



**STRATEGIC VISION**  
INSTITUTE

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## Strategic Vision Institute (SVI)

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## SVI Foresight

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*SVI Foresight* is a monthly electronic journal. It has a multi-disciplinary perspective highlighting contemporary strategic and security studies. The Journal is envisioned to be a collection of policy-oriented articles written by its Research Associates, Visiting Faculty and professional experts. The objective is to provide the readership with a concise all-round and real-time policy oriented discourse on contemporary strategic regional and international developments, highlighting their relevance to Pakistan.



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## *Editor's Note*

In a year which saw the Balakot strikes and the repealing of Jammu and Kashmir's special constitutional status already inflame tensions between the two nuclear armed rivals; Prime Minister Modi has added even more fuel to this raging fire (of his own making) by tabling the highly controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) and National Register of Citizens (NRC). In what can only be termed as a clear and systematic marginalization of India's 200 million Muslims – the largest minority population of Muslims anywhere in the world - the glaring similarities of the BJP's insidious Hindutva ideology with the fascist regimes of pre-war Europe have become unnervingly apparent even to some of India's staunchest apologists. With the CAB there is no now doubt that India's foreign policy under PM Modi is nothing more than an extension of his trademark demagoguery built on divisive communalism at the wider regional level.

Especially considering the widespread unrest these moves have caused all over India, one wonders whether the BJP government in its unabashed hubris realizes how it has merely painted itself into a corner. After all the cow lynchings and state sanctioned destruction of Islamic cultural and religious sites, this move to cleanse Indian society of Muslim 'infiltrators' via the CAB and NRC bears a striking and dangerous resemblance to the same discourse that had led to the marginalization of the Jewish population across axis controlled Europe.

Will Indian Muslims soon also be required to publicly differentiate themselves like European Jews had to under German occupied territories of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century? Will they too be required to wear something akin to that humiliating yellow star that was used to differentiate the 'pure' from those that needed to be shipped in packed trains on to numerous concentration camps? Is basing a domestic and foreign policy on nothing but deep seeded communal fault-lines even sustainable in today's day and age, especially with the specter of nuclear war looming overhead?

It is hoped that this issue will help readers in staying up to date with the current political environment and that they will find the analyses useful. The SVI Foresight team invites and highly encourages contributions from the security and strategic community in the form of opinion based short commentaries on contemporary political, security and strategic issues. Any suggestions for further improvements are welcome at our [contact address](#). Previous issues of the SVI Foresight can be accessed on our [website](#), as well as our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. For more information, please visit [www.thesvi.org](http://www.thesvi.org).

M Waqas Jan  
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# ***Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB): Global Ideological Non-Conformism***

*Shamsa Nawaz*

The unashamedly authoritarian regime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has once again displayed his exclusionary fascist instinct and violated the secular principles enshrined in the amended constitution of India. In fact, irreligious polity was never originally placed in the Indian Constitution even at the time of India's creation. Enacted during March 1977, the controversial 42nd Amendment Bill, which mainly came up as a result of the personal ambitions of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared India as a "sovereign secular socialist republic" instead of a "[sovereign democratic republic.](#)" Bringing about widespread changes in its constitutional history, it primarily curtailed the democratic rights in the country by giving all-encompassing powers to the Prime Minister's Office. As a result, the Parliament was empowered with unrestrained authority to amend any parts of the Constitution, without judicial review.

Nevertheless, was the change of words from "unity of the nation" to "unity and integrity of the nations" in the [42nd Constitutional Amendment](#) of India meant simply to dissipate the ideological tensions at that time; especially since a shift from a populist center-towards the left was representative of the politics of the day? Or was Indian liberal democracy simply misunderstood? The demand to separate religion from the state was most pronounced in the post medieval period. The reaction of the international community after World War I, conservatism, fascism and Nazism were self-evidently swayed away by liberal democracy. It however, overshadowed the inherent Indian politics of center-to-right as well. Popping up of several issues of today were largely or entirely expected and were kept under the carpet opportunistically. These have come to the fore with the economic rise of India.

