussion. All this has made Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Arab countries realise the importance of Pakistan. It can be rightly said that America's new foreign policy regarding the ME region has burst their bubble.

America has already acknowledged the importance of Pakistan on the Kashmir and Afghanistan issue and wants to work with Pakistan in this regard. Joe Biden has emphasised the need to resolve the Kashmir issue but so far there is no action in this regard. Pakistan has to take initiative to get this implemented practically. In a complete opposite to Trump's unjust and regrettable policies regarding Iran, the new government is recognising the significance of Iran and has emphatically asked Iran to abide by the 2015 agreement promising to lift all sanctions. Responding to the American offer, the Supreme Leader of Iran Ayatollah Khamenei has categorically stated that Iran won't even think about any agreement until the sanctions are lifted. This is a very realistic approach because the agreements made by President Barack Obama were not honoured by the Trump's set up which was a first in the American history. Now Joe Biden wants to restore the agreement also called U 235 agreement, which included limiting uranium enrichment

by Iran. Iran has expressed its misgivings so that American thought and planning could become clearer.

The American government has repealed numerous measures of the Trump administration in the wider public interest and has issued new directives. The US Secretary of State has increased the number of immigrants from fifteen thousand to hundred and twenty-five thousand on behalf of Joe Biden, which is a very positive development.

American foreign policy has always come under criticism because America is notorious in implementing the principle of might is right and is looked down upon in the Muslim world to the extent of hatred. President Joe Biden's humanitarian steps that have come after decades are being acknowledged but the new American foreign policy is being censored in Russia and China. In this situation it remains to be seen if Joe Biden will stick to his policies or will he change them with changing times and situations because he is talking about restoring American standing in the world arena and this is a tall task. Only the practical measures in resolving issues of Kashmir, Afghanistan, Palestine, Syria and Iraq can prove the American claim of humanitarianism. On the other end, the US government is not taking any step in current tension between Israel and Gaza as always. The US and the rest of the world must help to find a peaceful solution to this ongoing problem.

As part of the peace process, the US has to forcefully follow the case of giving the power back to Taliban in Afghanistan and to the Brotherhood in Egypt just as emphatically as the way Joe Biden has stressed upon restoration of democracy in Myanmar. Justice and human rights don't mean that they can be enforced selectively. One cannot advocate for them in one place and turn a blind eye towards them in another.

I am very optimistic that things will move towards betterment. China has already jumped in the fray now; if America wants to restore its reputation, it will have to change its behaviour in the true sense of the word because now people can't be coerced or subjugated.

Published in Daily the Nation

Chinese diplomacy in South Asia

By **Yasir Habib Khan**

China's robust integration and engagement with the South Asian region is centered around shared peace and green development along with the policy of coexistence, equality and rule of law. Largely underpinned by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), investments in infrastructure for connectivity, trade, tourism, science, technology, health, education and a comprehensive plan for economic recovery in post-pandemic era has been Beijing's focus.

China hosted a 'foreign ministers meeting' of five South Asian nations—including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal. To push forward cooperation, China announced the creation of the China-South Asian Countries Emergency Supplies Reserve, set up a Poverty Alleviation and Cooperative Development Centre, and held an E-commerce Cooperation Forum on Poverty Alleviation in Rural Areas.

The six countries' foreign ministers gave a thumbs up to active participation in the spirit of openness and inclusivity. They unanimously decided to keep tabs on the development of the Covid-19 situation in India, and expressed their willingness to continue to provide support through respective channels in consultation with India.

The meeting became the first high-profile platform to thwart any attempt to politicise the issue of pandemic origin, vaccine-making and its distribution. South Asian countries supported the Chinese President Xi Jinping's stance on making vaccines a global public good, and carrying out continued vaccine cooperation with the participating countries in a flexible manner. Even the importance of the co-production of the vaccines was discussed.

Led by China, all countries agreed to deepen cooperation for the BRI, open their borders under the premise of pandemic prevention and control for smooth trade, keep the industrial and supply chains stable and secure, and give a stronger boost to economic recovery to improve the people's lives. They stressed the importance of tackling poverty, food security and other non-traditional security fields to protect the livelihoods of the most vulnerable groups of society.

Asian economies will remain an anchor for multilateralism and play a key role in bolstering pandemic control, keeping industry and supply chains efficient and stable, and promoting trade and investment, said Li Baodong, the secretary-general of 2021's Boao Forum for Asia.

