**Is America back in old clothes?**

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Many were happy when President Joe Biden told the world soon after he took power in January this year that “America is back”—and people thought in old and new clothes. He whisked his country back into the Paris Agreement, the legally binding international treaty on climate change, which former President Donald Trump pulled the US out of in June 2017, just half a year after it had entered into force. Biden also returned the US as a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO), which Trump pulled out of in July 2020 in spite of the worldwide corona pandemic where WHO was a key coordinating player, indeed with regards to equality in rich and poor countries.

Biden has also ascertained the expected, that America will continue its close cooperation with the EU; US is at the same time probably happy with the UK’s new position outside the EU. Biden goes on as the leader of NATO, whose role it is to keep Russia and China at arm’s length militarily but also in trade and more. As for China, Biden continues Trump’s policies and has said that he will not allow China to take over as the world’s leading economic power (after the USA) during his presidency, meaning the next four, or maybe eight years, if the elderly Biden stays in good health and seeks a second term. We all know that China is moving ahead at an impressive pace and is said to have the world’s largest economy within a decade or so, and the US cannot stop that, and would probably not benefit from it either. As for Russia, the world’s largest country, with abundance of natural resources, development seems to take longer, yet it will indeed come, and it will also be in the interest of Europe, and certainly of Russia’s Central Asian’s neighbours and beyond. Russia is vital regarding Afghanistan, Syria and the region.

[Chauvin sentenced to 22.5 years behind bars over 2020 killing of George Floyd](https://nation.com.pk/26-Jun-2021/chauvin-sentenced-to-22-5-years-behind-bars-over-2020-killing-of-george-floyd)

When I was a student in development studies and other social sciences in the 1970s, political scientists used to teach us that superpowers have much longer-term development perspectives than other countries, perhaps fifty years, even a hundred years and more. Development and maintenance of spheres of interest of superpowers and great powers will always be long-term—rarely democratic and for voters to be bothered about. But then, one also sometimes wonders as for the cost and benefit, for acceptance and rejection, and many other issues. The recently held G7 and NATO summits of the world’s most powerful countries and organisations seemed to have outdated, ‘old men’s minds’ as regards international cooperation and definition of enemies and what threats actually are.

As readers of my articles would have seen, I always believe in dialogue and cooperation. In our time, that includes strengthening of such between the USA, China, Russia, Europe, and beyond, namely Africa, Latin America, our Sub-Continent, and more. I believe we have blundered and keep blundering tremendously in the field of international relations. In our time, international relations are no longer quite stale diplomatic fields and academic disciplines of political scientists. They have become much broader and multi-disciplinary fields, where exploitation is less important than everybody’s gain. Alas, Europe’s and NATO’s poor relations with Russia, and to some extent China, are examples of little use of the new knowledge. The way the African continent, with 60 countries, is treated, reminds us of the West’s policies at the time of independence. USA’s current trade disputes with China must be approached much more realistically, finding positive win-win situations for all. The role of China in the world must be considered using new knowledge, not old men’s outdated and inflexible modalities.

[US not changed stance on recognizing Israeli sovereignty over Golan Heights](https://nation.com.pk/26-Jun-2021/us-not-changed-stance-on-recognizing-israeli-sovereignty-over-golan-heights)

Most countries find it positive that the world after Trump has at least become more predictable and it is ‘business as usual’. That is not enough, but it is something. We are welcoming the USA being back in international organisations. Yet, that doesn’t mean that the US should lead in those organizations and in all fields, as it almost took for granted earlier. From now on, the USA must begin to realise that it is one country among new powers, or groups of countries. True, the US is still a superpower and will play a major role in this century, with Europe and probably in other formations. Some political scientists say that we will have some six or eight geo-political powers in future, with two or three of them being superpowers. But again, cooperation to everyone’s benefit is a key for future peace and development.

In the United Nations, USA should certainly have a lesser role, but that is also up to other important members to realize, especially as for funding of the UN. On the other hand, the UN’s specialised agencies, organisations and programmes must shape up, too, and perform better. Trump did have a point when he criticised the UN for not performing as well as they should. I don’t think he mentioned The World Bank, which in many ways is an ‘extension of America in poor countries’, needing major revision.

[One dose of Sputnik V reduces mortality rate in people by 70-80%](https://nation.com.pk/26-Jun-2021/one-dose-of-sputnik-v-reduces-mortality-rate-in-people-by-70-80-percent)

The whole field of development aid and north-south cooperation must change. The lack of fair international response to the corona pandemic, indeed in Africa, where still only one to two percent of the people have been vaccinated, shows the need for total change. COVAX was meant to be a facility within the UN to help fairer distribution of medicines and vaccination to poor countries, and to allow for vaccine production at a lower cost. The current situation is a scandal, as the WHO Chief Tedros Adhanom Gebreyesus, himself from Ethiopia, has said, alas, mainly to deaf ears and to no effect. Besides, it is in the end in all countries’ interest to have more equality as that leads to better security and prosperity for all. Ostriches hide their heads in the sand and think they are safe; we human beings and leaders should be better.

In my article last week, I summarized the G7 and NATO summits, which were held in old style. Separately, President Joe Biden went on to meet President Vladimir Putin, that too in the old style in the Villa La Grange in Geneva, Switzerland, a famous venue for discussions and signing of international cooperation documents.

[Germany bans Hamas flag, PKK symbols after wave of anti-Semitic incidents](https://nation.com.pk/26-Jun-2021/germany-bans-hamas-flag-pkk-symbols-after-wave-of-anti-semitic-incidents)

Some glimpse of hope was seen when the outgoing German Chancellor Angela Merkel reminded her peer leaders about not only defining what (and who) they were against, but also what they were indeed for. Next year’s G7 summit will be in Germany, but without Merkel, so it is up to the rest to think new and positive to create a more inclusive, equal and better world, where all countries, groups and individuals can enjoy good human rights and living conditions.

It is not only America that must go home and change clothes; most Western countries, and others, too, must do that. Yes, Biden is more predictable than Trump, and NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg (completing his extended term in September 2022) is a clever leader, shying away from internal conflicts, and also allowing America’s interests first. Sadly, he has led the organization and the world into massive rearmament. That and other policies can lead to tensions similar to those during the Cold War. Young people don’t want that; they want peace, equality, a sustainable environment, good gender relations in more—so we all can live well—in our own clothes, creeds, colours, faiths, differences and likeness.