Discriminatingly defining illegal immigrants as [foreigners](#) who enter India without a valid passport or travel documents, or stay beyond the permitted time into law on religious grounds is clearly either an ideological disposition of India or an original preference ever since its creation as an independent state. It has actually divided the Sub-continent and essentially confirms the validity of the two-nation theory. The decay of liberal democratic system is a natural phenomenon, appropriately synchronizing into an exclusionary society nurtured aptly by a Hindu dominated society. As such it simply confirms that the Indian nation was to eventually lead to the Hinduization of India.

The Citizen Amendment Bill (CAB) was first put before parliament in July 2016. It cleared the parliament's lower house where the BJP has a large majority, but it did not pass in the upper house, after violent anti-migrant protests in north-eastern India. According to the CAB, the amended 64-years-old Indian Citizenship law [prohibits](#) illegal migrants from becoming Indian citizens. They could be deported or jailed. The bill also amends a provision which says a person must have lived in India or worked for the federal government for at least 11 years before they can apply for citizenship. Nonetheless, the most humiliating clause of the bill is an exception for members of six religious minority

communities – Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian – provided that they can prove that they are from Pakistan, Afghanistan or Bangladesh. They will only have to live or work in India for six years to be eligible for citizenship by naturalization which is a process which allows a non-citizen to acquire the citizenship or nationality of a country. The CAB is also linked to The National Register of Citizens (NRC), which is a list of people who can prove they came to the state by 24 March 1971, a day before neighboring Bangladesh became an independent country. It also protects the non-Muslim Bengalis who migrated to Assam and are excluded from the register and face the threat of deportation. Home Minister Amit Shah proposed a nationwide register of citizens to ensure that [“each and every infiltrator is identified and expelled from India”](#) by 2024.

Muslims are clearly victimized since the Bill predominantly categorizes them as those who would be deemed illegal migrants and those who can prove their identity as being from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Niraja Gopal Jaya believes that the both “the NRC and CAB have the “potential of transforming India into a majoritarian polity with gradations of citizenship rights.” India is experiencing widespread opposition from all sections of its own population worldwide. The protests were particularly vocal in Assam state, which in August saw two million residents left off a citizens’ register. Illegal migration from Bangladesh has long been a concern in the state. They disregard the making of faith as a condition of citizenship. The constitution of India itself prohibits religious discrimination against its citizens and guarantees all persons equality before the law and equal protection of the law. Full of perils, both known and undiscovered, Modi’s RSS ideology certainly lacks the ability to discern the difference between appropriate expectations regarding the domestic and international behavior of a major state and misguided, dangerous demands for global ideological conformity regrettably optimized by religio-economic preferences. The repercussions of this move would be far-reaching. The non-responsive behavior of the major powers has unfortunately emboldened Modi to couch his non-universal policy and ignore Amnesty International laws ruthlessly.

<http://southasiajournal.net/citizenship-amendment-bill-cab-global-ideological-non-conformism/>.

## ***South Asia's Externalized Demons***

*M Waqas Jan*

As the Indian and Pakistani militaries yet again trade [ominous threats](#) with one another, the Line of Control is once more witness to a sustained and significant increase in cross border shelling from both sides. Coupled with [reports of unusual levels](#) of movement and deployment on India's side of the LOC, there is a certain sense of unease and uncertainty spreading throughout the entire region. With the recent turmoil that has taken hold of both countries' domestic politics, the risks of even the smallest missteps escalating to a full-blown conflict are at the present extremely high for both nuclear weapons states. This is even more worrisome when considering how demonizing each other amidst the drum beats of war, represents a surefire way of uniting an internally divided polity, against an already established and historic outside enemy.

