**USA versus China**

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As always, Pakistan has found itself in the eye of the storm. While progress on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is ongoing, the country continues to drown in debt. CPEC is being marketed as the great game changer, just like all the US funded projects previously that only added to our financial burden. Somehow the projects’ debt has now been passed over to the nation.

In addition to security challenges, Pakistan also has to deal with ballooning external liabilities that have now crossed the $100 billion mark. Due to various vested interests, we have a history of selling cheap as a nation. From Badaber to Afghanistan and to CPEC, we have not been able to get a fair deal for the land of the pure. Every nation must work in its best interests and Pakistan is no exception. Very few Pakistani leaders have been able to stand up for the people. Liaquat Ali Khan the first Prime Minister who refused to sign on the dotted line, he also refused to influence Iran to denationalise its oil wells. Then Bhutto had a vision of building an Islamic bloc for which he was punished.

[Vince, Gregory excel as England whitewash Pakistan in ODI series](https://nation.com.pk/14-Jul-2021/vince-gregory-excel-as-england-whitewash-pakistan-in-odi-series)

The Belt and Road Initiative project (BRI) of the People’s Republic of China is indeed poised to be a game changer for our ‘Iron Brothers’ but for us, it might pose a serious challenge to security and debt. To secure our future we must get rid of our external liabilities which continue to spiral. According to the PM Imran Khan, the country has suffered heavily due to our unnecessary indulgence in the War on Terror, especially in the dealing with Afghanistan over the years. We have suffered from a loss of over 70,000 human lives and $150 billion in assets. Neutrality is the correct approach as announced by the PM. If the Taliban are unable to form a consensus government in Kabul and the country faces civil war, then Pakistan will seal its borders. Mistakes of the past should not be repeated. If the US seeks any concessions, it must cover our past losses and enable us to stand on our own feet. There should be a total debt write off to clean the slate. The infrastructural damage caused by the war has to be rebuilt for which billions are needed.

[Pakistan stands with Kabul for peaceful, united Afghanistan: FM](https://nation.com.pk/14-Jul-2021/pakistan-stands-with-kabul-for-peaceful-united-afghanistan-fm)

The rivalry of the super powers also poses serious security challenges for the country. Under the Abraham Accord, the USA, India and Israel have agreed to contain Chinese influence in the region. India has amassed troops in Laddakh and Rajistan, which poses a serious threat. Even a naval blockade is possible. Considering the challenges posed by this unholy alliance to stall CPEC, we may have to be extra cautious about the financial implications. The entire CPEC expenditure could be converted into an investment instead of a loan. Only my friend Comrade, Aitzaz Ahsan, has openly spoken about it while all others continue to be silent. A passage through Pakistan to reach the warm waters of the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean is no small opening. It will extend the market for the Chinese products to cover half of the globe. The trade benefits to China will be extensive and long term. In his last speech in the parliament Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto talked about a corridor through Balochistan to link Afghanistan and then on to the Soviet Union. It was a brilliant idea which could have saved the area from two super power invasions, destruction and then retreat after a heavy toll.

[Jill Biden leading US delegation at Tokyo Olympics opening ceremony](https://nation.com.pk/13-Jul-2021/jill-biden-leading-us-delegation-at-tokyo-olympics-opening-ceremony)

The elected civilian government of Imran Khan has taken a principled stand to keep out of the conflict zone. Leadership demands vision and bold decisions. The past record needs to be corrected despite propaganda. It was Feroze Khan Noon and Lady Noon who got Gawadar for us, it was Khan Qayyum Khan who built the Warsak Dam, it was Bhutto who started the process of building the Nuclear Device. The entire framework for development was built in the early fifties and it relied on our own resources. We must come out of the debt trap, it is vital. Until October 1958, Pakistan was totally debt free. Nation building was the top agenda. It was Zia who decided to take on the Soviet Union to please the USA, which was acting in total violation of national interests. Zia’s Dark Ages continue to haunt us today even. Musharraf faulted twice, first by supporting and then abruptly pulling out of Afghanistan thereby seriously hurting Pakistan’s wellbeing. Our focus should focus on resolving the Kashmir conflict, especially considering the sort of support it could extend to the Palestinian cause. Kashmir is our jugular vein, we must internationalise the plight of our Kashmiri brothers. The diplomatic challenges that Pakistan faces today requires professional leadership at the Foreign Office. National Security Adviser, Dr Moeed Yousaf, has already proven his credentials in the international arena. A change of leadership is imminent as part of the entire process. For the sake of Pakistan, merit must prevail.

[PTI submits details of financial accounts to ECP: Farrukh](https://nation.com.pk/13-Jul-2021/pti-submits-details-of-financial-accounts-to-ecp-farrukh)

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