



Inside this Issue



■ Coronavirus Outbreak: Current Scenario and the Road Ahead	1-2	■ Ambassador Webinar Series	3
■ Latest Publication	2	■ IPRI Scholars' Opinion Articles	4
		■ IPRI on Television	4

Coronavirus Outbreak: Current Scenario and the Road Ahead

The global community is months into dealing with the global coronavirus pandemic and yet it is still grappling with uncertainty and all that entails. As governments around the world continue taking unprecedented steps to counter the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, it remains unclear if these measures will suffice as the true economic impact of imposing so-called lockdowns/slowdowns/pauses will take time to emerge. People are anxiously awaiting a glimmer of hope for a return to normal life and looking to experts for guidance. IPRI has been following the pandemic and is looking at how the Coronavirus crisis is shaping the world:



INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Why the Haste on a COVID Inquiry? Australia Can't Afford to Amplify US Anti-China Offensive by **Hannan Hussain**, Assistant Research Officer

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison's proposal of an independent inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 outbreak has Canberra caught between China, and its own long-standing ally United States. The proposal has angered China, who has retaliated by threatening to boycott Australian goods. At the same time, Australia cannot afford to amplify Washington's anti-China offensive. A majority of Canberra's Western allies remain busy containing COVID-19, and contemplating its origins is put on the backburner. Australia's focus on a COVID-19 investigation also risks understating the country's message on core national priorities. Australia, like other Western nations, should focus on addressing the immediate challenges of Coronavirus before seeking to mount an international inquiry.

The Sydney Morning Herald, 1 May 2020, <<https://tinyurl.com/y97xm26z>>

NYT Expose on Trump's Wuhan Lab Conspiracy Proves Beijing's Point

A report published by the *New York Times* has revealed that the Trump Administration pressured American spy agencies to unearth evidence to support an unsubstantiated theory that a government laboratory in Wuhan was the origin of the Coronavirus outbreak. The effort, part of a larger design to politicize hostilities with China, was led by Washington's top national security brass. This chain of events was set in motion at a time when Beijing's efforts were primarily focused on containing the outbreak within its borders. Findings from the report include Washington's politicization of the pandemic since the very beginning; Washington's considerable knowledge about the outbreak early on; and the Central Intelligence Agency's lack of impartiality. Despite credible evidence from the global scientific community and research experts that Chinese authorities had no link to the origins of the outbreak, Washington's blame game has persisted.

China Global Television Network (CGTN), 1 May 2020, <<https://tinyurl.com/yc3tfaq>>

Continued on p. 2

Continued from p. 1



SOCIOCULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Philanthropist Government in the Times of COVID by **Adeel Mukhtar**, Assistant Research Officer

The Government of Pakistan is taking extraordinary measures to counter the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. To help vulnerable sections of society and protect industries, the government has revealed a PKR 1.13 trillion relief package, which will partly be financed by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. Varying levels of lockdown were used by different provinces, with the Prime Minister Imran Khan, in total disagreement of a complete lockdown, fearing Pakistan's failure to deal with its extensive financial consequences. Other measures undertaken to control the outbreak include direct ventures into medicinal services framework and administrations; consideration of setting up a Coronavirus Ordinance; utilizing the World Health Organization's Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan against COVID; setting up one of the world's most focused monetary programs targeted at daily-wage labourers; and early appropriation of *Zakat*. Welfare organizations have also stepped in to help the government.

Global News Pakistan, 2 May 2020, <<https://tinyurl.com/yajoqoaf>>



GOVERNANCE, ECONOMY & TECHNOLOGY

Battling Pandemic by **Amna Ejaz Rafi**, Assistant Research Officer

COVID-19 has altered our way of life and people are learning to adjust to new ways of living requiring more reliance on technology, and lesser on physical interaction. Those dependent on physical mobility to earn a livelihood are at a disadvantage, compelling people to reorient their ways of earning. Businesses and governments alike are required to adopt strategies to readjust. COVID-19 has gripped people in fear, many speculating collapse of the healthcare system if the pace

of the virus continues undeterred. Scientists world over are trying to find a cure to the pandemic, but the question remains whether life will return to normal even after a vaccine is developed. The economic ramifications, resulting from the outbreak of the virus, will pose a challenge in reverting back to old practices.