This very notion forms the crux of the Pakistani government's official stance on the matter as it has for months attempted to internationalize the possibility of India conducting a false flag operation as a potential *casus belli*. Both Pakistan's military spokesman as well as its foreign minister have been clear in their [statements](#) in which they have linked India's aggressive posturing against Pakistan as simply an extension of the BJP's divisive communal politics from domestic towards regional fault lines. They point out that the recent unrest that has resulted from India's controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill stands perhaps as the clearest vindication of their argument, as the long simmering communal tensions that have plagued India's secular democracy finally come to fore. This for instance is evident in how the ruling BJP has embarked on its populist campaign of systematically eroding the rights of India's minorities, especially its population of over 200 million Muslims. Citing specifically the deliberate exclusion of Muslims from the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) as well as from India's already highly controversial National Register of Citizens (NRC), Pakistan's stance has been framed around showing how the BJP by habitually and willfully stoking communal tensions has given rise to a distinct form of fascism. A kind of fascism which while harking back to some of the worst excesses of Nazi Germany or Mussolini's Italy stands as a precursor to what helped ideologically fuel the unprecedented hate and genocide that had accompanied the Second World War.

On the other side of the most militarized border of the world, Pakistan too can be argued as being in the midst of a kind of internal political turmoil that is uniquely characteristic of its own tumultuous history. In what has been widely perceived as yet another episode in the long saga of the country's volatile civil military relations, recent steps taken by the country's judiciary to reassert its authority over certain domains of statehood has been widely portrayed as a direct challenge to the country's powerful military. This in an era where despite reassurances from both the elected government and the military repeatedly espousing that both 'are on the same page'; the judiciary's re-assertion of its legal and constitutional mandate have ignited a certain controversy of sorts over the power and accountability of Pakistan's powerful Army Chiefs, both sitting and old. This for instance is evident in the Supreme Court taking issue over the grounds on which the incumbent army chief General Bajwa was granted an extension in his tenure. Yet perhaps the biggest controversy to have come out of Pakistan's judiciary this

last week is the death sentence awarded to former president and military dictator, Gen. Musharraf on a 7-year-old case of treason. The death sentence has been widely criticized by both the ruling government as well as the military as not only [‘vindictive and uncalled for’](#) but highly suspect in its present timing considering the state of regional tensions. While the verdict and its subsequent appeals are a matter for the country’s top courts to decide, this latter point considering their timing with reference to the regional situation is highly interesting. This is because in externalizing the threat to Pakistan’s institutional unity, the argument has been based on uniting the country against a common enemy; the same way the BJP has been doing as part of its own domestic agenda when demonizing Pakistan.

These parallel almost similar strategies, while not entirely new, represent a dangerous narrative that is being set by both countries which in themselves can be used to justifying the use of force, be it at the conventional or even sub-conventional levels. However, there is still a major difference between both countries approaches that is worth noting. While the Pakistani military is simply pointing out the necessity of maintaining political and institutional stability as a necessary precursor to maintaining economic growth and regional security, India’s approach is tied to radically altering the status quo not only with regard to its internal politics, but also the international system as whole when considering its designs of becoming a major global power. Just like the second world war’s axis powers had embarked upon in their quest in setting up a Eurocentric world order built on certain fascist principles of exclusivity.

<https://foreignpolicynews.org/2019/12/23/south-asias-externalized-demons/>



## ***Pakistan-Russia Relations: Breaking Up with History***

*Shamsa Nawaz*

Saddled with the mistrust of the Cold War era, the new alliance swaps between India and the US and Pakistan and Russia, have led the geo-political terrain of South Asia to be once again multi-dimensionally open for these major rivals to contest. This paradigm shift can be best understood in the backdrop of the theory of integration.

This theory has seen three phases up until now. The sub-theory of transactionalism and neo-functionalism dominated the decades of 1950s and 1960s. The second phase of the late 1960s and early 1970s experienced the characterization of intense revisionism. It was largely [short lived](#) and experienced progress in theory only. Yet, in its second phase, the integration theory suffered during the late 1970s, as relations were particularly framed within a more unipolar world order. What possible shape the new emerging international governance system would take in the premise of the theories of disintegration and diversity can thus be best measured in the South Asian model. Driven by the US's "Asia Pivot", Putin's "Reach East" and India's "Look East" policies, the region's geo-politics have become even further complicated by the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The flagship project of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the membership of both India and Pakistan into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Russo-Taliban *rapprochement*, the Iran-Taliban *détente* and US-India harmonization are all contributing to the current political tremors being felt throughout South Asia.

