

# **MEDIA COVERAGE**

One-Day Panel Discussion

“Dynamics of Contemporary Middle East: Role of Pakistan”

13 March 2019

## **NATIONAL ONLINE NEWSPAPERS**

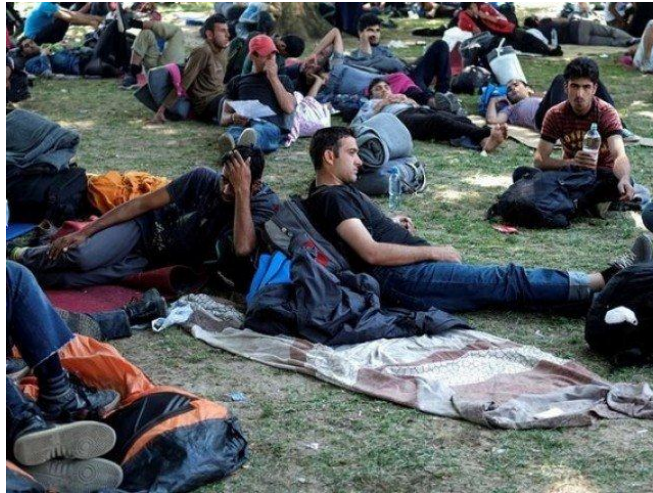
THE EXPRESS  
**TRIBUNE**

1.

### **Experts warn against choosing sides in ME conflicts**

By Our Correspondent

Published: March 14, 2019



File Photo: Migrants from the Middle East and Asia rest in a park before they start walking on their way to Hungary in Belgrade, Serbia. PHOTO: REUTERS

ISLAMABAD: With parts of Middle East still reeling from the after-effects of war and militancy that engulfed most of it and persistent feuds, there is a need for Islamabad to adopt a more prudent, practical, and quid pro quo policy which fosters a robust and diverse relationship when looking to the region rather than opting to choose sides. This was stated by speakers at the one-day panel discussion on ‘Dynamics of Contemporary Middle East: Role of Pakistan’. The event was organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute in Islamabad on Wednesday.

There is a need for a more robust and diverse relationship with the region that focuses on developing sociocultural ties as well as increased cooperation in areas of politics, security and defence. These were some of the recommendations and reflections shared by

IPRI President Ambassador Vice Admiral (retired) Hasham Bin Saddique said that due to the hands-off policy of US President Donald Trump in the Middle East and the rise of multipolarity, there is a need for a rebalancing of power in the region with states on the one side and non-state actors, on the other. “Unfortunately, there is no regional mechanism to address the issue of peace and stability in the Middle East,” Vice Admiral Saddique said, adding that the Middle East has been in turmoil since the 1980s. “While the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) exists, its role has not emerged as it was envisioned to be,” he lamented. Pakistan, he said, was in a unique position because it has “traditionally enjoyed cordial relations with most of the countries in the Middle East, particularly in the political and security cooperation arena.”

### **PM Imran offers role to heal Middle East conflicts**

However, he said that Islamabad needs to have a more robust and diverse relationship with the region which focuses on developing sociocultural ties as well as economic collaboration and predicted ties with middle eastern countries will only improve.

In a working session moderated by Ambassador (Retd) Zamir Akram, Quaid-i-Azam University’s Director School of Politics and International Relations Prof Dr Nazir Hussain spoke on ‘Middle East Geostrategic Conundrum: Implications for Pakistan.’

He said that owing to its geostrategic position and rich-energy resources, the Middle East is one of the most important regions of the world.

However, it was currently facing an inescapable security conundrum due to its internal instability, chaos and disorder. “At the regional level, the far-reaching Arab Spring has pushed Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen into the ranks of failed states. The rise of the Islamic State (IS) has emerged as the worst radical threat to the region’s modern history, challenging the regional political order by wiping out the territorial borders and spiralling beyond its borders,” Prof Hussain said, adding that despite the fragility and volatility of the region it remains important. He lamented that there is a shortage of local academic research on the Middle East.

