**Zero-Sum**

[**Najm us Saqib**](https://www.nation.com.pk/columnist/najm-us-saqib)

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Disproportionate advancement in technology has made the world market accessible to all and sundry. In an atmosphere of endless opportunities to carve out a comparatively comfortable future, majority of the countries have started the process of adapting to the change. Alliances in political and economic spheres are underway to secure a piece of the global pie. In the backdrop of a possible cold-war, sensible nations are working together in harnessing the change to the benefit of their present and future generations. Multilateral cooperation on crisis management is being strengthened while giving due space to preventive diplomacy and mediation.

From bracing the imminent energy crisis to reorienting the promotion of exports and producing more competitive products with higher added value, conscientious nations would wish to prepare doable plans to honourably breathe in the comity of nations.

Completely oblivious of this change in the global landscape, Pakistan finds itself busy in re-inventing the wheel….!! Facing an acute sense of insecurity, the people of Pakistan are going through one of the worst periods of political instability and economic crunch. The writ of the government has been challenged in the past. However, the country’s history has never experienced such a farcical situation whereby certain political communities are constantly defying the State of Pakistan’s territoriality with impunity. In the absence of a true and functional Parliament, the concepts such as constitution, rule of law, democracy, justice and foreign policy have lost their meanings. To top it all, there seems to be no one responsible to tackle the real issues and manage the consequences. Undoubtedly, Pakistan is going through a serious crisis of confidence.

['Liar' and 'foreign agent' acting as innocent, Marriyum bashes Imran](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jan-2023/liar-and-foreign-agent-acting-as-innocent-marriyum-bashes-imran)

In addition, no one at the helm of affairs seems to be ‘delivering’ except for promising statements. Immediate political or financial gains have blindfolded the present and future policy-makers. Indeed, Pakistan is at the crossroads.

On the other hand, the people have no idea what is going on. Each time, they have suffered the wrath of their ill-advised political choices. Every time, they happily repeated the same mistake. Conversely, the masses actually adore watching this cyclic circus as each time, enthusiasm defeats wisdom and the so-called life goes on. The good news is that the resilient people of Pakistan have not lost hope of getting the promised roti, kapra aur makaan (food, clothing and shelter) or achieving haqiqi aazaadi (real independence). Decades have passed by but the expressions ‘will’ and ‘shall’ have not changed to ‘is’ and ‘has’.

Interestingly, a few brainy individuals like former National Security Advisor (NSA) Moeed Yusuf are still hopeful of turning the tables for Pakistan. If only such and such initiatives were taken in political and economic fields, Pakistan could easily achieve such and such milestones. The country could present its case as a dependable partner if only such and such doctrines could be factored in.

[Dar declares Imran Khan responsible for economic crisis](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jan-2023/dar-declares-imran-khan-responsible-for-economic-crisis)

According to Yusuf, Pakistan must prepare itself to face the changing global geo-political and geo-economic situation. Referring to available tough choices, he observes that Pakistan could either become a proxy ground for great power contestation or emerge with a model where a destabilized Pakistan is unfavorable for the world.

Such propositions make perfect sense but only on paper. First question: Why must we presume that Pakistan is and will always remain ‘destabilized’? Second question: If Pakistan is or will become a proxy ground for great power contestation, what could we do to avoid this undesirable predicament? Third question: Agreed, Pakistan must prepare itself to face the changing global geo-political and geo-economic situation. The question is: How?

As NSA, Yusuf is credited with presenting Pakistan’s first-ever National Security Policy (NSP) in December 2021. Putting the economic and military security at its core, the NSP had outlined the challenges and opportunities facing Pakistan in coming years while providing policy guidelines for mitigating and actualizing opportunities through a ‘whole-of-government approach’. The NSP was required to be revised every year. Fourth question: Does Pakistan still have a National Security Policy? If yes, when is it going to be revised as a year has since passed? If no, what was the rationale behind floating an ‘unprecedented’ and ‘important’ official document which had no practical value for the country at all?

[PDM doubles down on giving Imran tough time](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jan-2023/pdm-doubles-down-on-giving-imran-tough-time)

The same wishy-washy situation prevails in Islamabad with regard to addressing the acute economic issues. In the face of the continuing political uncertainty, the nation is being assured that ‘Pakistan is heading in the right direction’ and ‘it will not default’. Again, the use of ‘will’ makes it difficult to believe the genuineness of such bold statements. Secondly, not going into default seems to be the aim instead of putting the country on the right course of economic recovery. Not being killed is the endeavour rather than acquiring a comparatively reasonable standard of living. As always, it is the ‘opposition’ which is hell bent on ‘forestalling foreign investment in the country by propagating on corruption stories.’ As always, it is the ‘opposition’ that needs to ‘show some serious attitude and not play with the country’s economy.’ As always, ‘hell is other people’ and the government of the day is struggling to find a way out on its own….!!!

[Karachi mayor election delay sows discontent](https://www.nation.com.pk/27-Jan-2023/karachi-mayor-election-delay-sows-discontent)

Meanwhile, efforts are underway to find the proverbial needle of achievement in the haystack of issues of enormous proportions. A routine rotatory presidentship at any UN Committee would be hailed and celebrated as a diplomatic success. Fixing a meeting with IMF would be considered worth mentioning at press conferences with a broad smile. Promises made by the world to financially assist in addressing issues created by the recent floods are portrayed as the result of own hard work. Even Goldman Sachs’ recent research is being projected as a big positive without acknowledging the attached ‘proviso’. According to Goldman Sachs, Pakistan will be the sixth largest economy in the world by 2075 provided ‘appropriate policies and institutions are in place.’ How and when Islamabad will make ‘appropriate policies’ and put ‘Institutions’ in place, is anybody’s guess.