1. INTRODUCTION

Since the turn of the twenty first century, the world has been witnessing major shifts in the global political landscape. The new wave of terrorism is fundamentally different from any other non-traditional security threats. Terrorists have been able to capture lands, formed foreign fighter mercenaries and presented a truly global threat. On the other side of the spectrum, the clash of culture has led to the rise of right-wing populism and has shaken the political establishments in the West at their core. The most remarkable examples of these profound changes are the triumph of populist United States (US) President Donald Trump and the United Kingdom’s (UK) referendum in favour of Brexit. The US retreat from the Paris Climate Accord, Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), threat to stop support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and budget cuts for United Nations
peacekeeping missions have raised serious questions as to the viability of the existing international order and the role of the US as the leader of the 'free world'. While war is unthinkable in Europe because of their level of integration, the same is absent in South Asia, North-East Asia and Africa as it lacks stability in the region and that is the matter of major concern. Similarly, non-state actors, terrorist groups and nations like Afghanistan, Myanmar and so forth, lie outside the ambit of "governed spaces" and pose significant threats to global security. The historic inter-Korean summit in April 2018, North Korean "leader" Kim Jong-un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in met on the South Korean side of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to start the 'talk' on the "denuclearisation" of the peninsula. The hope for a meaningful discussion between Pyongyang and Washington may largely be elusive if the parties involved are not certain regarding other's true intention. On the other side of spectrum, Washington's scraping of the nuclear deal forged between Iran and a group of major world powers may have further destabilising effect on the Middle East region. It may also have far reaching impacts on global nuclear disarmament regime and send wrong signal for the new found impetus on the North Korea's denuclearisation process.

On the global economic front, the global economy was buffeted and troubled by powerful crosswinds during the last global financial debacle. Disruptive financial market turmoil was slowing the growth in industrially advanced economies. However, new emerging market economies in the developing countries have exhibited a measure of global resolve and resilience. The divergence in performance between industrially advanced and emerging economies points to an ongoing shift towards a multipolar world, with a reduced reliance on the US as the engine of the global economy. This means, burgeoning economies will not decouple from the advanced economies, and neither will they be derailed, as the past experience of Asian financial crisis suggests. However, the looming threat of a trade war between Washington and Beijing may undermine the recovering global economy by significantly damaging sales, jobs and investment. Despite the large parts of the
world that were hitherto mired in poverty are seeing rapid economic prosperity, a lot of this prosperity has happened at a high environmental cost. From Europe to South Asia, and from the Arctic to Antarctica, this is an age of ecological excess, and unless there is leadership that can ensure ecological sustainability, the world might end up with greater conflict.

A record 65.6 million people are currently displaced globally, primarily as a result of violent conflicts. Displaced populations are more mobile than ever before, due to new transportation methods and communication technologies. These factors were unforeseen when the global humanitarian regime—which encompasses the policies and organisations that govern international humanitarian prevention efforts and responses—emerged in the aftermath of World War II. However, during the recent influx of Rohingyas, the international community has failed to prevent the persecution of a whole community. Despite its limited resources, a densely populated country like Bangladesh had to take the responsibility of more than 1.2 million Rohingyas. The impacts of these changing dynamics have far reaching implications for the future course of human history and international order. Hence, it remains to be seen how terrorism, the rise of right-wing populism in the West, changing balance of power and global leadership, the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and tackling the climate change alter the status quo in the international order.

Given this prelude, this chapter tries to explain how the global dynamics are shifting and in which ways they are going to affect nation state in general and Bangladesh in particular. By doing so, this chapter will mainly focus on four key themes. They are: Politico-Strategic Aspects of Global Dynamics, Economic Development and Globalisation, Climate Negotiation and Global Human Movement and Humanitarian Issues. After deciphering the impacts, based on these

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1 UNHCR, *Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016*, p. 2
four themes, the chapter will move on to make a discussion in the final section regarding the foreign policy imperatives for Bangladesh to manoeuvre in the changed global landscape.

2. POLITICO-STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF GLOBAL DYNAMICS

As the world rapidly shifts from a unipolar to a multipolar reality, the international system itself is exposed to profound instability. However, there are other forces at play, for example, global terrorism is one of them. This menace has threatened an established international order and challenged the role of the nation state as the primary actor within the global architecture. The realm of non-traditional security issues such as terrorism, drug trafficking, piracy and ecological disasters, among others, has come to acquire its rightful place within global politics. On the other hand, states understood the value of multilateral cooperation and conversely, the price of non-cooperation to face these challenges. In other words, non-traditional security has reinforced the neo-liberal faith in institutions as the guardians of international norms and values. However, the fact remains that institutions are not free from the influence of politics among nations and the new world order is still grounded in a state-centric international structure. In the post-Cold War period, despite the emergence of non-traditional security issues, traditional security and economic challenges continue to dominate the priority list for the nation-states. This endorses the continuing importance of certain post-World War institutions and the need of newer ones. At the same time, the emergence of China and rebirth of Russia as the global force reaffirms the notion for a multipolar new world order. The Brexit, refugee crisis across continents, rise of radical nationalist forces, radicalisation of the societies and extremism will play a significant role in shaping the emerging international structure.