Discussing the issue of mediating regional rivalries and Pakistan’s role, Ambassador (retired) Javed Hafeez was of the view that Pakistan needs to recognise that the Middle East controls three important commercial shipping lanes, including the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal. He noted that the Shia crescent and Sunni axis conflict has been exaggerated by the Western media. “These are not permanent fault lines, they keep on changing,” he pointed out. However, he warned that Pakistan must restrain its eagerness to mediate this minefield and wait to be invited by the parties involved. Moreover, he said that the mediator needs to be seen as completely neutral, more like Oman. However, because of its size and compulsions, Pakistan, he contended, cannot become an Oman. Thirdly, a mediator needs to be strong, with its own house in order, with peace within and without. “Pakistan does not qualify on these parameters and should not impose itself in Middle Eastern affairs. Wait

for the right time and then step in because this time, the stakes are higher and the situation more complex than what it was in the 1990s,” he stressed.

### **UN chief says ‘time to stop violence’ in Middle East**

“Pakistan must take its relations with the Middle East seriously. Our future relations with the Arabs needs to have more economic and commercial content. And to promote economic interaction, we have to restore the health of our economy, make Pakistan more secure and improve our image. Foreign relations are not guided by ideological factors or romantic perceptions. It is a game of pragmatism.”

Speaking on ‘Safeguarding Pakistan’s Interest in the Middle East’, National University of Sciences and Technology Department of Peace and Conflict Studies Associate Dean Prof Dr Tughral Yamin shared vital statistics about Pakistan-Middle East linkages. He pointed out that 184, 000 Pakistani pilgrims will perform Hajj this year – 5,000 more than last year. However, he also added that overall foreign remittances which stand at USD\$19.62 billion from Saudi Arabia are declining, whereas they are increasing from the UAE.

Prof Yamin said that while oil, trade routes, geography and terrain, faith and ideology, all contribute to the strategic importance of the Middle East, ‘Pakistan should not be seen merely as a poor nation forever seeking aid and oil on deferred price; as a provider of cheap unskilled labour; and source of a readily available military force that can be used as cannon fodder. Pakistan should rebrand itself as a country that is not only militarily powerful, but is a hub of knowledge, an emerging market producing quality agricultural as well as industrial finished goods at competitive rates, and as a peaceful and harmonious tourist destination.’

Moreover, participants of the discussion spoke about the Islamic Military to Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) is a team of 41 willing countries that forms a pan-Islamic unified front in the global fight against terrorism and violent extremism, and is not against any Muslim country and reflected over Pakistan’s policy on Yemen which is governed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2216 under which the country supports restoration of legitimate President Hadi’s government and peaceful solution in the light of the Gulf peace initiative and national dialogue. Furthermore, they confirmed that Pakistan steadfastly supports the cause of Palestinians.

*Published in The Express Tribune, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019.*

<<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1928899/1-experts-warn-choosing-sides-conflicts/>>

## Pak needs more prudent, practical quid pro quo policy for ME

By News desk March 14, 2019



### Sarwar Awan

Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham Bin Siddique, President of IPRI said on Wednesday that due to US President Trump's hands-off policy in the Middle East and rise of multipolarity, there is rebalancing of power in the region with states on the one side and non-state actors, on the other. Khan Hasham was addressing one-day panel discussion on 'Dynamics of Contemporary Middle East: Role of Pakistan' organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute here. He shared that the Middle East has been a region of turmoil since the 1980s, and to this day, remains a region in flux. 'Unfortunately, there is no regional mechanism to address the issue of peace and stability in the Middle East. While the Gulf Cooperation Council exists, its role has not emerged as it was envisioned to be,' Ambassador Siddique pointed out. "Pakistan has traditionally enjoyed cordial relations with most of the countries in the Middle East, particularly in the political and security cooperation arena. However, we need to have a more robust and diverse relationship with the region that focuses on developing socio-cultural ties as well as economic collaboration. Under the current government, Pakistan's relations with the Middle East are set to scale new heights,' he remarked. In the working session moderated by Ambassador (R) Zamir Akram, former representative of Pakistan to the UN, Prof. Dr. Nazir Hussain, Director, School of Politics and International Relations, QAU spoke on 'Middle East Geostrategic Conundrum: Implications for Pakistan.' He said that presently, Middle East is facing an inescapable security conundrum due to its internal instability, chaos and disorder. He said at the regional level, the far-reaching Arab Spring has pushed Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen into the ranks of failed states. Rise of the

