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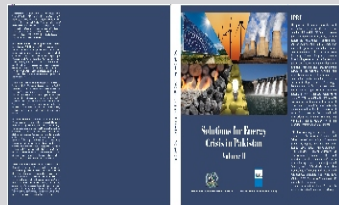
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IPRI Staff Members with Chair and Speakers of the Conference

Plight of Minorities in India

A one-day conference on “Plight of Minorities in India” was organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) at IPRI Conference Hall on December 15, 2015. Ambassador (R) Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), chaired the conference session. The panel of speakers included three eminent scholars: Dr. Shaheen Akhter, Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, National Defence University, Islamabad; Dr. Muhammad Mujeeb Afzal, Assistant Professor, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad and Ambassador (R) Fauzia Nasreen, Head of Department, Center for Policy Studies, COMSATS.

During the conference, speakers discussed the plight of minorities in India, Indian claim of being a secular state, Hinduva ideology and the likely impact of Hindu extremism on Pakistan-India relations. The salient points made

by the speakers were:

- Minorities in India are the unprivileged class of people, whose progress depended on government's will (as well as the majority). In India, the standing of minorities was more or less equivalent to the lower castes.
- Indian claim of a pluralistic and democratic country was in sharp contrast to the ground realities. In the politics, the Muslims had minimal or no representation. The political elite dominated by the Hindus consider the Muslims as disloyal, instigators of partition, and a hindrance in India's rise. Muslims were linked with Pakistan and their loyalty/identity was questioned. The Muslims were being portrayed as radicals. The slogans like India is for Hindus and that Muslims have a lot of countries to go were being raised. A number of times, the Muslim religious places were targeted.
- As per the 2011 consensus,

population of India is 1.2 billion, in which, the minorities numbered 200 million. The minorities made up about 20 percent of the total population and Muslims constituted about 13 percent of the minorities.

- Since the BJP led government took office in India, the plight of minorities had worsened. Prime Minister Modi's Hindu nationalist agenda had further marginalized the Muslim community.
- Recently, an editorial titled “Forced to Live in Terror” published in the Indian Express discussed the plight of minorities in India. It maintained that an environment of fear had been created for the minority factions in the country.
- India despite being party to international conventions on minority rights had failed to give protection to its minorities.

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National Conference

Conference Session



Ambassador (R) Fauzia Nasreen chaired Conference Session



Ambassador (R) Khalid Mahmood Dr. Shaheen Akhter Dr. Muhammad Mujeeb Afzal

India's coercive doctrine. Human rights groups had reported the inhumane acts in IHK. To bring an end to the sufferings of minorities in India, the international community needed to play its role, and press upon India to ensure rights of minorities.

- In a secular state all the communities irrespective of their religion should have equal opportunities. But Indian political parties had varied religious orientation; some were secular, while some were Hindu nationalists. Congress represented secularism and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had been the proponent of Hinduism.
- The creation of Hindu vote bank and Muslim vote bank during the 1960s, followed by the communal mobilization of 1980s (under the leadership of Indira Gandhi) reflected religious divide in Indian politics. Whereas, in 1997, the inclusion of socialists and democratic republics in the Indian constitution (reference 47th Amendment) was widely criticized by the Hindu nationalists.
- BJP had tried to homogenize the Indian plural and diverse culture. BJP's vision of one country, one nation revolved around the Hindutva ideology, and adoption of "Hindu first" approach.
- The current practices of BJP government like the Gau-Raksha, (preserve the cow) would ignite the Hindu-Muslim rivalry.
- India-Pakistan rivalry was an extension of the partition and the Hindu-Muslim animosity. The ideological orientation was central to the conflicting bilateral ties. Both the countries had fought wars over Kashmir. Still there was exchange of fire across the Line of Control (LoC). Indian subversive role in the dismemberment of former East Pakistan (confession by Prime Minister Modi), abetting of sub-nationalist tendencies in Balochistan and ingress in Afghanistan was a source of instability in



Pakistan (and the region at large).

