



Afghanistan in 2023: Taliban Internal Power Struggles and Militancy

Vanda Felbab-Brown | 03 Feb 2023

“A real challenge to the Taliban’s power would emerge if significant Taliban factions split off – as a result of a putsch or frustration with the collapsed economy and a steep decline in particular factions’ income.”

Read More: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2023/02/03/afghanistan-in-2023-taliban-internal-power-struggles-and-militancy/>

Should India Allow the Taliban Regime to Station Its Envoy in Delhi?

Sudha Ramachandran | 03 Feb 2023

“While the fraying of Taliban-Pakistan relations has opened up space for India, New Delhi should use this space “not merely in a strategic sense but to engage at the grassroots level.”

Read More: <https://thediplomat.com/2023/02/should-india-allow-the-taliban-regime-to-station-its-envoy-in-delhi/>

China's Challenges in Afghanistan are Just Beginning

Shanthie Mariet D'Souza | 06 Feb 2023

“There are two core aspects to Beijing’s interest in Afghanistan: establishing security in its western frontier by controlling Uyghur separatism and protecting Belt and Road projects in Central Asia and Pakistan.”

Read More: <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/china%E2%80%99s-challenges-afghanistan-are-just-beginning-206177>

Pak Grappling with Economic, Political Crises

Shalini Chawla | 09 Feb 2023

“This is indeed one of the most challenging times for a country when it is compelled to deal with multiple crises. The economic, political and security challenges invariably share a linkage, and one intensifies the other.”

Read More: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/comment/pak-grappling-with-economic-political-crises-477890>

Inside Pakistan: Domestic Challenges and External Imperatives

Imran Ahmed, Claudia Chia, Kunthavi Kalachelvam and John Vater | 01 Dec 2022

“As Pakistan continues to face complex and enduring challenges, including political instability, a weakening economy, security concerns and shifting geopolitical realities, it is significant to study and understand the factors that exacerbate these difficulties.”

Read More: <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/inside-pakistan-domestic-challenges-and-external-imperatives/>

Pakistan in the Indo-Pacific Framework?

Rushali Saha | 17 Feb 2023

“As both countries look for a strategic shift in relations, Washington can involve Pakistan through the multilateral Indo-Pacific framework and open avenues of engagement amid foreign policy bandwidth constraints in Washington.”

Read More: <https://southasianvoices.org/pakistan-in-the-indo-pacific-framework/>

Pakistan's Security Challenges Necessitate a New Approach

Fahd Humayun | 31 Jan 2023

“Against a backdrop of mounting socioeconomic instability and political polarisation, it is unclear whether Pakistan’s leaders will be able to effectively tackle the country’s growing security challenges.”

Read More: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/1/31/pakistans-security-challenges-necessitate-a-new-approach>

Pakistan's Government Is Choosing Extremist Islam Over Economic Stability

Kunwar Khuldune Shahid | 15 Feb 2023

“There’s an evident surge in Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy policymaking targeting Muslim minorities, which in turn is further emboldening Islamist vigilantes.”

Read More: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/02/15/pakistan-blasphemy-laws-government-pmln-islam-economic-stability/>

Full Throttle in Neutral: China's New Security Architecture for the Middle East

Tuvia Gering | 15 Feb 2023

“China and Middle Eastern countries are collaborating more on nontraditional security. Besides joint efforts to battle COVID-19 and climate change, there has been an uptick in bilateral counterterrorism training and cooperation on cyber and digital security.”

Read More: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/full-throttle-in-neutral-chinas-new-security-architecture-for-the-middle-east/>

Analysis: Stakes Rise as Iran Can Fuel 'Several' Atom Bombs

Jon Gambrell | 26 Jan 2023

“As Iran’s rial currency plunges further to historic lows against the dollar amid its crises, Iranian officials also have made unsupported claims about American officials agreeing to their demands or frozen money abroad being released.”

Read More: <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-iran-politics-government-mahmoud-ahmadinejad-6acdb64d36fcbe05b3ee725d8a585d96>

Erdogan's Plan for War, and Peace

Steven Heydemann | 24 Jan 2023

“Rapprochement between Turkey and Syria would bring about the most significant reshaping of the war in Syria since Russia’s brutal bombing campaign tipped it in Assad’s favour in 2015.”

Read More: <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/erdogans-plan-for-war-and-peace/>

Iranian Drone Exports to the Balkans and its Geopolitical Repercussions

Sine Ozkarasahin | 20 Jan 2023

“Iranian and Chinese weapons flowing into the Balkan market will also transform the region into a new hot zone, where the weapons of two blocs (Western and anti-Western) will enter into a direct confrontation.”

Read More: <https://jamestown.org/program/the-geopolitical-ramifications-of-iranian-drone-exports-to-the-balkans/>

Bhutan's Borders: The China Challenge and the India Factor

John Pollock | 23 Jan 2023

“Bhutan’s quiet diplomacy faces a substantial challenge in dealing with China, the aim of which is to strike a delicate balance that resolves the border issue whilst not incurring large-scale territorial concessions that alienate India or further encourage Chinese advances.”

Read More: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2023/01/23/bhutans-borders-the-china-challenge-and-the-india-factor/>

Will Russian Aid for Myanmar Give Moscow an Asian Foothold?

Alena Zhabina | 08 Feb 2023

“Russia supplies the junta with Pantsir-S1 surface-to-air missile systems, Orlan-10E surveillance drones, radar equipment, as well as M-17 and Mi-35 helicopters, Su-30 fighter jets, and anti-aircraft missile systems.”

Read More: <https://www.dw.com/en/will-russian-support-for-myanmar-give-moscow-an-asian-foothold/a-64644348>

The State of Opposition in South Asia

Paul Staniland and Milan Vaishnav | 24 Jan 2023

“However, there are also nonviolent, extra-systemic movements that are not reducible to conventional party protests. Mass protest movements from below in both Sri Lanka and Nepal have occupied this role, as have dissidents in Bangladesh.”

Read More: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/01/24/state-of-opposition-in-south-asia-pub-88835>

REGION IN PICTURES

5th Multilateral Meeting of National Security Advisers on Afghanistan (Moscow Format) was held on February 8 with participation from regional countries except Pakistan which refused to attend.



Pic Credits: - WION TV

COAS of Pakistan Army General Asim Munir was on a five day visit to United Kingdom where he attended the Wilton Park conference and interacted with the defence officials



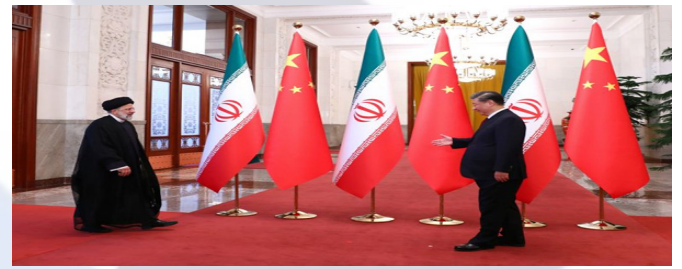
Pic Credits: Daily Pakistan /twitter

A series of catastrophic earthquakes in Türkiye and Syria on February 6 resulted in death of over 35000 people and large scale damage to infrastructure.



Pic Credits: Reuters

Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi made a three-day trip to China which marked the first state visit by an Iranian president to Beijing in two decades.



Pic Credits: Iranian Presidency/AFP



Centre for Air Power Studies

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NOTE: **Regional Opinion and Trends** aims to capture prevailing opinions in South Asia and West Asia.

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The views expressed in this brief are those of the author and not necessarily of the Centre or any other organisation.