Islamic State has emerged as the worst radical threat to the region's modern history, challenging the regional political order by wiping out the territorial borders and spiraling beyond its borders.'

Discussing the issue of 'Mediating Regional Rivalries: Role of Pakistan', Ambassador (R) Javed Hafeez was of the view that Pakistan needs to be cognizant that the Middle East region is also of vital importance because it sits on three important commercial sea lanes: Hormuz, Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal. He highlighted that the conflict between the Shia crescent and Sunni axis has been largely exaggerated by the Western media. 'These are not permanent faultlines, they keep on changing. While Pakistan may be eager to mediate in Middle Eastern affairs, first and foremost, it needs to be invited by the parties involved. The second important aspect of mediation is that the mediator needs to be seen as completely neutral, like Oman. However, because of its size and compulsions, Pakistan cannot become Oman. Thirdly, a mediator needs to be strong, with its own house in order, with peace within and without. 'Pakistan does not qualify on these parameters and should not impose itself in Middle Eastern affairs. Wait for the right time and then step in because this time, the stakes are higher and situation more complex than what it was in the 1990s', he stressed.

Speaking on 'Safeguarding Pakistan's Interest in Middle East', Prof. Dr Tughrul Yamin, Associate Dean, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, National University of Sciences and Technology, shared vital statistics about Pakistan-Middle East linkages. Pakistan should rebrand itself as a country that is not only militarily powerful, but is a hub of knowledge, an emerging market producing quality agricultural as well as industrial finished goods at competitive rates, and as a peaceful and harmonious tourist destination.'

<<https://pakobserver.net/2019/03/14/pak-needs-more-prudent-practical-quid-pro-quo-policy-for-me/>>

# NEWS AGENCIES



1. *Pakistan's Premier and Credible Wire Service*

## Experts say Pakistan should not choose sides in Middle East

DNA News | [March 13, 2019](#)



ISLAMABAD, MAR 13 (DNA) –

- Pakistan needs a more prudent, practical *quid pro quo* policy for the Middle East, rather than choosing sides.
- There is need for a more robust and diverse relationship with the region that focuses on developing socio-cultural ties as well as those in the arena of political, security and defence cooperation to carve a niche for itself.
- The Islamic Military Coalition to Counter Terrorism (IMCTC) is a coalition of 41 willing countries that forms a pan-Islamic unified front in the global fight against terrorism and violent extremism, and is not against any Muslim country.
- Pakistan's policy on Yemen is governed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2216 under which the country supports restoration of legitimate President Hadi's government and peaceful solution in the light of the Gulf Peace initiative and National dialogue.
- Pakistan steadfastly supports the cause of the Palestinians.
- There is a need to improve and strengthen research on the Middle East in Pakistan.

These were some of the recommendations and reflections shared by speakers at the One-Day Panel Discussion on '*Dynamics of Contemporary Middle East: Role of Pakistan*' organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute here in Islamabad today.

Welcoming the speakers, students, media and diplomats to the Panel Discussion, *Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham Bin Saddique*, President of IPRI said that due to US President Trump's hands-off policy in the Middle East and rise of multipolarity, there is rebalancing of power in the region with states on the one side and non-state actors, on the other. He shared that the Middle East has been a region of turmoil since the 1980s, and to this day, remains a region in flux. 'Unfortunately, there is no regional mechanism to address the issue of peace and stability in the Middle East. While the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) exists, its role has not emerged as it was envisioned to be,' Ambassador Saddique pointed out. 'Pakistan has traditionally enjoyed cordial relations with most of the countries in the Middle East, particularly in the political and security cooperation arena. However, we need to have a more robust and diverse relationship with the region that focuses on developing sociocultural ties as well as economic collaboration. Under the current government, Pakistan's relations with the Middle East are set to scale new heights,' he remarked.