If traced back to 2019, the Second China-South Asia Cooperation Forum—a platform to further enhance socio-economic ties between China and South Asia—was held in Yuxi, in the Yunnan Province. The forum's discussion topics revolved on closer cooperation in

terms of interconnectivity, business, poverty reduction, finance, and people-to-people exchanges.

China plans to build an important passageway, opening to South Asia through the Tibet Autonomous Region. This plan is envisaged in the outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025) for national economic and social development and the long-range objectives through the year 2035.

It is the result of China's efforts in South Asia that regional countries including Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Maldives and Nepal want to boost their collaborations in every sector.

Bangladesh's President, Abdul Hamid, told the Chinese Defence Minister, Gen Wei Fenghe, that China is one of the most important development partners of Bangladesh, and relations between the two countries are gradually expanding in various fields—including trade and investment. He mentioned that Chinese investment in various sectors, including infrastructure and communication, is playing a very significant role in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh.

The Sri Lankan President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, wanted to work together with China to promote construction for the BRI. Talking to China's new ambassador to Sri Lanka, Qi Zhenhong, Rajapaksa said Sri Lanka always bore in mind the firm support from China in the island country's fight against terrorism and the post-war reconstruction. He desired to study China's developmental path and model, and strengthen cooperation with it in key areas related to people's livelihood, such as rural areas, science and technology, education, and investment.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, eulogised China for its friendliness and cooperation in helping Pakistan to bolster its economy in the pre and post pandemic arena during a meeting with the Chinese ambassador, Nong Rong. Seeking opportunities in deepening access to the Chinese market, the Foreign Minister also stressed the need to speed up the completion of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects. He also maintained that CPEC was a transformational project and hoped that the ambassador, with his experience in trade and infrastructure development, will fast track the projects and promote industrialisation in Pakistan. China's robust engagement with the region needs to be integrated with pragmatism and developmental reciprocity.

Published in Daily the Nation

**For daily CSS/PMS updated
Materials keep visiting
www.csstimes.pk**

An uneasy relationship

By **Muhammad Amir Rana**

AFTER the reports that the US is scouting for new bases in Afghanistan's neighbouring countries, the Afghan Taliban warned the latter against committing such a "historic mistake". For Pakistan, the Taliban reaction appears more serious as it came at a time when the US assistant secretary of defence stated that Pakistan would continue to provide air and ground access to the US.

The Foreign Office in Islamabad responded promptly and rejected the speculations about the presence of any US military or airbases inside Pakistan. However, the US sees a bigger role for Pakistan for the future of Afghanistan and the presence of its military in the region. It is not yet clear what kind of role the US precisely expects from Pakistan apart from facilitation in the Afghan reconciliation process and basing of its military resources. But, as things stand, new challenges are emerging for both the civilian and military leadership of the country in terms of regional security and geostrategy and the relationship with the Taliban.

While the renewal of the US-Pakistan strategic relationship would be advantageous for both countries — also keeping the strategic equilibrium between India and Pakistan intact — it could be of concern to Chinese interests and engagement in Pakistan and the wider region. However, Pakistan will continue to base its focus and capital around its geographical proximity with Afghanistan and influence over the Taliban.

This is despite the fact that the Taliban are emerging as a more critical component in this equation. Over time, they have not only gained legitimacy in regional politics but have also diversified their sources of material support. If their recent threat is directed at Pakistan, it certainly reflects their growing confidence, which has apparently reached a level where they can threaten even a country that has not gone against them since their inception, including in times of stress and turbulence.

The Taliban threat followed rumours of mounting tension between Pakistan and the Taliban. Interestingly, in a recent media interaction, Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani repeated the allegations that Pakistan maintains an organised system of support for the Taliban. However, recent developments and some independent commentaries show that Pakistan's influence over the Taliban is not as comprehensive as many conceive it to be.

The recent upheaval between Pakistan and the Taliban started over the issue of the US-backed Istanbul conference, which was initially cancelled due to the Taliban's non-participation. Pakistan has again tried to persuade the Taliban to send its delegation to the Istanbul conference and warned of consequences in case of refusal. The Taliban have agreed that they will take part in the conference on three conditions: the conference will

be short; the agenda shall not include decision-making on critical issues; and a low-level Taliban delegation would participate.