2.1 Extremism

The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in the financial heart of the US, turned 9/11 into a watershed moment in the world history. The
success of a non-state actor like Al-Qaeda to be able to strike in the mainland of the US since the attack on Pearl Harbour of 1941, has brought the focus back on the controversial thesis, ‘The Clash of Civilization’ by Samuel P Huntington. His argument of Western and non-Western values being ‘inherently irreconcilable and a clash is inevitable’ can be criticised for being dogmatic and often too generalist in nature. However there is no denying the fact that global terrorism in the name of religion, has taken the security challenges for the nation states to the next level. Hence, the global community has been witnessing a major paradigmatic shift in the global security spectrum. In an attempt to reject the existing world order of liberal democracy, unlike its preceding ideological challengers such as Stalinism, Fascism or Maoism; violent religious extremism does not require an organisational base. It is rather decentralised and amorphous in nature. The rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and declaration of new ‘caliphate’ in June 2014 brought an operational and philosophical shift which entails, an inspired ‘lone wolf’ can carry out attacks in allegiance to ISIS without any organisational authorisation, training or logistical support. Global terrorist networks are exploiting the technology and infrastructure of global connectivity to radicalise young second generation Muslim diaspora living in Western cosmopolitan cities to take out ‘soft targets’. It will be a major challenge for the law enforcing agencies across the globe to tackle the ‘jihadists’, who have joined the ISIS as ‘foreign fighters’ once they

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come back to home countries with considerable battle experience. Returnee terrorist attacks across the world have put the liberal democratic world system under serious security challenge and consequently, the global community is witnessing an equally menacing threat for the liberal democratic world system which is looming in the form of right-wing populism.

2.2 Right-wing Populism

The increasing religious radicalisation, terrorist attacks in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, coupled with resentment against globalisation process and large influx of refugees from Syrian and Libyan conflicts have ramped up the right-wing populism across the northern hemisphere. The backlash of globalisation process was already felt by the Western societies since the global recession of 2007. During the Brexit and the last US election campaign, anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim rhetoric was exploited to shore up populist sentiment within the ‘liberal-western societies’. The sharp increase in the vote share for the Radical Right Populist parties (RRPs) in Europe is the manifestation of this growing anti-immigration, anti-European Union (EU) and xenophobic sentiments which override the liberal normative democratic values that the West has been preaching since the time of European Renaissances. The continued triumph of the RRPs in Europe was manifested by the sharp increase of vote share in the national elections of France, Austria, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland and most recently Italy has joined the populist league. The Eurosceptic and populist Five Star Movement and the anti-immigrant League won nearly 50 per cent of seats in the Italian parliament and the country has now abandoned over 70 years of careful centrist and joined the club of countries where populist forces are on the rise. Coupled with


Changing Global Dynamics: Bangladesh Foreign Policy

populism, the Brexit signals the growing grievances against the EU and the liberal normative democratic values that the Western societies has been preaching ever since the age of European enlightenment are on the decline. These factors have collectively put the US post-Cold War world order under a tremendous amount of strain. The last French election is an alarming example, where two established political parties (the Socialist and the Center Right) lost its political footing in the mainstream French political spectrum. Although, the triumph of a centrist and pro EU leader, Emmanuel Macron leader of *La République En Marche!* Party ("The Republic Onwards!") over the far right and anti-EU candidate, Marine Le Pen gave some relief to the liberals within the EU. However, the massive support that an RRP like the National Front gained in this election is significant. There is no denying of the fact that the difference between the winners and losers of the globalisation process has polarised the European societies. With the end of the World War II, the formation and growth of the EU signaled the win of regional integration over ultra-nationalism. However, since the Brexit and the rise of a populist wave across the Global North, it remains to be seen whether the strength of the EU declines.

2.3 The Populist Wave Reached Across the Atlantic

A populist wave that began with the Brexit has reached the US through the victory of Donald Trump. His rhetoric was full of xenophobic fear tactics against Mexicans and Muslims, paranoid conspiracy theories about his rivals, and isolationist “America First” policy abroad. The rise of populist leaders like Donald Trump in US and Marine Le Pen in France is altering established patterns of party competition in contemporary Western societies. However, there

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is a need to reflect on the issues that brought Trump to the White House. Immigration and trade seem to be at the top of the list. His whole campaign was based on popular hostility to liberal immigration and free trade policies. These political changes in a country that has led the free world and democracy, have profound consequences for the global environment.