In the working session moderated by *Ambassador (R) Zamir Akram*, Former Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, *Prof. Dr Nazir Hussain*, Director, School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University spoke on 'Middle East Geostrategic Conundrum: Implications for Pakistan.' He said that owing to its geostrategic position and rich-energy resources, the Middle East is one of the most important regions of the world. Presently, however, it is facing an inescapable security conundrum due to its internal instability, chaos and disorder. 'At the regional level, the far-reaching Arab Spring has pushed Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen into the ranks of failed states. Rise of the Islamic State has emerged as the worst radical threat to the region's modern history, challenging the regional political order by wiping out the territorial borders and spiraling beyond its borders.' Prof. Hussain pointed out that despite the fact this fragile and volatile region is of acute importance, there is a dearth of academic research on the Middle East being conducted in Pakistan.

Discussing the issue of 'Mediating Regional Rivalries: Role of Pakistan', *Ambassador (R) Javed Hafeez* was of the view that Pakistan needs to be cognizant that the Middle East region is also of vital importance because it sits on three important commercial sea lanes: Hormuz, Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal. He highlighted that the conflict between the Shia crescent and Sunni axis has been largely exaggerated by the Western media. 'These are not permanent faultlines, they keep on changing. While Pakistan may be eager to mediate in Middle Eastern affairs, first and

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<<http://www.dnaneews.com.pk/experts-days-pakistan-not-choose-sides-middle-east/>>





2.

## IPRI Panel Discussion on “Dynamics of Contemporary Middle East: Role of Pakistan”

[Sabah News](#) 13 مارچ، 2019

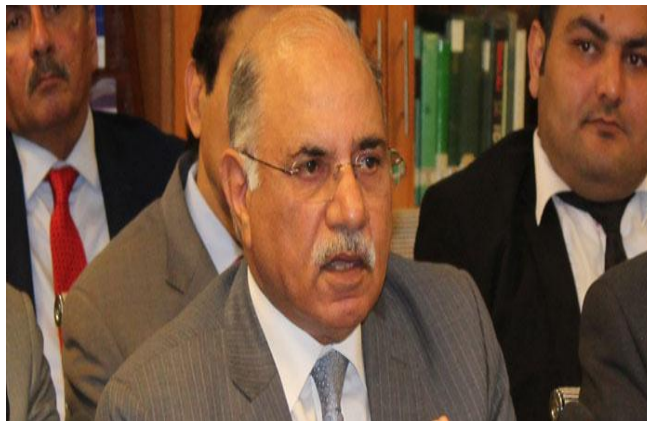
Islamabad, 13 March (SABAH):

1. Pakistan needs a more prudent, practical quid pro quo policy for the Middle East, rather than choosing sides. There is need for a more robust and diverse relationship with the region that focuses on developing sociocultural ties as well as those in the arena of political, security and defence cooperation to carve a niche for itself.
2. The Islamic Military Coalition to Counter Terrorism (IMCTC) is a coalition of 41 willing countries that forms a pan-Islamic unified front in the global fight against terrorism and violent extremism, and is not against any Muslim country.
3. Pakistan’s policy on Yemen is governed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2216 under which the country supports restoration of legitimate President Hadi’s government and peaceful solution in the light of the Gulf Peace initiative and National dialogue.
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5. There is a need to improve and strengthen research on the Middle East in Pakistan.

These were some of the recommendations and reflections shared by speakers at the One-Day Panel Discussion on ‘Dynamics of Contemporary Middle East: Role of Pakistan’ organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute here in Islamabad today.

