

Headlines:

- **Brexit Deal 'will cost UK £100bn' by 2030**
- **Donald Trump's Embrace of Saudi Arabia Rejected by Republican Senators**
- **Imran vs Trump: Pakistan Emerged as the Victor**

Details:

Brexit Deal 'will cost UK £100bn' by 2030

The government's Brexit deal will leave the UK £100bn worse off by 2030 than if it had remained in the EU, a study by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) has said. The study commissioned by the People's Vote, which wants a second referendum, said GDP would be 3.9% lower. "This is the equivalent of losing the economic output of Wales or the City of London," it said. Chancellor Philip Hammond has said the deal is better than staying in the EU. Approved by the EU on Sunday, the withdrawal agreement sets out the terms of the UK's exit from the EU, including its £39bn "divorce bill", citizens' rights and the Northern Ireland "backstop" - a way to keep the Irish border open, if trade talks stall. A separate political declaration sets out what the UK and EU's relationship may be like after Brexit - outlining how UK-EU trade will work. NIESR's research modelled different Brexit scenarios against a baseline of staying in the EU. NIESR's research modelled different Brexit scenarios against a baseline of staying in the EU. It found that the government's preferred outcome - leaving in March 2019 and entering a transition period lasting until December 2020 before moving to a free trade agreement - would lead to a huge reduction in trade and investment. This is largely because leaving the single market would create "higher impediments" to services trade, making it less attractive to sell services from the UK, it said. "This discourages investment in the UK and ultimately means that UK workers are less productive than they would have been if the UK had stayed in the EU." By 2030, at the end of the first decade outside the EU, the research predicts that GDP per head would fall by 3%, amounting to an average cost per person of £1,090 at today's prices. It also estimates that total trade between the UK and the EU would fall by 46%. The report also modelled alternative Brexit outcomes against staying in the EU. This showed that remaining in a customs union beyond the transition period, possibly through invoking the so-called Irish "backstop", would still mean a hit of £70bn by 2030. Another scenario, favoured by some Brexit supporters, of an "orderly no deal" departure from the EU would reduce GDP by 5.5%, or £140bn, it said. [Source: BBC]

Irrespective of the monetary costs, whether the UK remains or leaves, Britain's standing as a world power will forever be diminished.

Donald Trump's Embrace of Saudi Arabia Rejected by Republican Senators

Several US Republican senators have rejected President Donald Trump's embrace of Saudi Arabia after the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Some

lawmakers from his party have also suggested Congress must take additional action after Mr Trump last week vowed to remain a “steadfast partner” of Saudi Arabia. In a statement released last week, the US President said it was not clear whether the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman knew about the plan to kill Mr Khashoggi at the Saudi consulate. Mr Trump said: “It could very well be that the Crown Prince had knowledge of this tragic event. Maybe he did and maybe he didn't!” The president cast doubt on the CIA assessment that Crown Prince Mohammed ordered the Washington Post columnist’s killing, saying that the agency had not formed a definitive conclusion. “I disagree with the president's assessment. It's inconsistent with the intelligence I've seen” which implicates the crown prince, Republican Senator Mike Lee said on NBC's Meet the Press. He cited the killing of Mr Khashoggi as another reason why he has pushed against helping Saudi Arabia's war effort in Yemen. The US last week imposed economic sanctions on 17 Saudi officials for their role in the killing of Mr Khashoggi. Senators from both major US parties also introduced legislation that would suspend weapon sales to Saudi Arabia over the murder and for its role in Yemen's civil war. “I do think we need to look into this further,” Republican Senator Joni Ernst said on CNN. Mr Ernst acknowledged Saudi Arabia's importance as a strategic partner but added: “We also are a very strong nation when it comes to human rights, when it comes to the rule of law. “And if there are indicators that the prince was involved in this murder then we need to absolutely consider further action.” Senator Ben Sasse, a frequent critic of Mr Trump, criticized his stance on the killing as weak. “Making the realist case is a different thing than being so weak that we failed to tell the truth, Mr Sasse said on Fox News. Other Republican senators, including Lindsey Graham, Rand Paul and Bob Corker, have been unsparing in their assessments of Saudi Arabia's involvement in the killing. “I never thought I'd see the day a White House would moonlight as a public relations firm for the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia,” Mr Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wrote on Twitter after Trump's comments last week. [Source: Evening Standard]

In the era of transactional politics, values matter little to the US political establishment. Both Democrats and Republicans are guilty of giving Trump an open license to pursue naked commercial interests. The good thing is that the world can clearly see what America’s unbridled imperialism really looks like with their values.