Daily Times, 16 May 2020, <<https://tinyurl.com/y6v5olub>>

The Phase One Agreement: An American Project Gone Rogue? by **Waleed Yawer**, Assistant Research Officer

The United States' Phase One Trade Agreement, designed to retain support among manufacturing states for Trump's re-election campaign, retained tariffs on Chinese imports, to increase demand for American goods. Post-lockdown, disruption of supply chains, rise in unemployment and uncertain consumer behaviour, have left industries cash strapped and uncertain about their future. America is even at risk of losing its energy market. Altogether, it adds weight to adjustment of the Agreement, directed towards lowering of tariffs on Chinese imports.

Daily Times, 17 May 2020, <<https://tinyurl.com/y9jyntc3>>

Latest Publication

From 13-14 November 2019, the Islamabad Policy Research Institute hosted delegates from 14 countries with the desire to provide a platform to stimulate academic/policy discussions on issues related to peace and development in the SAMECA region at its flagship Margalla Dialogue on *Peace and Development in South Asia, Middle East, Central Asia*. Detailed proceedings of the first Margalla Dialogue 2019, including major takeaways and its key recommendations have been published and can be downloaded from the link below:

<<https://ipripak.org/margalla-dialogue19-report/>>



Ambassador Webinar Series

Humanitarian Assistance amid the COVID-19 Lockdown in Indian-Occupied Jammu & Kashmir: International Response to the Clampdown

On 11 May 2020, IPRI organized a webinar under its Ambassador Lecture Series on *Humanitarian Assistance amid the COVID-19 Lockdown in Indian-Occupied Jammu & Kashmir: International Response to the Clampdown*.



In his Opening Remarks, **Brig. (R) Raashid Wali Janjua**, Acting President and Director Research, IPRI, welcomed the Ambassador and raised his concerns about the current clampdown on Kashmiris in IOJ&K, terming it as a

'double whammy,' due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the human atrocities that India is committing in the region.



Delivering his Keynote Address **Ambassador (R) Ashraf Jehangir Qazi**, Former Pakistan High Commissioner to India and Ambassador to US and China, discussed how the outbreak of COVID-19 has provided India an opportunity to

further execute its *Hindutva* designs of absorbing and annexing the Valley. He pointed out that by unilaterally changing the legal status of IOJ&K in August 2019, India has nullified the Simla Agreement.

India is using COVID-19 as an iron curtain for its policy of genocide in IOJ&K. India wants to sort out its Kashmir problem once and for all by the use of overwhelming force, no matter what the cost to Kashmiri lives may be.

Ambassador Qazi highlighted that IOJ&K has been in a state of lockdown since 5 August 2019, now reinforced since the outbreak of COVID-19. He stressed that direct access to international humanitarian assistance has always been denied to people of IOJ&K by the Indian regime, but has been further tightened since August 2019, and made more comprehensive since the emergence of COVID-19.

He lamented that although the international community has expressed concerns over the situation in IOJ&K, it has become abundantly clear it will only exercise diplomatic and moral pressure on India, no matter how grave the human rights situation may be. India, ignoring these concerns, has shifted the blame on Pakistan. Under these circumstances if the forced lockdown in IOJ&K remains the same and a military conflict like Pulwama/Balakot begins, the international pressure to exercise restraint will be on Pakistan, not India. The

Indian narrative will, once again, prevail over the Pakistani narrative. The Ambassador was of the opinion that this makes Pakistan's strategic cooperation with China essential. China will not buy into the Indian narrative and will assist Pakistan by countering Western measures against it.



He opined that the Kashmir dispute needs to be seen in the broader context, taking into account military occupation and constitutional onslaught to alter the demographics of IOJ&K; the outbreak of COVID-19; India's assault against its own Muslim minority; and India committing genocide in IOJ&K, according to the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide.

There are no cost-free or risk-free options. Pakistan must stop being a soft state in order to survive.