The Taliban's reluctance to attend the Istanbul conference was not understandable because they have attended such conferences in Moscow and elsewhere. Perhaps their hard stance or refusal to participate might have been based on the fear that the conference could overshadow their Doha deal with the US. However, international media is now also reporting that the US wants a Turkish garrison to secure Kabul airport, which has led to concerns within Taliban ranks about the possibility of Turkey playing an active military role in Afghanistan.

The Taliban would not like to have troops from any Muslim country on Afghan soil, even for the security of important installations, which can damage its legitimacy in case of a clash or attack. The Taliban are confident that Afghans can decide their affairs themselves and can deal with the world on their own terms, but Pakistan is a challenge for them. Their off-the-record interactions with mediapersons in different capitals show that they do not have a very comfortable relationship with Pakistan over several issues, including the intra-Afghan dialogue and the post-US exit scenario.

The Taliban are also aware of the consequences of upsetting ties with Pakistan, which could entail arrests of and travel restrictions on their members. But they also have their tools and assets to neutralise such consequences including in the form of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other international terrorist groups. Against this backdrop, one can easily understand the context of the Taliban threat to neighbouring countries of Afghanistan in case they provide military bases to the US.

The TTP has developed its physical infrastructure in Afghanistan with the consent and support of the Afghan Taliban as well as Al Qaeda. The Afghan Taliban have proved that they were not merely proxies but independent actors and a product of the complex sociopolitical environment of Afghanistan and regional security influences. When militants are perceived as proxies it becomes difficult to treat them as the rational actors they are. That strengthens the notion that they only follow the plans of others and do not enjoy the freedom to pursue their own objectives. The Taliban have taken advantage of this impression and camouflaged themselves in Pakistan's doctrine of strategic depth.

The Taliban's relationship with Pakistan may have been passing through a turbulent phase, but this does not mean that both are approaching a break-up point any time soon. The Taliban still need an ally like Pakistan, which can continue providing diplomatic support on international forums. Even Pakistan cannot think of completely disengaging with the Taliban because, with new strategic alignments, its edge over the Taliban is a crucial component of its ability to bargain with the rest of the world.

Both need each other, but Pakistan is a state, and it cannot afford the luxury of tactical manoeuvring like non-state actors. Pakistan has several compulsions and commitments to facilitating the peace process in Afghanistan and playing a critical role in regional

stability, which is of course essential for the country's internal security and economy. The complexities of geopolitics and great powers' confrontations apart, major actors still agree that stability must be brought to Afghanistan. Pakistan extracts strategic and geopolitical advantages out of it while prioritising its interests.

The writer is a security analyst.
Published in Dawn, May 30th, 2021

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BUREAUCRACY

New Session for CSS and PMS has been started

SUBJECTS OFFERED ARE:

• All Compulsory	• Political Science
• International Relations	• Gender Studies
• Criminology	• US History
• Indo Pak History	• Psychology
• Sociology	• Punjabi
• Business Administration	• Journalism
Fee Per Month : 6000Rs. (for all subjects)	Duration: 4 months

3 Days free Demo classes

For Registration: Contact 03314599096

Israel and the right to self-defence

By: **Abdul Aziz Bhurgri**

Israel in claiming its right to self-defence hasn't just failed to satisfy the rules of self-defence but has also breached international humanitarian law, making its supposed exercise of self-defence one of the biggest crimes against humanity in the modern world. While Israel has agreed on a ceasefire after 11 days, it has so far killed more than 59 children and more than 250 Palestinian civilians. This isn't including the incalculable destruction of civilian properties, residential buildings, hospitals, and schools—all amounting to a war crime under international law.

In times like this, it's important to remind ourselves of the basic role of international law. From time immemorial, its role has been to provide room for basic communication between states and agree on a normative state of affairs. The normative state of affairs that was established after World War II through the UN Charter and that's prevalent today is to ensure peace and security in the world. Article 2(4) in the UN charter is evident of that commitment as it explicitly prohibits the use of force.

However, there are certain exceptions to using force and the state of Israel claims its exercise of self-defence falls within those exceptions. Mainly the principles of Jus Ad Bellum—the justification of a just war and Jus in Bello—which is also referred to as international humanitarian law. Both of these sets of criteria are mutually exclusive and states have to satisfy both separately to justify using force.

It is important at this time to also acknowledge that international laws, like all laws made anywhere, are made by people/states in power. Similarly, international law is heavily politicised and a clear violation of it can often be overlooked when the vested and strategic interests of powerful states are threatened. However, keeping the politicised nature of international law in mind, let's take a look at whether Israel has successfully applied international law correctly and whether they can exercise self-defence against Hamas by attacking Palestinian children and women.