Nevertheless, in the short term, Trump can be good for geopolitical stability because he is likely to allow China and Russia more roles to play. His preference for cautious isolationism over Obama’s liberal interventionism may stabilise relations with Russia and China. China’s inevitable dominance in Asia could be accepted, provided it avoids outright wars with Japan, Taiwan and other countries whose security is guaranteed by treaties with the US. The Middle East is bound to remain an epicentre of geopolitical unrest. The bottom line is the rise of Trump will signal some significant changes in international politics and alter the existing balance of power.

2.4 Changing Balance of Power and Global Leadership

The notion of “changing balance of power” is widely used nowadays. While there are many academic ways of showing how there has been a gradual shift in the balance of power, Harvard University professor Joseph Nye’s conception of soft power is a good way to show how it is changing. While coercive power is conceptualised as hard power, the influence to attract others is defined as soft power. When a country is forced to do things that it does not want to do, then it has to be the exemplification of hard power in play. On the other hand, if a country willingly risks loss of its human and financial resources to support a

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leading country, then the latter is exercising soft power over the former. What matters in the international balance of power system is opportunity for prosperity and security. If China offers more opportunities for prosperity and security, countries will naturally be attracted to the Chinese magnet. Therefore, a genuine analysis of balance of soft power between China and the US is not much different from an analysis of their economic and security potentials. Despite the global financial crisis in 2007, Chinese economy will surpass the US economy (in terms of nominal GDP) within a decade or so.\(^\text{13}\) As the US signals to become isolationist under the leadership of populist President Trump, China is becoming more outward-looking in terms of investment and reaching out to more countries in Africa and South America.

Trump’s “America First” policies, his threats to crack down on “abuse of free trade” and his withdrawal from the Paris Climate Change accord could seriously undermine America’s ability to lead the world.\(^\text{14}\) His policies also might weaken the existing security architecture in Europe and elsewhere. For example, before election, Trump stated that the US military support for NATO member states would be conditional on whether those states have met their financial obligations to the organisation.\(^\text{15}\) This comment regarding an organisation that has served as the cornerstone of global security since the World War II represents a marked departure from the US policy since NATO’s inception in 1949. It nevertheless highlights America’s isolationist outlook. Eastern European states which are dependent on NATO’s security guarantee from Russia’s military clout will be apprehensive regarding their future security arrangement with the ‘free world’.


Another grave concern for the global peace and harmony would be the UN's budget cuts for the peacekeeping missions across the world.16 Under Trump administration's insistence, the budget committee of the General Assembly of the United Nation agreed to cut US$600 million from the organisation's nearly US$8 billion annual peacekeeping budget.17 Which effectively slashed US contribution in the peacekeeping fund by 7.5 per cent.18 The UN peacekeeping budget currently funds 16 peacekeeping missions around the world. The effect of this budget cut has been already visible as the UN Security Council has agreed to a major reduction of peacekeepers in Sudan's Darfur region.19 This event sends a wrong message to the 'free world' that an unwilling leader is reluctant to take the responsibility to maintain global peace and stability.

The biggest blow to the US leadership was the decision to pull out from the Paris Climate Accord. By doing so, Trump has created a vacuum of global leadership that presents ripe opportunities to reorder the world's power structure. His decision is perhaps the greatest strategic gift to China, who is eager to fill the leadership void. Speaking only two months after the election, US President Donald Trump announced plans to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership,20 While, the Chinese President urged the world leaders in World Economic Forum Meeting, 2017 to reject the protectionism threatening multilateral trade agreements and embrace the win-win potential of interconnected

growth. In Davos, President Xi, expressed China’s strong commitment to make globalisation work for everyone, and not just the few in contrast to Trump’s plans to the US withdrawal from multilateral trade deals and protectionism. The willingness to lead was loud and clear from the Chinese President as he stated, “The people of all countries expect nothing less from us, and this is our unshrinkable responsibility as leaders of our times.” China’s investments in Asia, Africa and Latin America boost Beijing’s influence in dozens of countries, and Trump’s renunciation of the TPP which was an enormous trade deal gives China an excellent opportunity to expand its web of regional trade ties. Therefore, the rise of China, be it a ‘Peaceful Rise’ or otherwise, can be viewed as a prelude to succession of a ‘superpower’. Or alternatively, as others see it a change in the global distribution of power and the beginning of a multipolar system.

2.5 Forging New Alliances

As the power started to shift from the US, multiple centres of power are emerging in the global political landscape. Increasingly, Moscow has been politically more assertive and this was manifested in the annexation of the Crimea and its role in reshaping the civil war in Syria. Revival of Russia under Putin, an old-school, hard-edged, national interest-centered Russian leader, committed to defend and bring back the old pride of the rodina (the motherland) has made this global geopolitical mix interesting and complicated.