Recommendations

Discussing a valid response in light of these circumstances, Ambassador Qazi advised that Pakistan must operate on two tracks making the world see that, first, Pakistan is working on all fronts to engage with India to discuss and resolve all outstanding issues, including climate change, for peaceful co-existence; and second, that Pakistan does not seek zero-sum solutions. Ambassador Qazi urged that the Prime Minister of Pakistan should regularly brief the nation about such developments. The Ambassador was of the view that this could lead to backchannel diplomacy similar to 2005-06, but in a more regular dialogue format to reach initial and interim understandings on IOJ&K. The Government of Azad Kashmir, All Parties Hurriyat Conference representatives and other parties of Kashmir also need to be frequently briefed by the Foreign Office. Such initiatives would make the international community aware of Pakistan's efforts for a peaceful resolution of the dispute, he remarked.

Continued on p. 4

IPRI Scholars' Opinion Articles

Brig. (R) Raashid Wali Janjua
Director Research

1. "Hindutva: A Poisonous Chalice"
2. "India Fails South Asia"
Pakistan Observer

Ambassador (R) Asif Durrani
Senior Research Fellow
"Afghan Peace: Treading through Spoilers' Minefield"
Daily Times

Dr Talat Farooq
Senior Consultant
"Uneasy Neighbours, Uneasy Border: Iran and Pakistan"
Enduring America (EA) Worldview

Hannan Hussain
Assistant Research Officer

1. "Why the Haste on a COVID Inquiry? Australia Can't Afford to Amplify US Anti-China Offensive"
The Sydney Morning Herald
2. "Why India's New FDI Rules Can't Bother Chinese Investments?"
Daily Times
3. "NYT Expose on Trump's Wuhan Lab Conspiracy Proves Beijing's Point"
China Global Television Network (CGTN)

Waleed Yawer
Assistant Research Officer
"The Phase One Agreement: An American Project Gone Rogue?"
Daily Times

Hamzah Rifaat Hussain
Assistant Research Officer
"U.S. Strategy on Nuclear Testing, Non-Proliferation under Question Again"
China Global Television Network (CGTN)

Muhammad Nawaz Khan
Research Officer
"India Fails to Protect Minorities"
Balochistan Times

Gulshan Rafiq
Assistant Research Officer
"South Asia's Troubled Borders"
Global News Pakistan

Adeel Mukhtar Mirza
Assistant Research Officer

1. "India-China-Nepal Fiasco: Explosive Triangle"
2. "Philanthropist Government in the Times of COVID"
3. "The Blame Game"
Global News Pakistan

Amna Ejaz Rafi
Assistant Research Officer
"Battling Pandemic"
Daily Times

Contact Information

Address: IPRI, Fifth Floor, Evacuee Complex, Sir Agha Khan Road, Sector F-5/1, Islamabad, Pakistan.

-  +92 51 9211346-49
-  ipri.editor@gmail.com
-  <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Islamabad-Policy-Research-Institute>
-  https://twitter.com/IPRI_Pakistan
-  www.ipripak.org

IPRI on Television



Ambassador (R) Asif Durrani, Senior Research Fellow at IPRI was part of 7 panel discussions during the month of May, appearing on various local news channels including **PTV World** (*Views on News, Dialogue, Politics Today, and Newsroom*), **Indus News** (*Newswire*), and **Khyber News** (*Marakka*). He shared his views on the changing situation in Afghanistan and power sharing agreement signed on 17 May between Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah-Abdullah. He also discussed India's human rights violations in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir; tensions between India-China; Prime Minister Modi's designs to destabilize the region; and Pakistan's measured response to baseless allegations by India.

Continued from p. 3

Ambassador Webinar Series Question/Answer Session

When probed about whether Pakistan should revoke the Simla Agreement given the current circumstances, Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir Qazi responded by clarifying that India has already revoked that Agreement by its actions in August last year. He remarked that Pakistan should not revoke the Agreement as it has an unblemished record of abiding by UN Resolutions with respect to Kashmir and other issues, and does not need to share the blame with India.

When questioned about the UN Secretary General's call for a worldwide ceasefire, he responded that a principled compromise, which does not betray the interests of Pakistan, was possible in the case of IOJ&K. He advised that UN's help with regard to Kashmir is limited and other avenues need to be explored to pressurise India.