- India's reliance on a coercive hegemonic doctrine, rather than an institutional one, had led to the failure of bilateral talks between India and Pakistan one after the other.
- The Hindu nationalism had prevailed under the mantle of Hindu secularism. The concepts of Akhand Bharat, and anti-Muslim rhetoric were an integral part of India's political orientation. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Sang Pariwar's teachings had spawned a culture of extremism. The Samjohta Express incident (2007) is an example, in which the Indian rogue elements destroyed the peace initiative with Pakistan.
- The BJP led Lok Sabha has lowest ever Muslim representation of just four percent of MPs, way below the Muslims 13.4 percent population share. In the state of Uttar Pradesh, "BJP won 71 out of 80 seats. Muslims form almost a fifth of the population of the state but there was not a single Muslim MP from Uttar Pradesh".
- In the backdrop of BJP's Hindutva ideology, India-Pakistan dialogue process was at the lowest ebb. The recent announcement to initiate a "Comprehensive Dialogue" was a positive development, but to achieve concrete results, the Indian leadership would have to give up the extremist approach.

Lecture

Modi's Visit and Future of Pakistan-India Relations

Mr. Asghar Ali Shad, Research Fellow IPRI, gave a lecture to IPRI scholars on the topic "Modi's Visit and Future of Pakistan-India Relations."

The salient points highlighted during the presentation are:

- Indian Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's brief stopover in Lahore on December 25, 2015 and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's warm welcome may be taken as a "good-will gesture" or a positive sign in future Pakistan-India relations. The visit coincided with Nawaz Sharif's birthday

and the wedding of his granddaughter. The two heads of government earlier had an unscheduled meeting at the Paris climate change talks last month (December 2015).

- Both internal and external factors within India possibly played a role in

Modi's surprise visit to Pakistan.

- Internally, BJP's defeat in Delhi elections held in February 2015 was an important factor. As per schedule, provincial elections are going to

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IPRI Engagement

Fourth CICA Think Tanks Roundtable on Asian Security Cooperation



On the invitation of the President, Shanghai Institute of International Studies (SIIS), President IPRI Ambassador (r) Sohail Amin visited Shanghai, China to attend the Fourth Think Tanks Roundtable on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA). The theme of the Roundtable, held during December 2015, was 'Asian Security Cooperation: Contexts, Missions and Prospects'. Scholars from China, Afghanistan, Egypt, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Russia, Turkey and Uzbekistan attended the event.

The inaugural session of the Roundtable was addressed by the Vice Foreign Minister of China H.E Mr. Cheng Guoping. He said that all the member countries of CICA were confronted with grave security challenges and were pitched against terrorism, extremism and international financial crisis. CICA was meant to find out solutions to those grave challenges by promoting dialogue and through its Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). He said that innovative security contexts to achieve common comprehensive security were required.

Addressing the Roundtable, President IPRI said that the global order was undergoing transition and a new system of international relations was taking shape resonating the dawn of a multipolar world. Causes of instability and uncertainties in global politics and economy were increasing. Threats to global and regional stability including terrorism, extremism, trafficking in narcotic drugs, transnational organized crime, cyber threats, environmental disasters, as well as the implications of global climate change were looming large. Asia was facing diverse challenges, especially those emanating from instability in the Middle East, United States'

renewed interest in the Asia-Pacific, rapprochement between Iran and the US, evolving political and security developments in Afghanistan and Russia's mixed signals about its future endeavours in its greater neighbourhood as well as global matters. All those factors suggested that a new Asian order may be in the making. It appeared that a multipolar Asia with multiple centres of power was shaping its contours.