Since the war broke out in Syria in 2011, due to its geostrategic nature this devastating civil war has drawn in multiple regional and great powers. Apart from being committed to annihilate IS in Syria


and Iraq, Washington's intention on other issues has been vague. As Trump has declared, that the US has "very little to do with Syria other than killing IS", the US was also engaged in pursuing a ceasefire between the Assad and opposition forces. In divergence with the Obama policy where the message was clear that "Assad must go", Trump administration has given conflicting signals whether there is a possibility of a peace deal by keeping Assad in helm. However, Washington's intention is clear when it comes to limiting Iran's clout in Syria. The US vowed to deny any space to the Lebanese Shiite militia, Hezbollah in Syria as it could threaten to undermine Israel's interest. Russia engaged itself in Syria in October 2015 as it started airstrike against "terrorist" targets. As for Moscow, keeping Assad in power is of paramount importance as this regime is the closest ally in the Middle East and key to secure Moscow's military influence in the region. Russia already possesses important military installation in Syria in form of an airbase in the western province of Latakia and a naval base in the Syrian port city of Tartus. On the other hand, Turkey has been claiming a key player role in this war as Ankara took part in airstrikes against IS targets as part of the US led coalition. Ankara's policy was clear as it supported Syrian opposition against the Assad regime. Turkey conducted its war campaign as it fought battles alongside non-Kurdish factions in the Syrian opposition including the Free Syrian Army (FSA). Ankara has been in strong opposition of Syrian Kurdish groups gaining any territorial space and autonomy in any post-war arrangement. Hence, this war has been providing a vital battlefield for the rising great and regional powers to challenge the existing global and regional status quo by undermining US dominance in the Middle East. An evidence to this balancing game can be Moscow's strengthened naval presence in the eastern Mediterranean region by exploiting the Syrian war and NATO's southern Europe commander, US Navy Admiral James

Foggo alleged the Russian presence to make the region “very crowded”.

In Israel’s relentless persuasion, Washington’s decision to pull out of the Iran nuclear deal has severe manifestation for the region itself and EU-US relations. In this case, there is a risk of Europe drifting further from the US and closer to Moscow as this was manifested in French President Macron’s meeting with Russian President Putin in St Petersburg on May 2018 following the US pull out of the Iran Nuclear deal. During that meeting, Macron put the emphasis on France and Russia’s mutual interests, as well as their historic and cultural ties. On the other hand, New Delhi has vowed only to follow UN sanctions on Iran and not those imposed by individual countries, as it urged nuclear deal partners to engage constructively with Tehran despite the US withdrawal from the pact. This has manifested a clear divergence between the US and its key allies on this particular issue. Therefore, Russia is willing to exploit this rift to forge new alliances.

On the other side of the globe, the Indo-Pacific region is becoming increasingly a troubled water territory due to great power rivalry. A complex web of alliance system is emerging out of this region as the number of players and their intentions as well as interests often contradict the traditional wisdom. This was manifested in the elevation of priority of this region in the recently published National Security Strategy (NSS) paper 2017 under the Trump Administration. In this paper the Indo-Pacific was identified as a region in which “a geopolitical competition between free and repressive visions of world order is taking place” and where “China is using economic inducements and penalties, influence operations, and implied military threats to persuade other

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states to heed its political and security agenda." The sea lanes of the Indian Ocean and the South China Seas linking Europe, the Middle East and Africa with Asia are among the busiest in the world as almost 90,000 vessels in the world's commercial fleet carry 9.84 billion tonnes of cargo per year through this region. Hence, the security of the region is imperative to smooth operation of 50 per cent of global annual trade. Majority of the crude oil imported from the Persian Gulf passes through the Strait of Hormuz into the Arabian Sea and subsequently into the Indian Ocean. Hence, for China it is critical to establish an alternative sea route through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as 70 per cent of its oil is transferred through Indian Ocean where Indian Navy maintains a strong presence.

To offset the Chinese plan, Washington is portraying New Delhi as the key ally in the Asia-Pacific region and redefined the name of Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific. There is a strong possibility that Washington is going to adopt the strategy of offshore balancing, an idea that was coined by John Mearsheimer and Stephen M Walt. The strategy entails that a stronger coordination and support for the American alliance network in Asia to contain or check the development of China. Therefore, maintaining close relations with India, Japan, Australia, Philippines, South Korea and Vietnam to use their combined military, political and economic power against China is vital to the US interest. The transfer of US military technology and other resources to these allies is another strategy to enable them to stand vis-à-vis Chinese clout. Hence, proponents of this theory maintain that the combined power and resources of the US and its allies will be able to counterbalance China within its own sphere.

Under the presidency of Xi Jinping, China continued to build a strong strategic presence both in form of building key ports as part of its

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28 Ibid.
Maritime Silk Road model and a stronger naval force. During a visit to
China’s naval headquarters in May 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping
emphasised the need for China to become a great maritime power as he
mentioned that the “aim for the top ranks in the world” and that
“building a strong and modern navy is an important mark of a top-
ranking global military.”

