

Is Trump winning at the expense of America?



GP ACHARYA

ACCEPT it or not, President Richard Nixon had contributed to China's opening-up in the past. President Donald Trump's strange policy is now contributing to China's economic gearing-up, and North Korea's opening-up. The initiative undertaken by Nixon to establish relations with China was highly commendable. However, Trump's diplomatic vandalism to produce stronger rivals would be lamentable for Americans in the generations to come. Conceivably, a decade from now, scholars of international relations and researchers would be writing books and research articles on "Donald Trump's extraordinary contribution in the gearing-up of China and the opening-up of North Korea."

Yet, Trump's initiative for peace in the Korean Peninsula and his last-minute decision to withdraw the order to strike Iran must be admired. The approach that he is adopting through stripped diplomacy, however, could consequently push America into disaster someday. If such diplomatic vandalism continues after 2020, either the world would witness World War III, or America would disintegrate, or China would become the dominant force in world politics and the world's great power, or North and South Korea would be integrated and emerge as a new power.

Meanwhile, Russia and India would be the key game changers. Consequently, Iran and Pakistan would benefit greatly. Venezuela would emerge, and Cuba would rise again. After all, Japan and Saudi Arabia would be suffering a lot.

When we analyse the specific causes and effects of the rise and fall of great powers or different empires, it is seen that constricted ideas or differences of growth have led to power struggles. Their power mostly revolved around

the struggle between social forces, ethnic nationalism, or economic development and the rise of their militaries. And, after annexation of such power, the power struggles have resulted in the extinction of empires.

The Ottoman Empire in Europe, British Empire in UK, Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent, Russian Empire in Eurasia and Ming Dynasty in China, among others, had collapsed due to internal

Nevertheless, the rising ethnic nationalism, foreign imperialism, and economic and military pressures among others propelled the decline of the empire.

The European Union (EU) is on the verge of facing similar internal weaknesses as that of former empires. Since its inception, the EU has been a dominant force in international relations. Until the 20th century, the world's great powers were European.

are in political turmoil, and Germany is experiencing internal pressure.

The US is also suffering from similar symptoms as that of former empires and is gradually heading towards a series of grave policy errors. Under the plank of "Make America great again", Trump is making developing countries like China, Russia and India great. Meanwhile, he is lending (and extending) a hand to America's long-time rivals such as

Syria and Afghanistan will certainly damage its relations with its allies and consequently empower its adversaries. This may widen the door for Russia, Iran and China to consolidate their presence in South Asia and the Mediterranean.

The absence of US leadership in the world is now leaving ample ground for its adversaries to cause more trouble for it. American emphasis on democracy, international law, multiculturalism and multilateralism were the constituents of its security. The US was most powerful at the end of WWII, (America had dominated more than 35 percent of the global economy in terms of production), and was capable enough to (re)shape the world according to its wishes. American values abroad are gradually waning. What is the American position now?

America is struggling to make inroads in Venezuela, Iran, North Korea, Russia and China. And it may fail with its Indo-Pacific strategy and Hong Kong next. Trump's policy of building a physical wall on the border with Mexico and logical wall with many of its allies will leave America behind. America is becoming more racist and realist under Trump. Americans worry. Most of the mass-shootings in America are fuelled by racial and discriminative behaviour. America was the only multicultural nation in the world where people from every corner of the world wished to dwell. This was the outcome of American soft power and wealth—which is now on the decline.

Diplomatic intelligence and American thinking on foreign policy is eroding. Trump is more nationalistic than patriotic and is more discriminative than any of his predecessors, argue some American analysts. Soft power and persuasive diplomacy were America's strengths. America was winning the hearts, minds and spirits of billions of people around the world before Trump's presidency. Conversely, Trump is incredibly winning, but America is irreparably losing.

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President Trump during his State of the Union address on February 5.

PHOTO: SAUL LOEB/AFP

weaknesses and economic, social, cultural, industrial, technological, environmental and political issues. Ottomans were a multinational empire and had controlled much of Europe, Western Asia, the Caucasus and North Africa. At the height of their power in the 16th century, the Ottomans were an economic powerhouse—they had controlled all trade in the Mediterranean Sea and had been successful in maintaining a strong economy, society and military throughout the 17th century.

The EU is one of the largest single economy in the world and has the second-highest defence budget after the US, with more than 66,000 troops deployed around the world and some 57,000 diplomats. It accounted for about 20 percent of the world's military spending in the past. But now with its slow growth and internal weaknesses, its credence is declining—democracy is fading and has been facing a legitimacy problem in politics. Today, the EU is in dismay as Britain is in the process of exiting from the EU; France and Italy

Russia and North Korea.

Trump has dispensed of several multilateral associations and is threatening to get out of several others—for instance, pulling out of the nuclear missile accord with Russia, the Iran Nuclear Deal and the Paris Climate Agreement. The US has been gradually losing credibility, reputation, reliability and trust from its allies.

The invasion of Iraq and the corresponding debacle was the biggest ever foreign policy failure in US history. Its decision of withdrawing troops from

For the Fear of...

HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

AS our plane makes its final approach in to Chennai Airport, my 7-year-old, who has just recently graduated from flying phobia to the class of thrill seekers, tells me:

"Baba, I LOVE rough landings."

Right at that very instant, the Improbability Drive from *A Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* kicks into gear. The plane hits a violent jerk, revs up its engines and makes a steep climb as we are pinned to the backs of our seats. The plane then circles the airport several times before finally landing after what seemed the longest 15-minutes of the lives of every passenger on board.