President IPRI said that CICA had made considerable progress since it came into being. It had come up as an extremely important forum for interaction, dialogue and confidence building. As a founder member of CICA, Pakistan was pleased to see it develop into a unique forum which was representative of Eurasian regions' diversity and richness. CICA's primary objective was to enhance elaborate multilateral approaches that could promote peace, security and stability in Asia. Its objectives also included promotion of trade and economic cooperation and building transport corridors to achieve regional connectivity. Development of trade and economic activity would alleviate poverty and bring about prosperity in the region. And prosperity in turn would bring with it security and stability. President IPRI added that when the economic projects were of such a nature that several countries were surely going to benefit from them, a large number of countries developed interest in them and aspired to work together collectively for their success. Such collective efforts could dampen and then help in mitigating regional irritants and conflicts. Asian countries were, therefore, required to focus on projects that could benefit a group of countries. President

IPRI continued that 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) was based on the concept of development leading to security and stability. OBOR was a web of networks which would connect more than 60 countries together causing their economic integration. The transport corridors that it would create would connect the Pacific Ocean to the Baltic Sea and would link East Asia to South Asia and the Middle East. This visionary idea would serve a market of about three billion people. China and Pakistan had taken a lead in this regard by focussing on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which was the southern extension of OBOR. Excellent relations between China and Pakistan were acting as a stimulus in realizing this dream project.

President IPRI concluded that the CICA region was geographically linked and possessed abundant natural and human resources and technical expertise. Pakistan believed that under China's Presidency, CICA would get further strengthened resulting in greater cooperation among Asian States to achieve security, stability and prosperity in the region.

CALL FOR PAPERS IPRI Journal Summer 2016

IPRI Journal is published twice a year by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI). The Institute is dedicated to research and analysis of regional and international issues with relevance to Pakistan's national policies.

Editor invites scholars to submit well-researched and unpublished papers for its upcoming IPRI Journal Summer 2016.

Submission Deadline:
March 30, 2016

For Submission Guidelines, visit: www.ipripak.org

Note: IPRI Journal is HEC recognized 'X Category'

IPRI Review Meeting

Russia's Revival: Opportunities and Limitations for Pakistan

Ms. Gulshan Bibi, Assistant Research Officer in her presentation on "Russia's Revival: Opportunities and Limitations for Pakistan" discussed revival of Russia based on its gaining military might, revitalizing economic strengths, enhancing energy exports, diplomatic sagacity and its geographical significance. She explained areas of common interest between Pakistan and Russia that offer opportunities for Pakistan.

The salient points highlighted during the presentation are:

- The relations between Pakistan and Russia have been growing over the past decade with increased diplomatic engagement. The year 2007 was marked by a three day official visit of Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov to Pakistan.
- Demidov Andrey Vladimirovich, Russian Consul General, while speaking at the 65th year of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Russia stated, "The history of our bilateral relations saw both good and not so good. But irrespective of the state of then relations, both countries always felt the necessity to maintain good contacts."
- Defence collaboration between Russia and Pakistan got a new impetus on June 2014 when Russia lifted embargo on arms supplies to Pakistan.
- Pakistan and Russia have also signed a most sought-after energy deal of \$1.7 billion for laying a liquefied natural gas (LNG) pipeline from Karachi to Lahore.
- Afghanistan, India and the US could be some of the challenging factors in Pak-Russia relationship but both countries are determined to better their relations despite constraints that are manageable.
- Russia recognizes Pakistan's strategic

significance in the region, particularly with regard to the situation in Afghanistan, where instability can have a negative impact on the security of Central Asian Republics (CARs) and North Caucasus.

- Pakistan has become a member of the SCO. The SCO can play a constructive role in pushing for the improvement of bilateral relations among its member states. It can cooperate in a number of high-tech sectors, such as biotechnology, aviation and space, climate change adaptation, disaster management, drug trafficking and disease mitigation.
- The statement by Russian authorities forbidding the use of word 'Islam' with ISIS terrorism is praiseworthy. Both countries can jointly formulate a mechanism to fight terrorism, and can initiate a mechanism for intelligence sharing and joint operations.
- The expertise of Russia's oil company like Rosneft and Gazprom Gas Company can contribute significantly to developing Pakistan's oil and gas potential. Gazprom is ready to invest in Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline. It also offered its cooperation in trans-national energy projects, including CASA-1000 and TAPI gas pipeline.
- Russia's Magnitogorsk Iron and Steel Factory (MMK) also offered help to expand the capabilities of Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) from one million to three million tons of production a year.
- Russia can also help in gas purification plants, modernization of oil and gas infrastructure, and building/renovation of various power generating units in Pakistan, especially those of Russian origin, Tarbela 4th and 5th extension hydro power project and up-gradation of the Jamshoro power



plant.