In the Pacific region, denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and
Beijing’s shift from Deng Xiaoping’s old policy of patience to political
and military assertiveness on Taiwan issue, China’s expansive
territorial claims in the South China Sea and the US response by
running another Freedom of Navigation Operation have been another
major flashpoints. All these balancing game and forging new alliances
will make the whole Indo-Pacific region as the biggest battleground
for the great powers.

In the European front, Trump might give space to Moscow in Ukraine
and Syria, in exchange for a more restrained approach by Putin in the
central Europe and the Baltics. However, strengthening of NATO and
EU’s neighbourhood programme to lure Eastern European countries
in the EU still can be interpreted by Moscow as an aggressive posture
in the Russian backyard. Subsequently, Sino-Russian rapprochement
aims at creating a new multipolar world in which big powers will have
to reconcile differences in a harmonious way. Such world could only
be brought about if Russia and China engage in a strategic
understanding that is designed to increase their geopolitical clout and
promote their interests. The creation of the Shanghai Cooperation
Organization (SCO) has been the main manifestation of such
understanding.

On the other hand, Britain’s vote to leave the EU plunged the bloc into
an existential crisis and unleashed a wave of euroscepticism. Hence,
France and Germany had to take the lead on post-Brexit reforms

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29 Bennett Seftel, “Best of: China Ramps up Navy to Challenge U.S. Dominance”,
available at https://www.thecipherbrief.com/best-china-ramps-navy-challenge-u-s-
dominance, accessed on 31 May 2018.
Changing Global Dynamics: Bangladesh Foreign Policy

starting from 2017. Germany has shown its leadership role in the recent Eurozone crisis and along with France, emerged as the natural leader in the post-Brexit Europe. Both of these nations will play a critical role in shaping the normative character of EU in various global issues. In Asia, India is expanding its regional sphere of influence with an international ambition to be a member of the great power league and has been claiming for its membership in the UN Security Council. With the rise of Trump to the US presidency and rebound by China and Russia, uncertainty looms over the world security architecture and a clear shift in the global balance of power is visible, that tilts heavily towards Eurasia rather than the global north. In this context, the main challenge for Bangladesh foreign policy is to readjust as well as realign itself with this paradigmatic shift.

3. ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF CHANGING GLOBAL DYNAMICS

In early 1990s, the collapse of the Soviet Union guaranteed the free reign for capitalist mode of production which was spearheaded by the US along with its Western allies. During that period, the global financial architecture started to get its final shape as the Bretton Woods organisations institutionalised market deregulations and globalisation of capital for production. On the other hand, the intensified globalisation process increased the “fragility of national economies toward global swings.”

This has led to real and, in many cases, serious harm to major sectors of the global population, often creating complex and disruptive knock-on effects. Perhaps the most spectacular recent example was the 2008-

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09 global financial crisis, which brought havoc on the world economy in general, and on many countries in particular. These developments have had major impact to significant political destabilisation. Rising economic inequality, a long-term trend in many economies, has been made more salient by the financial crisis. A stark political cleavage between those who have benefited from the globalisation, digitisation, and automation of the economy, and those who feel left behind, including many working-class voters in industrialised countries, has been reinforced. This division is particularly acute in spatial terms: in the schism between global cities and their hinterlands.

In the gamut of this economic paradoxes, the world has taken the ambitious 2030 Agenda—a historic agreement to end poverty, combat inequalities, promote peaceful and inclusive societies and protect the environment. Implementing the SDGs will not only require investment on a massive scale, but also strategic planning, technological innovation and monitoring. Global economic prospects remain subject to various risks, including increasing policy uncertainty in major advanced and emerging economies, financial market disruptions and heightened geopolitical tensions and estimated cost of such economic uncertainties could reach into the trillions of dollars.

3.1 US-China Trade War

Trump made US’s external trade deficit a main issue on his campaign trail to the White House. To back off from trade negotiations with Europe and Asia, was among his first acts as the President. By threatening to pull the US out of NAFTA and criticising the World Trade Organization (WTO), he has taken a stance opposite to the liberal economic order that the US has created over the last seven decades


following the World War II. In the most recent case of trade war with China, Washington’s decision to put on harsher tariffs to bring down the trade deficit might be counterproductive. China’s investment friendly policy, lower wage rate, technological development and the biggest single market are the luring factors for the American investors to shift their production from the US to China. Hence, merely applying heavy tariffs will not be successful as the modern industrial production takes place within complex global networks and any level of protection for the local industry or applying heavy duty is not going to bring whole industries back to the US.