Pakistan is at the center-stage of such shifting paradigms, with President Trump's disrespectful remarks standing as a case in point. On January 1, 2018, [he tweeted](#) that Pakistan "has given the US nothing but lies and deceit" and that "The United States has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years," (3) It represents in one of the many ways Pakistan was disdainfully pushed away from being one of the US's most important allies in its War on Terror. Yet, it could not endear the US to swim out of its love-hate relationship. Each spell of intimacy between the US and Pakistan has been followed by the emergence of a new security environment in the region with ambiguity and fiasco. Regrettably, the relationship between the two has always left behind a bad taste of animosity and doubt between both countries.

Since the recent past, Pakistan started revamping its relations with Russia in 2012. They have both taken a pro-active approach to take the relationship forward and look towards realizing their untapped potential in greater economic and military cooperation. The foreign minister of Russia, Mr. Sergei Lavrov visited Pakistan, followed by the visit of their Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu in 2014. These visits were mutually recognized and Russia's embargo on Pakistan was lifted. It agreed to supply [four Mi-35 helicopters](#) besides pledging to build a \$1.7 billion gas pipeline from Karachi to Lahore. Hence, despite India's concerns, Pakistan-Russia ties were resumed with cordiality after a lapse of several years when Pakistan played a major role against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. On the other hand, with its evolving role in the region, and renewed sanctions on Russia after the invasion of Ukraine, Russia has become even more pro-active in engaging with Pakistan. In fact, Ukraine alone has been a decisive factor in pushing Russia to explore new defense and energy markets.

Russia is particularly interested in Afghanistan due to its impact on [security](#) in the broader Central Asian context and thus is also concerned about the threat of terrorism and drugs flowing into its borders via the region. Moscow also noted the threat to regional stability arising from the presence of Islamic State in Afghanistan as the reason for its renewed interest there. Improvement in Pak-Russia relations is an apt appreciation of Pakistan's ability to foster peace and cooperation to counter terrorism affectively. They both have a shared belief that ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K) is the leading threat to Afghanistan's security. While U.S. policymakers contend that ISIS-K is a declining threat, Moscow and Islamabad have repeatedly stated that the terrorist network is [gaining new recruits](#) due to the displacement of ISIS fighters from Iraq and Syria. [Building relations with Pakistan](#) therefore has become increasingly relevant due to its strategic location and influence.

Furthermore, bilateral trade between Pakistan and Russia in 2018 was estimated to touch \$800 million, around \$600 million more since the previous year. This however is in stark contrast to Russo-India trade relations which amount to \$10 billion in 2017. The Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) on trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation was also set up in 2000.

Though, Pakistan is being appreciated as a mature and responsible state, the durability of the Russia-Pakistan alignment can be explained by both countries' common desire to reduce U.S. influence in South Asia, their shared strategies (since Pakistan had been an active participant in all Soviet sponsored peace negotiations) to resolve the war in Afghanistan and their adherence to similar prescriptive principles. Russia has primarily engaged in direct military cooperation with Pakistan and has to an extent defended Pakistan's conduct in multilateral organizations as well. Russia-Pakistan cooperation in Afghanistan presents a prototype for collaboration between the two former Cold War nemeses in other international crises. At the same time, Moscow has balanced its relationship with Pakistan and India quite carefully.

Historically, South Asia has undergone profound alterations. Nonetheless, it is an exercise in multilateralism for all concerned parties as each capital is constantly testing each other's red lines in ever-changing circumstances. With Afghanistan and Pakistan as the staging grounds, politics in South and Central Asia appears to be coming full circle with the making and breaking of alliances involving major regional and international actors. Whether the US's bellicose rhetoric towards Pakistan can be moderated to mitigate the risks associated with the Russia-Pakistan alignment, or to instead facilitate the alignment's consolidation by underestimating their partnership's strength is yet to be seen.