- A strategic partnership is evolving between China and Russia for the promotion of regional peace. Pakistan seeks Russian economic assistance in the form of foreign direct investment and technological cooperation particularly in the energy field. Russia seems inclined to responding to these needs in addition to increasing trade volume from current \$600 million to \$1 billion in the next decade.
- Pakistan can be a competitive source of agricultural and textile goods to Russia. Russia has banned agriculture imports specially food from Europe. Pakistan can export agriculture products to Russia by utilizing this void of \$16 billion food imports of Russia.
- Russian achievements in sports are noteworthy. Russian coaches can be invited and friendly fixtures can be arranged to provide the opportunity for Pakistani teams to nurture and groom, and earn a higher position in the world.

Useful Information

- Vladimir Putin has been Russia's dominant political figure since 2000 and Russia under him is reasserting its role in its immediate sphere of influence.
- Putin launched a modernization programme after Russia's short war with Georgia in 2008. In 2009, the Kremlin jacked up military spending by nearly a third. Russia's 2014 defence budget of 2.49 trillion rubles makes it the third largest spender in the world behind the US and China.
- The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) has become an Intergovernmental Military Organization safeguarding Russia against the US and NATO. Russia is making alliances and is realigning the old ones. It has conducted biggest naval drills with China in the



South China Sea and has a Naval Facility in Syria. Russia also held naval exercises for the first time in the Arabian Sea with Pakistan.

- 2008 Russian military intervention in Georgia, 2014-15 military intervention in Ukraine and 2015 military intervention in Syria showed the emergence of a more confident and assertive Russia.
- The Russian economy is the sixth largest in the

world. China is Russia's second largest trading partner after the EU. With emerging economies, it is building economic blocks like BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank) and Eurasian Development Bank. It is also a member of the G 20 and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

- Russia is the world's largest producer of crude oil and the second-largest producer of dry natural gas. It also produces significant amounts of coal.
- Russia maintains a dominant position in gas supply within the European market. It is ready to help establish the Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline and establishing closer commercial ties between South Asia and Europe via Russian territory.

IPRI Review Meeting

India's Strategic Relations with Afghanistan: Implications for Pakistan

Ms. Saman Zulfqar, Assistant Research Officer in her presentation on "India's Strategic Relations with Afghanistan: Implications for Pakistan" discussed that during Taliban rule in Afghanistan, India kept a low profile on the Afghanistan issue at the diplomatic level. However, Indian post 9/11 engagement in Afghanistan has to be seen in parallel to the changed and evolving international environment. Salient points of her presentation are:



- Indian policy makers view Indo-Afghan strategic relations as a measure to secure its national

security interests in Afghanistan and marginalize the influence of Pakistan, and to reduce Afghanistan's dependence on Pakistan.

- Indian analyst Sumit Ganguly described that along with the use of soft power, India's covert activities also continued in Afghanistan. India provided \$8 million worth of high altitude warfare equipment to Afghanistan and sent military advisors and technicians.
- Indo-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), 2011 is the first such agreement that post-Taliban Afghanistan has formally entered into with any state to guarantee post-withdrawal Afghan security.

Indo-Afghan relations and Implications for Pakistan

- Pakistan perceives the Indo-Afghan Strategic Partnership Agreement detrimental to its interests as preserving strategic stability and regional balance of power has been one of the guiding principles of its foreign policy.
- Given the troubled India-Pakistan relations, Pakistan is concerned



about enhanced Indian military and political influence in Afghanistan that has been increasing Indian capacity to destabilize Pakistan. Pakistani assertions were reconfirmed by the US Secretary of Defence, Chuck Hagel, in his talk at Cameron University in Oklahoma in 2011, who commented on India's role in Afghanistan and said that India had been using Afghanistan as a second front against Pakistan and had over the years financed problems for Pakistan on that side of the border.

- India's cooperation in develop-ing

alternate transit land and sea routes would have a negative impact on Pakistan politically as well as economically, as it is reported that post 2014, transit trade through Pakistan has been reduced by half.