Hence, question has been raised over Trump’s decision to launch a self-described ‘trade war’ against China as he tweeted, rather infamously, “...trade wars are good, and easy to win.” Subsequently, policymakers and political analysts got baffled, whether Trump administration’s threat to wage a trade war is a tactical move under a coherent particular policy or it is rather the passage toward finding a policy.34 However, on 19 May 2018, both the parties agreed to “putting a hold on the trade war” as a result of a high level negotiation in Washington.35 The reason for the trade war to be started at the first place can be summed up in three key concerns raised by the US. They are—the trade deficit between the US and China, Washington’s allegation of widespread theft of intellectual property rights in China, and Beijing’s industrial policy. But for many, this ‘ceasefire’ after ‘barbs and complaints, investigations and enforcement actions, tariffs and threat of tariffs’ has been interpreted as a US retreat as the “Trump administration, agrees to a truce without having achieved any measurable gains.”36 Although, Beijing has agreed to buy more products from the US goods and service industry (particularly energy and agriculture), it will have miniscule impact to bring down the trade deficit of US$375 billion to US$200 billion. Nevertheless, the truce

35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
has been welcomed as a positive development and not only for China-US relations but also for the global economy. A full-fledged trade war between the two biggest economies and great powers would not only delay the post-recession global economic recovery but it would be fatal and undermine the established system of global trade. The consensus reached after two days of high level negotiations between teams led by Chinese Vice-Premier Liu He and US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin produced only a truce and not a full-fledged treaty. Hence, fundamental differences remain, which means the possibility of a trade war looms over the global economy.

An intensively globalised world means, impacts and shocks from a potential trade war between the US and China, will spread and be felt globally due to the interconnectedness of the economies. Nonetheless, despite the aftermath of global financial downturn in 2008, over the last decade (2007 to 2016) Bangladesh’s performance has been impressive in terms of sustaining an average GDP growth rate of 6.24 per cent. 37 Bangladesh is one of the first nations that will meet all the three criteria for sustainable graduation from LDC to developing country. Hence, it expects to graduate from LDC by 2024 38 and aims to attain the upper middle income country status by 2021 and a full-fledged developed country status by 2041. 39 To keep the momentum of development, Bangladesh needs to secure the opportunities of the globalisation while mitigating the threats of it. Currently, Bangladesh aims to attract the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), secure a Duty Free Quota Free (DFQF) market access, boost export of goods and services, export the manpower, and explore new markets. Therefore, the focus has been given to become an export led economy with increasing

37 Calculated from World Bank Country Data.
economic growth pattern. By gradually opening up towards the market economy in the form of reducing the tariff and the non-tariff barriers, joining in the regional connectivity programmes (e.g., BBIN, BCIM, Asian Highways) and engaging in the region specific preferential trading arrangements (e.g., Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement, Trade Preferential System among OIC Countries, Preferential Trade Agreement among D-8 Member States), Bangladesh has made major advancements in the realm of regional integration.

However, with regard to the economic security, it is imperative to accelerate the other sectors of development (e.g., social, institutional and environmental) as Bangladesh is committed to the implementation of SDGs. Evidence shows that FDI played a key role for the growth of the economies like Malaysia, India, Oman, Turkey, Poland and so forth. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for Bangladesh to have a discussion to equip and readjust its foreign policy in accordance with global economic reality.

4. CLIMATE NEGOTIATION

A catastrophe caused by climate change is undoubtedly the biggest threat to human existence. The global population is currently around 7.3 billion and growing. Climate change will create more competition among a growing global population over scarce food, water and land. It will also trigger new security competition. A melting Arctic Ocean means a new coastline to defend. It means open competition among the bordering nations of North America, Europe and Asia for oil-drilling rights in the Arctic. Due to sea level rise, many nations would lose much of their landmass, including Bangladesh; while some might

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completely disappear in the future. No security issue today is graver than the threats posed by climate change. Politics is also intricately linked with climate change. A shift in global leadership and balance of power would also imply that climate change politics would be intensified and it will further drift the great powers apart. For example, former US President Barack Obama endorsed the United Nations Green Climate Fund, which was created as a financial institution to help developing countries combat the adverse impacts of climate change. Trump has halted US donations to this fund, noting that it would drain US taxpayers’ money and withdrew from Conference of the Parties (CoP) 21. Therefore, two serious global challenges at hand: one that threatens the existence of mankind and redrawing of the maps; and the other is lack of global leadership to unite the world under a common umbrella to tackle climate change.

Furthermore, climate negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) could not make significant progress towards the desired targets. The world fell under despair with two great failures, the Kyoto Protocol and the CoP 15 at Copenhagen in 2009, during which the parties in question could not come to an agreement. Amidst these failures, the Paris Agreement in 2015 that came with the conclusion of CoP21 was a success in a sense that the countries were able to reach an agreement and are required to submit some sort of plan to address climate change. But the content is entirely up to the country. The agreement also does not impose enforceable financial obligations on the specific


parties. Furthermore, no country will be forced to take any further actions, and no one gets penalised if they fail to live up to their promises.

Although it is a major gamble on the fate of the planet, the global leaders are yet to get serious and committed in their plans and actions. Developed countries are not fulfilling their expected role in providing financial resources to help poorer countries develop in a sustainable way and protect citizens from the impact of climate change.