Welcoming the speakers, students, media and diplomats to the Panel Discussion, Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham Bin Saddique, President of IPRI said that due to US President Trump’s hands-off policy in the Middle East and rise of multipolarity, there is rebalancing of power in the region with states on the one side and non-state actors, on the other. He shared that the Middle East has been a region of turmoil since the 1980s, and to this day, remains a region in flux. ‘Unfortunately, there is no regional mechanism to address the issue of peace and stability in the Middle East. While the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) exists, its role has not emerged as it was envisioned to be,’ Ambassador Saddique pointed out. ‘Pakistan has traditionally enjoyed cordial relations with most of the countries in the Middle East, particularly in the political and security cooperation arena. However, we need to have a more robust and diverse relationship

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<<http://www.sabahnews.net/english/?p=3675>>

# ONLINE

1.



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March 13, 2019 [Pakistan](#)



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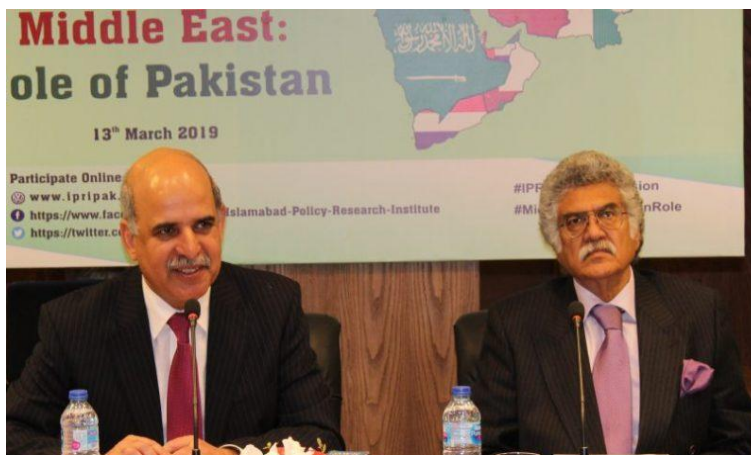
<<http://www.centreline.com.pk/experts-say-pakistan-not-choose-sides-middle-east/>>

# HAMARINEWS

2.

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13th March 2019 admin, Experts, in, Middle, not, Pakistan, say, should, sides



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< <http://www.khabrain.cf/2019/03/experts-say-pakistan-should-not-choose-sides-in-middle-east> >

### 3. *The Punch*

## **Pakistan must not take sides in Middle East: experts**

**TP** 13 hours ago



By Muhammad Zahir

Islamabad (TP) March 13: Experts have said that Pakistan needed to pursue more prudent and cautious policy regarding the Middle East crisis rather than choosing sides

They said that there was a need for a more robust and diverse relationship with all countries in the region that focuses on developing socio-cultural ties as well as those in the arena of political, security and defence cooperation to carve a niche for itself. They said that the Islamic Military Coalition to Counter Terrorism (IMCTC) was a coalition of 41 willing countries that forms a pan-Islamic unified front in the global fight against terrorism and violent extremism and it was not against any Muslim country. They were speaking at a panel discussion on ‘Dynamics of Contemporary Middle East: Role of Pakistan’ organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute here (IPRI) in Islamabad.

IPRI President Ambassador Vice Admiral (retd) Khan Hasham Bin Saddique said that due to US President Trump’s hands-off policy in the Middle East and the rise of multi-polarity, there was a rebalancing of power in the region with states on the one side and non-state actors on the other. He shared that the Middle East has been a region of turmoil since the 1980s, and to this day, remains a region in flux. ‘Unfortunately, there is no regional mechanism to address the issue of peace and stability in the Middle East. While the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) exists, its role has not emerged as it was envisioned to be,’ Saddique pointed out.

“Pakistan has traditionally enjoyed cordial relations with most of the countries in the Middle East, particularly in the political and security cooperation arena. However, we need to have a more robust and diverse relationship with the region that focuses on developing sociocultural ties as well as economic collaboration. Under the current government, Pakistan’s relations with the Middle East are set to scale new heights,” he said.