- India's cooperation in the construction of dams on Kabul River would decrease the flow of water to Pakistan by 17 percent and would badly affect the irrigation process and power generation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as Warsak dam is built on river Kabul.

Addition to Our Library

The Colder War: How the Global Energy Trade Slipped from America's Grasp

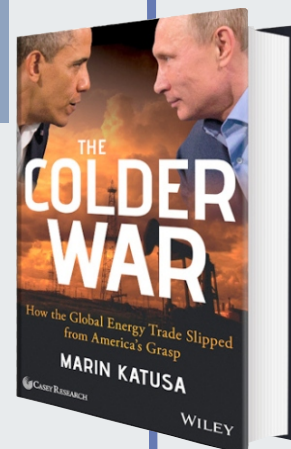
The book discovers how political coups, takeovers, and assassinations have brought Russia to the center of the world's energy market. It follows Putin's rise to power and how it has led to an upsetting of the global balance of trade. It explores how Russia positioned itself as the most powerful force in the energy market and studies Putin's long-range plans and their potential impact on the United States and the U.S. dollar.

In *The Colder War: How the Global Energy Trade Slipped from America's Grasp*, energy expert Marin Katusa takes a look at the ways the western world is losing control of the energy market, and what can be done about it.

Russia is in the midst of a rapid economic and geopolitical renaissance under the rule of Vladimir Putin. There is a new cold war underway, driven by a massive geopolitical power shift to Russia that went

almost unnoticed across the globe.

If Putin's plans are successful, not only will Russia be able to starve other countries of power, but the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) will replace the G7 in wealth and clout. *The Colder War* takes a hard look at what is to come in a new global energy market that is certain to cause unprecedented impact on the US dollar and the American way of life.



IPRI Review Meeting

Ukrainian Crisis and the Resurgence of Russia

Ms. Aymen Ijaz, Assistant Research Officer IPRI gave a presentation on “Ukrainian Crisis and the Resurgence of Russia”.



Salient points of her presentation are:

Crisis at a Glance

In November 2013, Ukraine suspended a political and an economic association agreement that Kiev had to sign with the EU. Instead later in December 2013, Ukraine accepted a generous financial and economic package from Russia. The November 2013 decision led to mass protests in central Kiev. These protests became known as the *Euromaidan*, which resulted in the resignation of Ukrainian President Yanukovich. His resignation led to unrest in Southern and Eastern Ukraine, from where he

had drawn his support. Many anti-revolution activists started demonstrations in Crimea and other regions. A referendum was held in Crimea on 16 March, 2014 and finally Crimea joined Russia on 18 March, 2014. Elections were held in May 2014 in Ukraine and a new government of Petro Poroshenko was installed. In order to restore peace in the *Donbass region*, peace deal agreements were signed in September 2014 and February 2015 respectively between the Ukrainian government and the separatists. First Minsk-I Protocol (to ensure immediate ceasefire) was brokered by OSCE, Minsk-II was brokered by Germany and France.

Implications of Ukrainian Crisis

Ukrainian crisis had both domestic and international implications. It led to political unrest. According to World Bank, the Ukrainian economy collapsed by 8% in 2014. The gas pipeline agreement with the EU through Ukraine was cancelled. As for Russia, it was ousted out of the G8 and heavy economic sanctions were imposed on it. The crisis resulted in devaluation of ruble. Russia's economic ties with Europe were also strained. Hence, the Ukrainian crisis politically and economically affected the region.

Useful Information

To understand the Ukrainian crisis, it is important to understand the geography of Ukraine and its geo-strategic importance. Ukraine is a country in Eastern Europe, lying on the northern shores of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov. It borders a number of European countries, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary in the west, Belarus in the north, Moldova and Romania in the south-west and Russia in the east. Ukraine is the second-largest country by area in Europe after Russia.

Ukraine's strategic location made it a crucial player in the European energy transit network. Ukraine manufactures ballistic missiles, large transport planes and launch pads for space carriers. Ukraine is also a major producer and exporter of steel. Ukraine has large natural gas deposits and some of the best offshore hydrocarbon deposits in the Black Sea. From the strategic point of view, Ukrainian port cities are important in both economic and military sense. The ports of Odessa and Sevastopol provide both military and commercial access for exports, particularly from Southern Russia.