The stake for Bangladesh in climate negotiation is huge as it is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Its geophysical position coupled with highly dense population, limited resources and dependence on nature makes the country hazard-prone with many catastrophic events like floods, cyclones and salinity intrusion. The long-term effects of climate change are likely to hinder Bangladesh’s progress towards sustainable development and undermine its development gains. Bangladesh has started to play a key role in climate negotiations. It is time, Bangladesh gives more importance to climate negotiation and develops stronger partnerships to push for enforceable actions and gain access to resources and technology to develop the capacity to effectively address its climate vulnerabilities.

5. GLOBAL HUMAN MOVEMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

The failure to manage terrorism and to end the wars in the Middle East more generally have had a particularly destructive impact on the global governance of migration. With millions of refugees fleeing their

homelands, many recipient countries have experienced a potent political backlash from right-wing national groups and disgruntled populations. This further reduces the ability of countries to generate effective solutions to problems at the regional and global level.

The rapid escalation of refugee flows in the last few years alone, coupled with the protracted nature of today’s conflicts, has strained the humanitarian regime to the breaking point. It has also tested the reception systems of states and called into question the protections afforded to refugees. From Syria to Myanmar more than 125 million people around the world have had their lives devastated by conflict or disaster and countless families are being pushed deeper into poverty every day.

Today’s humanitarian institutions are in dire need of reform. Created in the aftermath of World War II, the regime has failed to adapt to increasingly complex crises characterised by minimal burden sharing among states, increased secondary movement and the expanding array of humanitarian actors. The 1951 Refugee Convention provides the legal foundation for the humanitarian and refugee aid regime.47 Although it recognises the right of refugees to seek asylum and outlines the obligations of states to protect asylum seekers, it offers no mechanism to distribute the responsibilities and burdens of hosting refugees equitably. This divide creates tensions between countries that are forced to accommodate refugees because of proximity and countries that can choose how many asylum seekers to protect. Refugee-hosting states are often located in regions marked by instability and conflict, and they are often unable to provide adequate protection and support. Consequently, they rely heavily on aid from donor countries, international institutions and nongovernmental service

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providers. However, the supply of funding for emergency relief has failed to keep pace with skyrocketing demand.

The persecution of the Rohingyas, being the latest example, has caused a colossal humanitarian crisis for Bangladesh. The most recent influx occurred following the 25 August 2017 violence in Rakhine state of Myanmar.\(^{48}\) Hundreds of thousands of ethnic Rohingyas have fled to escape mass atrocities by the security forces of Myanmar. An estimated 1.2 million Rohingyas have crossed into Bangladesh.\(^{49}\) It has mastered all its efforts to engage the international community to stand beside her to resolve the problem. The entire international community, including the UN, EU, the US and different civil society organisations have acclaimed Bangladesh’s humanitarian efforts to accommodate the Rohingyas. On the call of Bangladesh government, they have created pressure against Myanmar and extended their hands of cooperation. A lion’s share of the credit goes to the diplomatic efforts made by the Bangladesh government, especially by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Nonetheless, the support from the three of its trusted and most dependable allies, China, India and Russia was not up to the expectation of Bangladesh. Hence, Bangladesh should not rule out the possibility of reconsidering its alliances with regard to its security needs.

6. BANGLADESH FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVES

The changing global dynamics require revisiting Bangladesh’s foreign policy perspectives in the 21st century. Historically, its foreign policy


orientation is shaped by an overarching approach, widely acclaimed as ‘friendship to all, malice to none’. While this has been an important guideline for achieving different foreign policy objectives, devising pragmatic and crafty foreign policies by prioritising and strengthening partnerships selectively (both bilateral and multilateral) based on its key interests is also critical to address its major foreign policy challenges.

There is a need to recognise two important aspects of Bangladesh foreign policy issues. First, Bangladesh bears certain limitations in conducting its foreign policies as a geographically small state. Its physical location, limited resources and growing economic and security vulnerabilities demand placing a vital importance on bilateral and multilateral cooperation and partnership-building. In particular, Bangladesh needs to emphasise its traditional policy of prioritising multilateralism over bilateralism. Second, Bangladesh's stake in the changing global dynamics is not only very high, but also its stakes are growing, especially in the areas of climate change and human development. For these two important aspects, Bangladesh needs to increase its bargaining capacity and resources to be able to bring the most out of its regional and global negotiations and engagements.

As the US global leadership shifts away from free trade, globalisation, and open markets, the developing countries like Bangladesh should be concerned regarding the rippling effect of a systemic power shift. Nobody can predict the full effects of the change in global economic management, but they will surely be negative for emerging economies, whose development strategies are based on free trade and open capital flows. Given the likelihood of additional trade protectionism and measures to remove immigrant workers, the increase in inflation and long-term interest rates could be quite dramatic. The impact on financial markets will also be disruptive in the coming days.

