**‘America is back’**

[**Atle Hetland**](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/atle-hetland)

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It is said that ‘all politics is local’. The phrase is accredited to the former top American politician Tip O’Neill. He said that politicians must listen to the people in their constituencies and help improve their conditions concretely. Politics should not be abstract and intangible, but about real issues of concern to people. President Joe Biden has said that ‘America is back’, yet, in a world that remains unequal, certainly so militarily.

When the leaders of the world’s seven richest countries, the G7 Group, and a number of observers from other countries and multilateral organisations met in Cornwall, England, last week, chaired by UK’s PM Boris Johnson, they discussed international issues, but probably with a local flavour, indeed taking up issues of importance to their home countries and constituencies. Many issues are local, regional and international at the same time as international, such as banning of electricity generated by coal, reduction of the use of oil, and the vast number of other climate and environmental issues. The G7 Summit endorsed the aim of carbon neutrality by 2050, but didn’t present many details about how to reach it. Attention was given to economic growth, free trade, job creation and building back better after the corona pandemic. Health issues and gender equality were given due priority. Improved global responsibility was mentioned, with better regulated and improved roles of the multinationals.

[Bangladesh seeks UN intervention to end Rohingya crisis](https://nation.com.pk/18-Jun-2021/bangladesh-seeks-un-intervention-to-end-rohingya-crisis)

All the G7 leaders, plus 23 more, went on to another meeting, notably the 2021 NATO Summit last Monday June 14, 2021 in Brussels, Belgium. NATO is a military alliance to secure local and international interests, notably defence, in its 30 member countries, having the policy of ‘one for all, all for one’ in case of attack from outside. In recent decades, NATO has also had operations outside its territory, such as in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, and has been criticised for that as it basically falls outside its mandate. Recently, it has also increased presence in the South China Sea.

In the future, NATO should continue to focus on prevention of various forms of terrorism and unrest. Many countries must improve migration and integration policies. NATO must be in the forefront with regards to prevention of new types of conflicts, such as cyber war, political infiltration and more. As we know too well, NATO was not prepared to be the defence organisation one had expected when the corona pandemic struck. In the future, pandemics and other ‘unknown’ attacks should be part of NATO’s priority areas. Less focus should be given to military and other conventional defence—in spite of the organisation’s largest state, the US, depending on weapons and industrial export for its development. Most NATO members are also EU members.

[Israel to send 1M vaccine doses to Palestinian Authority in swap deal](https://nation.com.pk/18-Jun-2021/israel-to-send-1m-vaccine-doses-to-palestinian-authority-in-swap-deal)

The final communiqué from the 2021 NATO Summit mentions Russia as a hostile country no less than sixty times. Almost eight years after Russia’s annexation of Crimea, that issue is still a top issue blocking positive talks in the relations and the NATO-Russia cooperation body, which has not met in the last two years. Even conservative Western politicians believe the Crimea issues must be put aside in spite of it being controversial to do so, and Russia’s defence interest realised. Peaceful solutions to the unrest in eastern parts of Ukraine must be found.

If there had been good cooperation initiated by NATO and the West after the fall of the Soviet Union from 1989/90, the relations between the ‘blocs’ today could have been much better, even good. The current crisis in Belarus might not have risen, and it might not have become the symbol of Russia’s geopolitical sphere of interest towards the West, that it now is, as also Ukraine is.

It is sad to witness the current situation, which has gone from bad to worse at a time when Russia needs economic and political modernisation and development—and when the West and the world as a whole should work towards reduced military expenses, not the rearmament which is currently led by NATO although in a time of the West’s relative economic decline as compared to China’s impressive growth and development, with ‘systematic challenges’—and indeed potentials.

[Pakistan army to modernise Artillery corps: COAS](https://nation.com.pk/18-Jun-2021/pakistan-army-to-modernise-artillery-corps-coas)

The Norwegian PM, Erna Solberg, has pointed out that NATO should not be too expansionist; she has also underlined the importance of good trade and other relations with China. Thinking as a local politician perhaps, she said during the 2021 Summit that she wants excellent cooperation with neighbouring Russia in the Far North, as Stoltenberg also secured when he was Norwegian PM. In the end, perhaps all politics is indeed local politics. Besides, much of the international and military issues of NATO and the world, indeed rearmament, are intangible, illogical and quite impossible to understand for most of us, certainly for me, and perhaps even the leaders—in a world that remains very unequal.