Relevance to Pakistan

The government of Pakistan emphasized on the need for talks and diplomacy as the only option to resolve the matter.

Recommendations

Pakistan must diversify its foreign policy and have good relations with all the major world powers, including Russia. Russia is also inclined towards improving its ties with Pakistan. Growing Russia-China ties would also open new prospects and opportunities for Pakistan. In view of

Russia's search for new markets for its defence equipment and technology sale, Pakistan would be an additional destination for Russia. It would also be able to focus on increasing trade and investment in Pakistan. There are prospects of collaboration on CPEC between Pakistan and Russia as well.

Conclusion

The political, economic and military resurgence of Russia is evident through its pro-active role in the global politics presently.

Modi's Visit and Future of Pakistan-India Relations

Continued from p. 2

- be held in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Pandi Chari in April 2016 where the large Muslim population may become a deciding factor in the results of these constituencies. Being softer on Pakistan probably means getting the support of Muslim voters for the BJP.
- The external factors on India included the pressure on the Modi government from the US, Russia, China and other European states. These states also want India not to come in the way of Pakistan's ongoing resolve and efforts in operation “Zarb-e-Azb”.
- In Pakistan, the visit was taken positively and analysed as a turning point in Pakistani-Indian relations. However, Modi faced criticism from the main Indian opposition Congress Party and Indian media. Members

of the Congress party termed it as personal diplomacy of Modi, which lacked gravitas.

- Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, a key Kashmiri leader in the Indian-held Kashmir, said that it was a welcome step. People in Kashmir hoped that it will be followed by a consistent policy of engagement to resolve the Kashmir dispute.
- The thawing of relations between Pakistan and India could be traced back to Sharif-Modi meeting on the sidelines of the “Paris Climate Change Conference”. This supposedly led to a December 6, 2015 meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, between Pakistan's National Security Advisor, Lieutenant General (R) Nasir Khan Janjua and his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval. The conclusion of these meetings made it possible for India to send its External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to Islamabad to attend the latest session of the multilateral

“Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process” on December 8, 2015, which culminated in initiating the process of “Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue” between Pakistan and India.

- Previously, in May 2014 Nawaz Sharif had attended Modi's swearing in ceremony. But soon after, Modi government cancelled Secretary level dialogues, which were scheduled on August 25, 2014. This was followed by Line of Control (LOC) and working boundary violations by the BJP government.
- Shift in Modi's approach toward Pakistan is expected to change once the elections in the provinces in April 2016 are over and the pressure from the said states fades.
- There is very little one could expect from Modi in the future as far as relations with Pakistan are concerned and his visit was symbolic in nature.

IPRI Review Meeting

Security Dynamics of Middle East: Implications for Pakistan

Ms. Asia Perveen Mahar gave a presentation on the topic, "Security Dynamics of Middle East: Implications for Pakistan". Salient Points of her review meeting are:



- The 2011 Arab Spring was apparently meant to replace extremism. Muslims were rising up peacefully for reforms, individual rights and to discredit the al-Qaeda narrative that violence is the way to replace imperialism.
- But the uprisings in Egypt, Yemen, Syria, Libya and Tunisia were mishandled by domestic political rival groups and foreign intervention that further weakened local governments. As a result, both ISIS and al-Qaeda expanded their presence around the region.
- The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has increased its control over territories in Iraq and Syria having an estimated population of 2.8 million to 5.3 million

people.

- ISIS is adept at social media, posting internet videos of beheadings of soldiers, civilians, journalists and aid workers, and is known for its destruction of cultural heritage sites.
- Countering the threat of ISIS may be a point of convergence for Muslim countries.
- ISIS operations and activities across the Middle East and Europe have led to creation of multiple alliances. Syria has been battling ISIS and other militants with the help of Iran and Russia. Whereas, the US is leading separate alliance against ISIS. Saudi Minister of Defense, on December 14, 2015 also announced the establishment of Islamic Military Alliance.