School of Politics and International Relations Director Quaid-i-Azam University Dr Nazir Hussain spoke on 'Middle East Geostrategic Conundrum: Implications for Pakistan'. He said that owing to its geostrategic position and rich-energy resources, the Middle East was one of the most important regions of the world. Presently, however, it was facing an inescapable security conundrum due to its internal instability, chaos and disorder. "At the regional level, the far-reaching Arab Spring has pushed Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen into the ranks of failed states. The rise of the Islamic State has emerged as the worst radical threat to the region's modern history, challenging the regional political order by wiping out the territorial borders and spiraling beyond its borders," he said. Prof Hussain pointed out that despite the fact this fragile and volatile region is of acute importance, there is a dearth of academic research on the Middle East being conducted in Pakistan.

Discussing the issue of 'Mediating Regional Rivalries: Role of Pakistan', Ambassador (retd) Javed Hafeez was of the view that Pakistan needs to be cognizant that the Middle East region is also of vital importance because it sits on three important commercial sea lanes: Hormuz, the Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal. He highlighted that the conflict between the Shia crescent and Sunni axis has been largely exaggerated by the Western media. "These are not permanent fault lines, they keep on changing. While Pakistan may be eager to mediate in Middle Eastern affairs, first and foremost, it needs to be invited by the parties involved. The second important aspect of mediation is that the mediator needs to be seen as completely neutral, like Oman. However, because of its size and compulsions, Pakistan cannot become Oman. Thirdly, a mediator needs to be strong, with its own house in order, with peace within and without," he said.

"Pakistan does not qualify on these parameters and should not impose itself in Middle Eastern affairs. Wait for the right time and then step in because this time, the stakes are higher and the situation more complex than what it was in the 1990s," he stressed. 'Pakistan must take its relations with the Middle East seriously. Our future relations with the Arabs need to have more economic and commercial content. And to promote economic interaction, we have to restore the health of our economy, make Pakistan more secure and improve our image. Foreign relations are not guided by ideological factors or romantic perceptions. It is a game of pragmatism'.

Speaking on 'Safeguarding Pakistan's Interest in the Middle East', Prof Dr Tughral Yamin, Associate Dean, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, National University of Sciences and Technology, shared vital statistics about Pakistan-Middle East linkages. He pointed out that 184,000 Pakistani pilgrims will perform Hajj this year – 5000 more than last year. However, he also added that overall foreign remittances which stand at USD 19.62 billion from Saudi Arabia are declining, whereas they are increasing from the UAE. Prof. Yamin said that while oil, trade routes, geography and terrain, faith and ideology, all contribute to the strategic importance of the Middle East, 'Pakistan should not be seen merely as poor nation forever seeking aid and oil on deferred price; as a provider of cheap unskilled labour; and source of a readily available military force that can be used as cannon fodder. Pakistan should rebrand itself as a country that is not only militarily powerful, but is a hub of knowledge, an emerging market producing quality agricultural as well as industrial finished goods at competitive rates, and as a peaceful and harmonious tourist destination.'

< <https://thepunch.com.pk/?p=2189> >

# PRINT NEWSPAPERS

## 1. THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE

THE EXPRESS  
TRIBUNE

Thursday 14, March, 2019

# Experts warn against choosing sides in ME conflicts

### Speakers at panel discussion highlight need for conducting more research

OUR CORRESPONDENT  
ISLAMABAD

With parts of Middle East still reeling from the after-effects of war and militancy that engulfed most of it and persistent feuds, there is a need for Islamabad to adopt a more prudent, practical, and *quid pro quo* policy which fosters a robust and diverse relationship when looking to the region rather than opting to choose sides.

This was stated by speakers at the one-day panel discussion on 'Dynamics of Contemporary Middle East: Role of Pakistan'. The event was organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute in Islamabad on Wednesday.

There is a need for a more robust and diverse relationship with the region that focuses on developing sociocultural ties as well as increased cooperation in areas of politics, security and defence.