<https://www.eurasiareview.com/02012020-pakistan-russia-relations-breaking-up-with-history-oped/>

## ***Modi, Trump and the Vindication of Political Demagogues***

*M Waqas Jan*

As widespread protests across India enter their third week over the controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC), therein lies a muted sense of irony in how the once 'populist' BJP government is faced with an onslaught of a very different kind of populism of its own making. In a direct challenge to the ruling BJP government's inspired vision of the *Sangh Parivar*, protestors across major cities such as Lucknow, Delhi, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Assam have taken to the streets in defense of what has in principle remained a secular democracy. In effect exercising the very democratic right guaranteed to them by the Indian Constitution.

Yet, while these protests have already turned increasingly violent with many reported to have died at the hands of riot police, there is a general expectation that the apathy directed towards India's minorities that has long characterized this ruling government is likely to continue in the absence of any serious condemnation, especially from the rest of the democratic 'free world'. Hence, while 'Prime Minister Modi's government steadily erodes India's democratic ideals in favor of a more 'populist' brand of politics,' one can't help but note how this very statement has come to read as a catch-all byline that is applicable to almost any part of the world now. Be it in Trump's America, Putin's Russia, Erdogan's Turkey, Johnson's Britain or Bolsonaro's Brazil, the rise of such 'populist' leaders themselves represent perhaps one of the most troubling impediments to such a so called 'free' world.

For the ardent supporters of these leaders, the very fact that their support is part of the majoritarian cause stands as the ultimate triumph of democracy through the unfettered will of the people constituting these states. Yet, what this illusory triumph masks is how each of the above mentioned leaders, including Narendra Modi, have simply perfected the age-old art of political demagoguery. In generating the kind of rabble-rousing appeal that resonates with their electorate's basest fears and insecurities, the Trumps, Modis and Bolsonoros of our times have focused more on developing dangerous cults of personality that often transcend their respective democratic parties. In effect representing a brash, self-serving and dictatorial style of leadership as opposed to one based on consensus or an established rule of law.

This for instance has been evident in President Trump's recent impeachment the very grounds for which have coalesced around the President putting personal and political gain before the country's national security. In representing a clear violation of his oath of office to protect and uphold the United States Constitution, it also points to the vital need for adequate checks and balances that are otherwise inherent to the very idea of a democracy. This emphasis on accountability is important considering that even though President Trump's impeachment is unlikely to result in his removal from office, the symbolic value of a leader being held accountable under law is what differentiates a democratic ruler from a despotic or autocratic one.

Hence, on pure principle, a similar case can be made against Prime Minister Modi as well. Mr. Modi's systematic marginalization of Indian Muslims stands also as a blatant attempt at subverting the secular

principles laid out in the Indian Constitution for his own self-serving political agenda. Be it in disputed fringe territories of Kashmir and Assam, or in major metropolises in the country's heartland; Mr. Modi's concerted efforts at reshaping the very basis of Indian nationalism and statehood represents a sheer disdain for the democratic principles of equality, liberty and justice on which the likes of both Nehru and Gandhi had emphasized the need for establishing a pluralist more inclusivist society. Well cognizant of the deep seeded divides permeating through Indian society along the lines of caste, race, creed and language, several of India's founding leaders had emphasized self-rule through democracy as the only solution to colonial oppression. To see how those same principles, which have since remained enshrined in the Indian constitution for seven decades are now being willfully eroded is nothing short of absolute treason. It represents a betrayal of not only the very idea of democracy, but a willful perversion of the concept towards unadulterated demagoguery, minus the checks and balances needed to prevent an autocracy.

Hence, while President Trump's opponents both in and outside of his government still managed to achieve a symbolic victory in the form of an impeachment while working within an imperfect yet established democratic system; it waits to be seen whether India being the world's largest democracy can writhe itself free of what can only be described as fascist tyranny. The same kind of tyranny which the free world had once labeled as its anti-thesis when combating the likes of Hitler and Mussolini, or more recently Saddam Hussein and Moammar Ghaddafi.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2019/12/27/modi-trump-and-the-vindication-of-political-demagogues/>