Palestine is widely accepted as an occupied territory under international law as per Article 42 of the Hague Regulations 1907. The United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 3314 prohibits states from "any military occupation however temporary". Israel as a matter of fact is recognised as an occupier and in turn a settler-colonial state. The UN also recognises the right of colonised people to self-determination, freedom, and independence. In fact, under international law, the occupied people have a right to armed resistance as per the adoption of Additional Protocol 1 to the Geneva convention of 1949. Nelson Mandela, who is today remembered as the man who ended the apartheid in South Africa, was initially a leader of an armed militant group in South Africa long before

becoming President. Moreover, Ireland also put an armed resistance before securing independence from the British state. So armed resistance is used by people resisting occupation and Palestinians similarly are permitted legally to form armed resistance as they are fighting for self-determination against a colonial power.

Regardless, the Israeli State claims it is attacking Palestinians in self-defence against Hamas who are firing rockets into Israel. While accountability for international crimes is complicated for non-state actors like Hamas, indiscriminate attacks on civilian targets undoubtedly violate the laws of war. Yet, Hamas is not acting on behalf of Palestinian authorities nor do the Palestinian authorities have the capacity to halt its actions. Moreover, it may be argued that Hamas is putting up armed resistance against the occupying power, in this case, Israel, the question of exercising self-defence would never arise in the first place, failing the criteria of Jus Ad Bellum.

However, even if it assumed that Hamas is a terrorist group committing war crimes against the state of Israel on behalf of Palestinian authorities, there are still two facts that need to be acknowledged; the asymmetry of power that exists between the state of Israel and the Palestinian nation; and that Hamas' war crimes don't give license to Israel to commit war crimes indiscriminately in return. And Israel, even if it can use Hamas' rockets as an excuse for self-defence, it still has to follow the rules of Jus in Bello.

Under international humanitarian law, a war crime is committed when the laws of warfare are violated. While the laws of war are plenty in number, indiscriminate targeting of the civilian population, collective punishment, bombing hospitals, education institutions, cities of religious and historic importance and media houses are all considered war crimes. In this instance, Israel in this week alone destroyed civilian apartments, high-rise buildings with international media houses and medical facilities where vaccines were being tested. While it is inevitable that people die and get injured during wars including the civilian population, the rules of military necessity and proportionality must be satisfied where an attack may cause civilian casualties. Military necessity can only be satisfied when there is a clear military objective and the damage to civilian property has to be proportional and not excessive in relation to the direct military advantage anticipated.

Israel has continuously failed to satisfy the necessity requirement. If Israel bombs a high-rise building that houses 80 flats and homes on the pretence that there is a Hamas office building within it, the civilian damage to these is grossly disproportionate. As Israel claims that it informs the civilians before attacking in which case, it gives ample opportunity to Hamas to leave their offices accordingly to escape an attack. So, to destroy one empty office of Hamas, Israel destroys entire buildings with hundreds of civilian houses.

This is not including hospital and educational institutions where it's even harder to satisfy the requirement of proportionality and necessity. Israel's war crimes have been established at the world stage before too; a UN commission of inquiry concluded that Israeli authorities were responsible for war crimes in 2008/2009 and 2014. The

International Criminal Court (ICC), which Palestine is a party to, also announced a few months ago that they would investigate the war crimes of Israel. Moreover, recently the main prosecutor of ICC gave a statement saying they are keeping a close eye on Israel's war crimes.

However, the international community has been unable or unwilling to hold the state of Israel accountable; the politicised nature of international law has meant that there has been no accountability of these clear violations of international laws and norms. Israel has labelled any measure of accountability as "pure anti-Semitism", and its allies led by the United States have provided it complete impunity.

The state of Israel fails to satisfy the legal requirements of self-defence. It is an occupying force displacing indigenous people from their land by using force under international law. However, while the political nature of international law and international institutions refuse to hold it to account. Israel has lost the war of humanity and conscience and history will not forgive it or its allies.