Imran vs Trump: Pakistan Emerged as the Victor

There’s nothing Trump doesn’t tweet, and there aren’t many he spares in his tweets that on a normal day read like knee-jerkish, mean-spirited, written-in-unsuppressed rage over-reactions of a testosterone-fuelled juvenile to an imagined or a real slight. Given his position as the president of the most powerful country and the only superpower of the world, expectation of restraint, dignity and magnanimity from Trump is akin to expecting Grinch to not steal Christmas. Or the Sun to not rise in the east. Donald Trump of the USA versus Imran Khan of Pakistan is the latest Twitter fight in the age of Trump who with each new tweet rewrites the virtual rules of engagement, turning the playbook of protocol, diplomacy and intricacies of bilateral interactions on its head, gleefully kicking its proverbial backside faster than you can say retweet. From America’s usual refrain to Pakistan of “Do More,” Trump tweet-

jumped to Pakistan “do[es] nothing for us.” And a tweet that wouldn’t have elicited more than an oh-no-not-again – if Americans or the world started to pay attention to Trump’s unmentionable tweets, it would be Apocalypse Now every day – triggered a reaction that not many expected. Nothing unites Pakistan quicker than a Trump tweet or two belittling Pakistan’s immense role in the US War on Terror. Exceptions are there; there are a certain type of Pakistanis who watch and tweet in glee whenever Pakistan is trashed/attacked by a western country. Prime Minister Imran Khan does not tweet to shock, intimidate, amuse or insult. His Twitter timeline, devoid of replies and retweets, other than serving as a noticeboard of his political and now prime ministerial viewpoints and activities, is merely a run-of-the-mill collection of tweets that are expected from any head of a state. Khan does not tweet to become a global headline, and what he did in response to Trump’s tweet was a simple stating of facts. Khan’s now globally viral response is not nationalistic bluster or patriotic hyperbole; what he said is a fact. Pakistan has suffered huge human and material losses after being forced to become a part of George W. Bush’s post-9/11 “you are either with us or against us” war. Khan tweeted: Record needs to be put straight on Mr Trump’s tirade against Pakistan: 1. No Pakistani was involved in 9/11 but Pak decided to participate in US War on Terror. 2. Pakistan suffered 75,000 casualties in this war & over \$123 bn was lost to economy. US “aid” was a miniscule \$20 bn. Our tribal areas were devastated & millions of ppl uprooted from their homes. The war drastically impacted lives of ordinary Pakistanis. 4. Pak continues to provide free lines of ground & air communications(GLOCs/ALOCs).Can Mr Trump name another ally that gave such sacrifices?” The noteworthy point: Imran Khan the prime minister has merely reiterated what Imran Khan the politician has said for years. That Pakistan is fighting US wars, that Pakistan must not be part of any western/US war in which the US focused on its goals of global hegemony and self-aggrandisement kills people in our region, that the toll on Pakistan of the US wars is astronomical compared to any monetary or other compensation America has given Pakistan in the guise of being its ally, and that no US war in Afghanistan should have ever been brought to Pakistan.Pakistan’s history is fraught with its misplaced military adventurism that stemmed from its myopic and self-detrimental paradigms of “strategic depth” and “strategic assets.” The debate of the why and how of that is beyond the domain of my limited-word op-ed; what I know is that Khan’s government has a unique chance to construct the groundwork for a change that would be beneficial to Pakistan in ways that are far reaching and substantial. Khan’s tweet to Trump “Now we will do what is best for our people and our interests” is the indication of a beginning of a new chapter of Pakistan’s geostrategic identity: Pakistan for Pakistan. [Source: Gulf News].

Khan needs to back up his rhetoric was solid actions on the ground and this should including cutting ties with the US, closing its embassy and consulates, and expelling its personnel. Anything short of this, only serves to underscore that American hegemony over Pakistan is the preference of the ruling class.