These were some of the recommendations and reflections shared by IPRI President Ambassador Vice Admiral (retired) Hasham Bin Saddique said that due to the hands-off policy of US President Donald Trump in the Middle East and the rise of multipolarity, there is a need for a rebalancing of power in the region with states on the one side and non-state actors, on the other.

"Unfortunately, there is no regional mechanism to address the issue of peace and stability in the Middle East," Vice Admiral Saddique said, adding that the Middle East

has been in turmoil since the 1980s. "While the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) exists, its role has not emerged as it was envisioned to be," he lamented.

Pakistan, he said, was in a unique position because it has "traditionally enjoyed cordial relations with most of the countries in the Middle East, particularly in the political and security cooperation arena."

However, he said that Islamabad needs to have a more robust and diverse relationship with the region which focuses on developing sociocultural ties as well as economic collaboration and predicted ties with middle eastern countries will only improve.

In a working session moderated by Ambassador (Retd) Zamir Akram, Quaid-i-Azam University's Director School of Politics and International Relations Prof Dr Nazir Hussain spoke on 'Middle East Geostrategic Conundrum: Implications for Pakistan.'

He said that owing to its geostrategic position and rich-energy resources, the Middle East is one of the most important regions of the world.

However, it was currently facing an inescapable security conundrum due to its internal instability, chaos and disorder.

"At the regional level, the far-reaching Arab Spring has pushed Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen into the ranks of failed states. The rise of the Islamic State (IS) has emerged

as the worst radical threat to the region's modern history, challenging the regional political order by wiping out the territorial borders and spiralling beyond its borders," Prof Hussain said, adding that despite the fragility and volatility of the region it remains important.

He lamented that there is a shortage of local academic research on the Middle East.

**"Pakistan does not qualify... to impose itself in Middle Eastern affairs"**

Ambassador (Retd) Javed Hafeez

Discussing the issue of mediating regional rivalries and Pakistan's role, Ambassador (retired) Javed Hafeez was of the view that Pakistan needs to recognise that the Middle East controls three important commercial shipping lanes, including the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal.

He noted that the Shia crescent and Sunni axis conflict has been exaggerated by the Western media. "These are not permanent fault lines, they keep on changing," he pointed out. However, he warned that Pakistan must restrain its eagerness to mediate this minefield and wait to be invited by the parties involved.

Moreover, he said that the media-

tor needs to be seen as completely neutral, more like Oman. However, because of its size and compulsions, Pakistan, he contended, cannot become an Oman.

Thirdly, a mediator needs to be strong, with its own house in order, with peace within and without. "Pakistan does not qualify on these parameters and should not impose itself in Middle Eastern affairs. Wait for the right time and then step in because this time, the stakes are higher and the situation more complex than what it was in the 1990s," he stressed.

"Pakistan must take its relations with the Middle East seriously. Our future relations with the Arabs needs to have more economic and commercial content. And to promote economic interaction, we have to restore the health of our economy, make Pakistan more secure and improve our image. Foreign relations are not guided by ideological factors or romantic perceptions. It is a game of pragmatism."

Speaking on 'Safeguarding Pakistan's Interest in the Middle East', National University of Sciences and Technology Department of Peace and Conflict Studies Associate Dean Prof Dr Rughral Yamin shared vital statistics about Pakistan-Middle East linkages. He pointed out that 184,000 Pakistani pilgrims will perform Hajj this year - 5,000 more than last year. However, he also added that overall foreign remittances which stand at USD\$19.62 billion from

Saudi Arabia are declining, whereas they are increasing from the UAE.

Prof Yamin said that while oil, trade routes, geography and terrain, faith and ideology, all contribute to the strategic importance of the Middle East, "Pakistan should not be seen merely as a poor nation forever seeking aid and oil on deferred price; as a provider of cheap unskilled labour; and source of a readily available military force that can be used as cannon fodder. Pakistan should rebrand itself as a country that is not only militarily powerful, but is a hub of knowledge, an emerging market producing quality agricultural as well as industrial finished goods at competitive rates, and as a peaceful and harmonious tourist destination."