Needless to say, those 15-minutes throw every single passenger into a genuine state of prayers, irrespective of faith, or even a lack of. Many make silent and sincere pledges, "If I ever get out of this in one piece, I PROMISE to never..."

I put on a brave face, so as not to scare off my little broods accompanying me. My 7-year-old, whose wish for a rough landing is about to come true, is now clinging on to me.

My 14-year-old sitting in the window seat, squeals: "Baba! Look!! Fireworks!!!" It is August 11, just a few

days away from India's Independence Day, hence aplenty of the pyrotechnics.

There is a collective gasp from the passengers and another barrage of loud prayers. The passengers hadn't quite heard the last word of my daughter's sentence. They started screaming midstream right up to my daughter saying: "Baba! Look!! Fire!!!" Her saying "works" remained unheard, having been drowned in their screams.



PHOTO: AFP

Of course, as in any crisis, there are self-proclaimed experts. I loudly explain to my daughter, making sure that several around us hear (and are impressed by) my aviation prowess: "It seems that there was another incoming

[aircraft] on our [descending] glide path, a rare error by ATC, that is Air Traffic Control." I deliberately use the acronym to boast my total of 1 hour of flying logged on a single engine Cessna 152. I expand on the ATC acronym to ensure that my surroundings perceive me as an aviator while also comprehending the scenario. Akin to the doctor who comes and tells the patient: "Your ACL has a 70 percent

plain me could have just plain said plane). The plane finally lands. I have the burning desire to lead the clapping symphony, something that is all too familiar on international flights landing in Dhaka (smirked at by the seasoned fliers). Judging by the looks of the flight attendants who suddenly looked so much more fair (er, pale) without any *Fair & Lovely*, would definitely have joined in on the applause.

As the plane puts on its reverse thrust and exits Runway 32 to taxi (enough, Naveed! Now everyone knows you have merely Googled up these aviation jargons!), the captain, cool as a cucumber, goes on the intercom:

"Ladies and gentleman, just want to explain to you what happened. We hit a wind shear and as per standard procedures, we had to increase power, gain altitude, make a few circles for the weather pattern to clear and then make our final approach."

He didn't apologise. He didn't have to, nor did he need to. For, at that moment, he and his first officer, were the local heroes. Now, I am the first to clap, followed by every passenger, INCLUDING the flight attendants. It would have been a standing ovation, had it not been for the plane still taxiing and the seat belt signs still being on.

There is a collective sigh of relief. My 7-year-old finally lets go of my hand, her knuckles white. I joke, "So, didn't you say you like a rough landing?"

She replies, crossed: "Yes, I said I like rough LANDINGS, NOT rough FLYING!!!"

Oh, and the pledges made through silent prayers? They are left where they were made and stuck in neatly inside the seat back pocket along with the safety cards, which, by the way, we had all read through carefully, and for many, for the first time in our lives, not too many minutes ago—all for the fear of flying...

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QUOTABLE Quote



ABUL KALAM AZAD (1888–1958)

Indian scholar, activist and a senior leader of the Indian National Congress during the Indian Independence Movement

You have to dream before your dreams can come true.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

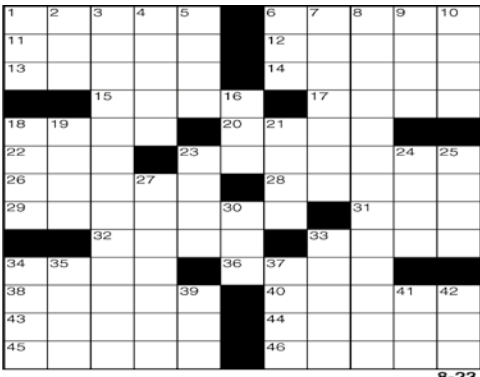
ACROSS

- 1 Makes do
- 6 Bulb units
- 11 "Skyfall" singer
- 12 Flynn of films
- 13 Audacity
- 14 Hang loosely
- 15 School member
- 17 Three or four
- 18 Departs
- 20 "Like that'll happen!"
- 22 Circle segment
- 23 Smelly smokes
- 26 Barista's creation
- 28 Husband of a tante
- 29 Race loser
- 31 Burmese, for one
- 32 Campus area

DOWN

- 1 Beans buy
- 2 Exalted poem
- 3 1, 4, 9, or 16
- 4 "The King"
- 5 Beholds
- 6 Tie the knot
- 7 Call before the court

- 8 Round-about
- 9 Hit the bottle
- 10 Whole lot
- 16 Bowler, e.g.
- 18 Fancy bash
- 19 Advanced exam
- 21 Shortly
- 23 Blood fluids
- 24 Dash
- 25 Jazz club units
- 27 Resort business
- 30 Brouhaha
- 33 Stand for a painting
- 34 Umpire's call
- 35 Getting —years
- 37 Forest growth
- 39 Pig place
- 41 Guitar blaster
- 42 Maze runner

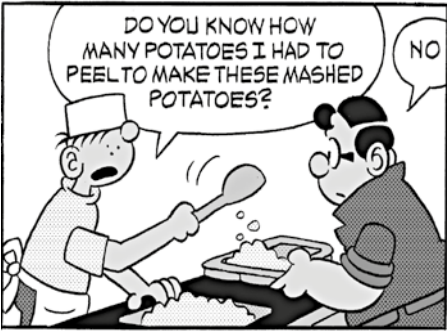


YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES

by Kirkman & Scott