Published in Daily the Nation

ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BUREAUCRACY

New Session for CSS and PMS has been started

SUBJECTS OFFERED ARE:

• All Compulsory	• Political Science
• International Relations	• Gender Studies
• Criminology	• US History
• Indo Pak History	• Psychology
• Sociology	• Punjabi
• Business Administration	• Journalism
Fee Per Month : 6000Rs. (for all subjects)	Duration: 4 months

3 Days free Demo classes

For Registration: Contact 03314599096

Jews & Muslims

By **Ayesha Ijaz Khan**

JEWS and Muslims are both minority communities in the West. Just as Muslims have had to face Islamophobia, Jews have been victims of antisemitism. The politics of the Israel-Palestine conflict, though bound to influence perception, should not make us oblivious to this fact.

While both communities have suffered religious persecution and racism at the hands of white supremacists, it is particularly sad when they target each other. On May 18, the official Arabic language account of the Israeli foreign ministry used verses from Surah Fil to justify its bombardment of Gaza. A follow-up tweet implied that the Israeli Defence Forces were righteous and had hence prevailed over Hamas' falsehood. The tweet not only ascribed false meaning to Quranic verses but was meant to be hurtful as several innocent Palestinian women and children had died.

On the other hand, a couple of days earlier, four pro-Palestine protesters were arrested in London for shouting abuse at Jews, including calls for 'raping their women'. As is often the case, misogyny intersects with racism.

It is not beneficial to the Palestinian cause to conflate Jews with Israel

While there is little expectation of humanity from Netanyahu's regime — in fact many Israelis feel he manufactured this war to detract from his electoral woes and corruption charges — it is troubling to see those protesting a violation of human rights calling, in turn, for their abuse.

Although, in Pakistan, there is a tendency to lump the West as one entity and to consider Western media as a monolith, the reality is far more complex. Like Pakistan, Western countries may be more polarised today than in the past. There is far more willingness to challenge entrenched narratives and confront imperialist and racist histories amongst the younger generations.

Europe, in any case, was never as blindly supportive of Israel as the US, and France 24, for instance, covers the Palestinian cause far more sympathetically than CNN. Even in America, however, critiques of Israel have become much more acceptable than they were previously. Those supportive of movements like Black Lives Matter have also begun to say that Palestinian Lives Matter. Some of these people are Jews.

Therefore, it is not beneficial to the Palestinian cause to conflate Jews with Israel. Not all Jews are Zionist, and of those who are, some are far more sympathetic to Palestinians than others. Bernie Sanders, a past presidential aspirant of the Democratic Party, is a case in point. His recent op-ed in the New York Times called for the US to "stop being an apologist for the Netanyahu government". In his piece, he focused on the rights of the Palestinian people, and lamented the "inequality between Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel". For his introspective honesty and calls to rethink US military aid to Israel, he has

been labelled a 'self-hating Jew' by the likes of Alan Dershowitz, a Harvard law professor known for his representation of sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein.

In Pakistan, we are familiar with such labels. Those willing to introspect are labelled 'ghaddar', or worse, 'kafir'. But while America continues to sell arms to Israel, which it uses to pound Palestinians, it also allows a Palestinian-American congresswoman, Rashida Tlaib, to speak out against US foreign policy. Thus a commitment to free speech and democracy ensures that dissenting voices are heard, even if not yet heeded.

In the UK, the head teacher at a school in Leeds was forced to apologise after he described the Palestinian flag as a "symbol of anti-Semitism". The acceptability of Palestine is gaining ground and Islamophobia is being confronted. Just recently, an inquiry was held on Islamophobia within the Conservative party and the report named Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his junior minister, Zac Goldsmith, as culprits. Johnson has since apologised for his racist characterisation of Muslim women in burqas as "letterboxes". However, Goldsmith, named for his Islamophobic campaign against London mayor Sadiq Khan, remains unrepentant but has had to delete a tweet in support of the Israeli military, as it deviated from the UK government's official line.

In Pakistan, however, one wonders if the support for Palestinians and purported concern for Islamophobia goes beyond domestic political point-scoring. Can the OIC really help Palestinians if Muslims aren't free enough to ask tough questions of their governments and leaders? Can we ask Prime Minister Imran Khan why he supported Zac Goldsmith when he claims to fight Islamophobia? Can we honestly talk about what role then Brigadier Ziaul Haq played in Black September against the Palestine Liberation Organisation at the behest of Jordan's King Hussein?

Similarly tough questions must be asked in Egypt, UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. As long as Muslims remain shackled by authoritarian regimes and are denied the right to question freely there is little hope for the OIC.

The writer is a lawyer who lives in London.

Published in Daily Dawn

**For daily CSS/PMS updated
Materials keep visiting
www.csstimes.pk**