Moreover, participants of the discussion spoke about the Islamic Military to Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) is a team of 41 willing countries that forms a pan-Islamic unified front in the global fight against terrorism and violent extremism, and is not against any Muslim country and reflected over Pakistan's policy on Yemen which is governed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2216 under which the country supports restoration of legitimate President Hadi's government and peaceful solution in the light of the Gulf peace initiative and national dialogue.

Furthermore, they confirmed that Pakistan steadfastly supports the cause of Palestinians.

## 2. PAKISTAN OBSERVER

PAKISTAN  
**OBSERVER**  
Thursday, March 14, 2019

# // Pak needs more prudent, practical quid pro quo policy for ME

SARWAR AWAN

Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham Bin Siddique, President of IPRI said on Wednesday that due to US President Trump's hands-off policy in the Middle East and rise of multipolarity, there is rebalancing of power in the region with states on the one side and non-state actors, on the other.

Khan Hasham was addressing one-day panel discussion on 'Dynamics of Contemporary Middle East: Role of Pakistan' organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute here.

He shared that the Middle East has been a region of turmoil since the 1980s, and to this day, remains a region in flux. 'Unfortunately, there is no regional mechanism to address the issue of peace and stability in the Middle East. While the Gulf Cooperation Council exists, its role has not emerged as it was envisioned to

be,' Ambassador Siddique pointed out.

'Pakistan has traditionally enjoyed cordial relations with most of the countries in the Middle East, particularly in the political and security cooperation arena. However, we need to have a more robust and diverse relationship with the region that focuses on developing socio-cultural ties as well as economic collaboration. Under the current

government, Pakistan's relations with the Middle East are set to scale new heights,' he remarked.

In the working session moderated by Ambassador (R) Zamir Akram, former representative of Pakistan to the UN, Prof. Dr Nazir Hussain, Director, School of Politics and International Relations, QAU spoke on 'Middle East Geostrategic Conundrum: Implications for Pakistan.'

He said that presently, Middle East is facing an inescapable security conundrum due to its internal instability, chaos and disorder.

He said at the regional level, the far-reaching Arab Spring has pushed Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen into the ranks of failed states. Rise of the Islamic State has emerged as the worst radical threat to the region's modern history, challenging the regional political order by wiping out the territorial borders and spiraling beyond its borders.'

Discussing the issue of 'Mediating Regional Rivalries: Role of Pakistan', Ambassador (R) Javed Hafeez was of the view that Pakistan needs to be cognizant that the Middle East region is also of vital importance because it sits on three important commercial sea lanes: Hormuz, Gulf of Aden and the Suez Canal.

He highlighted that the conflict between the Shia crescent and Sunni axis has been largely exaggerated by the Western media. 'These are not permanent faultlines, they keep on changing. While Pakistan may be eager to mediate in Middle Eastern affairs, first and foremost, it needs to be invited by the parties involved. The second important aspect of mediation is that the mediator needs to be seen as completely neutral, like Oman.'

However, because of its size and compulsions, Pakistan cannot become Oman. Thirdly, a mediator

needs to be strong, with its own house in order, with peace within and without. 'Pakistan does not qualify on these parameters and should not impose itself in Middle Eastern affairs. Wait for the right time and then step in because this time, the stakes are higher and situation more complex than what it was in the 1990s', he stressed.

Speaking on 'Safeguarding Pakistan's Interest in Middle East', Prof. Dr Tughral Yamin, Associate Dean, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, National University of Sciences and Technology, shared vital statistics about Pakistan-Middle East linkages.

Pakistan should rebrand itself as a country that is not only militarily powerful, but is a hub of knowledge, an emerging market producing quality agricultural as well as industrial finished goods at competitive rates, and as a peaceful and harmonious tourist destination.'



Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham Bin Siddique and ambassador (R) Zamir Akram former representative of Pakistan to United Nations speaking on occasion of a one-day panel discussion organized by IPRI.