The Paris Agreement does not impose enforceable financial obligations on the specific parties. However, developed countries were expected to “provide financial resources” to help poorer countries develop in a
sustainable way and protect citizens from the impact of climate change. The developing countries like Bangladesh will be worst affected by the adverse consequences, a problem created by the developed countries.50

In an intensified globalised world, where violent extremism has always been changing its nature to broaden its operational area, Bangladesh is not out of danger from radicalisation and the global terrorist threat. In this regard, inextensive cooperation with fellow victim nations the Bangladesh Government has been working on both ideological and operational fronts to tackle the threat. However, a global rise of terrorism and Syrian refugee crisis instigated rise of right-wing populism across the Northern hemisphere.51 In effect, a harsh immigration policy in Europe and in the US means, middle-income countries like Bangladesh, who depends on foreign remittances, transfer of technology as well as skill and education from their expatriates, will face a difficult period. A drastic reduction of migrants from the global south to global north will have direct impacts on “Goal 4: Quality Education”, “Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth” and “Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure” to achieve SDGs by 2030.

As the Gulf countries are pivot to Bangladesh’s labour market and building block for a strong foreign reserve, the “Qatar crisis,” has to be taken in the cognizance of the policy makers. The air, land and sea blockade by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates to Qatar has grave impact on the Middle Eastern geopolitics. When it combines with other issues like Saudi Prince Mohammad bin Salman’s liberalisation of Saudi society and growing Saudi assertiveness, uneasy relations with Iran, Washington’s controversial decision to establishing US embassy in Jerusalem, paints a complex


puzzle to solve. To safeguard Bangladesh’s interest in terms of expanding labour market, ensuring rights for migrant workers and maintaining traditional warm relations with Arab Muslim nations will be imperative. In this endeavour, Bangladesh has to be careful and farsighted to take stance or in maintaining neutrality on issues of contention.

The world is witnessing the re-emergence of China as a global power, willing to take the baton from a reluctant Trump administration. Be it through the “One Belt One Road” (OBOR), currently known as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to spend billions on infrastructure spanning Africa and Asia, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) or through its military bases in the South China Sea, China has gradually built itself as an essential player on the global stage. Hence, the regional manifestations of the systemic power shifts from the US to China are likely to open up windows of opportunities for Bangladesh as well as pose some challenges. China’s economic growth has made BRI a strong economic force in driving global trade. Building on Xi’s New Security Concept, which states that economic development is a precondition for security, it has been called “the most ambitious infrastructure-based security initiative in the world today.”

By joining BRI and China being the largest trading partner, Bangladesh expects an increase in Chinese FDI, increased market access in China and continuing Chinese support in infrastructure development to be integrated in multiple regional and subregional initiatives. Bangladesh-China increasing economic interdependence can be visible in the 40 per cent rise in growth of Bangladesh’s export to Chinese market in the last five years, while the bilateral trade is expected to be US$30 billion by the year of 2021. Subsequently, Bangladesh is to gain substantially from the rapid economic growth of the two large neighbours, China and India, and their growing engagements in the

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neighbourhood. Bangladesh’s ability to exploit different regional and subregional initiatives undertaken by the two rising powers would be crucial. Additionally, attracting more FDI and technology transfer by integrating itself with both regional and global supply chain and innovation network would also be highly important for achieving its major foreign policy objectives.

With regard to national security, the Rohingya refugee crisis is a recurring problem for Bangladesh. Starting from 1978, it is becoming progressively more intensified over the years, 2017 influx being the most severe one. The trend of Rohingya crisis for the last four decades does not give any guarantee that the crisis would not recur and lead to a standoff situation between Bangladesh and Myanmar. That also suggests that Bangladesh needs to revisit its security policies and alliances to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Since 1988, Bangladesh has been one of the highest troop contributors in global peacekeeping operations under the UN banner. To strengthen Bangladesh’s global presence in order to uphold the global peace, it is imperative to find a strong footing in command and decision making process of the UN peacekeeping effort. The transition is justified by Bangladesh’s sacrifice and industrious effort to safeguard global peace. The global dynamics are changing and a subtle change can be observed in the global leadership as well. Nations like Bangladesh, who were less fancied are punching above their weight to bring sustainable peace and prosperity. The influence of such nations will also contribute in changing the dynamics in the global environment.

7. CONCLUSION

A paradigm shift in the global world order came followed by the end of the Cold War. Many started to believe a unipolar world, led by the leader of the ‘free world’ the US, will continue to persevere. Nonetheless, the unipolarity started to get diluted as the global south started to emerge with China at the helm. The postcolonial states, once
dismissed as the ‘third world nations’ are now catching up fast and often compared as the ‘factories of the world’. Hence, the question remains to be answered is whether the world is going to witness an ‘Asian Age’ in the backdrop of an intensified globalisation process. A tectonic shift of such magnitude is bound to pose few challenges and opportunities alike for nations and societies across hemispheres. As the climate change looms in the background of a rapid economic boom for many of the industrialised and graduating middle income economies, a collective action will be imperative to reverse the trend of global warming and determine the fate of the human race.