Situation in Yemen

The protests against the government of President Saleh started in January 2011 with protestors demanding his resignation.

- In November 2011, President Saleh handed over power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi. Unity government with PM from opposition was formed.
- Violence erupted again, when in August 2014, President Hadi sacked the cabinet and overturned a controversial fuel price rise following two weeks of anti-government protests. Taking advantage of the situation, Houthi rebels took control of Sana'a.
- Houthis advance has been halted by intervention of Saudi-led coalition

forces since March, 2015. Saudi-led intervention with Pro-Hadi forces have recaptured Aden and are continuing with their counter-offensive.

Situation in Syria

- Initially Syrian civil war was between the government and homegrown rebel groups.
- UN Security Council on 18th December, 2016 unanimously adopted a resolution endorsing the Syrian peace process, starting with formal negotiations and a ceasefire in early January 2016.

Situation in other States of Middle East

- Iraq has been ravaged in recent years by cycles of warfare, a growing refugee crisis, crippling sectarianism, and ISIS. The ISIS threat and rising violence in Iraq brought US military advisors back in country in 2014, after having withdrawn in 2011.
- The Second Libyan Civil War is an ongoing conflict between: 1) the internationally recognized Tobruk government, 2) Libya Dawn, 3) the Islamist Shura Council of Benghazi Revolutionaries, and 4) the ISIS's Libyan provinces.
- The declaration of an Islamic State province in Sinai has led to insurgency in an area bordering Gaza, which could have serious consequences on Gaza itself and on other neighboring countries.
- The Vienna agreement between Iran and the P5+1 in July 2015 was seen as

a significant development for Middle East's geopolitical future and Iran's economic arrival.

- New wave of Israel-Palestine conflict that started in early September 2015 is related to tensions on the status of the Temple Mount. Three months of uprisings has left 109 Palestinians dead and thousands injured.
- The conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Libya, the persistent menace of the Islamic State and its various affiliate groupings, and rising tension between regional powers of the Middle East may draw in major global powers in even greater ways in 2016.

Conclusion

- **Pakistani government policy is not to deploy its troops outside the country's borders except for UN peacekeeping missions.**
- **Mutually agreed Middle East's regional way forward can improve security situation in the region.**
- **Regional states have to give preference to what serves their regional interests.**
- **Pakistan should define its position in the Middle East in accordance with preserving South Asia's own stability.**
- **Pakistan has to balance its regional interests, national interests and internal security interests.**

Recently Published by IPRI

Solutions for Energy Crisis in Pakistan- Volume II

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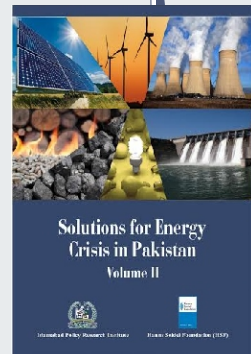
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Publications by IPRI Scholars (December 2015)

Col (R) Muhammad Hanif,
Research Coordinator
 Dialogue could Benefit
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Asghar Ali Shad,
Research Fellow
 6 December Aur Babri Musjid
 Ki Shahadat
(Daily Pakistan)



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Our interesting neighbourhood
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Khalid Chandio,
Research Officer
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Muhammad Nawaz Khan,
Research Officer
 Hindu extremists creep ahead
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Amna Ejaz Rafi,
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Gulshan Bibi,
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Saman Zulfqar,
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 Materialising the pipe dream
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(Daily Times)



Aymen Ijaz,
Assistant Research Officer
 Gas Shortage Hits us Hard
(Pakistan Observer)



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May Everyday of the
New Year Glow with
Good Cheer and Happiness
for You & Your Family



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Editor-in-Chief:
 Ambassador (R) Sohail Amin

Editor:
 Asiya Mahar

Composer:
 Noreen Hameed

asiyamahar@hotmail.com

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Address: House No.6, Street No. 63, Ismail
 Zabeeh Road, Sector F-8/4, Islamabad
Phone: +92 51 9261348-50
Fax: +92 51 9261351