

## **Press Coverage of International Conference**

### **“Policy Approaches of South Asian Countries and their Impact on the Region”**

*2-3 June, Serena Hotel Islamabad.*



#### **Regional cooperation must to tackle terrorism threat**

*Published on June 03, 2015*

ISLAMABAD: India must not be allowed to use terrorism as an instrument of state policy, said Masood Khan, former ambassador and the director general of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), on Tuesday. He was speaking at a seminar organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute on ‘Policy approaches of South Asian countries and their impact on the region.’

“India should not target Pakistan... in its (Pakistan’s) quest for peace and stability by deploying its intelligence assets. This is criminal,” he added.

He was referring to the Indian defence minister’s controversial “terrorists have to be neutralised only through terrorists” comment. About the Indian protest to the Chinese leadership over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Mr Khan said it’s now clear that India would use all resources at its disposal to undermine the project. He called for an emphasis on conflict resolution and accommodation for the improvement in bilateral ties.

“Divergences will have to be reduced and convergences need to be built upon,” he said, adding this would not happen unless there was a move towards conflict resolution. The region, he noted, was faced with numerous challenges, including Kashmir, climate change, trade, rise of Hindutva, non-proliferation, and the threat of terrorism which required cooperation within the region.

Ex-envoy says India must not be allowed to use terrorism as an instrument of state policy. Regarding the challenges of policy formulation in the region, the ISSI director general said there was very little space for formulating policies in all South Asian countries. Civil society and media, he observed, were increasingly influencing the policy formulation processes.

Responding to a question, he opined that India would not be able to make to the permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Former federal secretary Dr Gulfraz Ahmed called for a paradigm shift in the region for expanding cooperation. He said India, being a bigger state, should desist from undermining Pakistan. "Would not the flames ignited here cross the border," he asked.

Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, director School of Politics and International Relations at Quaid-i-Azam University, while discussing the causes of decline of civilian institutions said it happened because of political appointments for the sake of having a "loyal bureaucracy." "When loyalty is the merit, the civilian institutions would fail to perform," he said and added that all political parties had dynastic culture.

Because of the weak political leadership, Dr Jaspal said, bureaucrats made and implemented the policies with little input from the politicians. Dr Andrea Fleschenberg, a guest professor at QAU, was of the opinion that Pakistan's problem was that of lack of political will and poor enforcement. "There is no issue with the law making," she said and added that contentious politics, non-state actors and other issues may be hindering implementation and monitoring of policies.

Dr Bishnu Hari Nepal, the country director Nepal's South Asia Policy Analysis Network, discussed the prospects of energy cooperation within South Asia. "South Asia can become an energy hub of Asia if hydropower was planned well," he maintained.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1185855/regional-cooperation-must-to-tackle-terrorism-threat>

### **India blamed for derailing talks, blocking regional trade routes**

*Hassan Belal Zaidi*

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ISLAMABAD: Even as leaders on both sides of the border continued posturing for the world stage on Wednesday, academics and diplomats at an Islamabad Policy Research Institute's (IPRI) seminar put the onus of the derailment of the Indo-Pak peace process squarely on India's shoulders.

On the second day of discussions at 'Policy Approaches of South Asian Countries and Their Impact on the Region', India's role in the region repeatedly came under discussion, whether in the context of regional security or the possibility of regional connectivity through economic corridors.

While Pakistani speakers were quite hawkish about India's intentions on the first count, Chinese experts were also apprehensive of India's plans with regards to possible regional projects, such as the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) corridor and the possibility of linking it with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Over the past few years, Pakistan has always taken the lead with regards to dialogue, but it has been undone by India, whose insistence on attaching certain conditions to the talks always scuttles the process, said former foreign minister Inamul Haque.

Chinese academic says as the bigger country, New Delhi should have 'a bigger heart'. His sentiments were echoed by National Defence University (NDU) Dean Dr Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, who said that over the course of the last few years, most cross-border aggression has targeted Pakistan, which then had "no choice but to respond". These remarks seemed poignant in the context of a statement made by Army Chief General Raheel Sharif, almost simultaneously, at NDU, and indicate a marked shift from the softer tone that was characteristic of all discussion about Indo-Pak peace up until a few months ago.

According to tweets sent out by ISPR spokesperson Maj Gen Asim Bajwa, the army chief said that that Kashmir was an unfinished agenda from partition. "Our enemies [were] supporting terrorism to stoke ... conflicts and destabilise our country. [We are] fully determined and capable of defeating nefarious designs. Pakistan is opposed to [the use of] proxies versus other countries and won't allow any country to use proxies versus Pakistan," he tweeted.

Dr Cheema, presenting his paper on the 'Prospects of India-Pakistan Peace Process', said that most of the troubles between the two countries were a hangover of the past, i.e. the Kashmir dispute and other irritants such as Sir Creek. He also said that the two sides were naturally suspicious of 'outsiders' and pointed out that third-party interference in any bilateral matters has always been viewed with apprehension, giving the example of the US-India nuclear deal.

Professor Ye Hailin from the National Institute of International Strategy at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in his talk regarding the potential of the CPEC, said that the corridor could serve as an impetus to convince India of joining the trade route, which would be economically beneficial for the whole region. However, Mr Hailin was not very optimistic about the chances of this happening. "India is a big country, and the bigger country should have a bigger heart," he said, before asking, "But what if [it] doesn't?" To a question regarding the possibility of China exploring an entry-point into South Asia through Nepal, he said, "Accessing South Asia from Nepal is feasible, but not profitable." In his talk on the implication of political disputes on trade and economic cooperation, entrepreneur and economic analyst Dr Kamal Monnoo blamed India for derailing the landmark consensus forged at the World Trade Organisation's Bali summit in 2013.

He said that globally, champions of the free trade regime were rolling back and realising the importance of selective protectionism and solemnising unilateral agreements with regards to trade in certain commodities or in specific sectors. The Bali 2013 agreement talked about simply facilitating trade, omitting most of the grandiose language about doing away with barriers and tariffs that had been part of the previous rounds, he said. However, in Geneva in 2014, India used its so-called 'veto power' to get its way on agricultural stockpiling, thereby breaking down the first meaningful agreement forged by the WTO since its inception in 1995, Dr Monnoo said.

In a presentation on the 'Regional Dividends of Peace in Afghanistan', Nader Nadery from the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit also explained the importance of restoring normalcy in

Afghanistan. He pointed out that in terms of security, both central and South Asian countries were dealing with a common threat of Islamist and terrorist groups. However, the threat perception is different in the context of geopolitical and territorial issues, leading governments to cherry pick, creating distinctions such as 'good Taliban' and 'bad Taliban'. Emphasising the importance of a peaceful Afghanistan, he said it would be far cheaper and easier to trade with Central Asia states if security in the country were no longer a problem.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1186104>



### **Meeting challenges: Speakers call for regional integration, better policy**

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Former diplomats, academics and security analysts described terrorism, poverty, energy and water crises as the major problems being faced by South Asian countries and called for regional integration and better policy formulation to meet these challenges. South Asia is home to one-fifth of humanity and two nuclear powers, they observed highlighting the importance of the region. They were speaking at the inaugural session of a two-day international conference on "Policy Approaches of South Asian Countries and their Impact on the Region" organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation here on Tuesday. "South Asia having a population of 1.7 billion is facing many problems," former Secretary General for Foreign Affairs Akram Zaki said.

Terrorism, extremism, insurgencies and drug trafficking leave less time and resources to deal with basic problems of poverty, ignorance and health in South Asia, he added. "Half a billion people live below the poverty line in the region. This causes various problems," he said, urging South Asian countries to work together against poverty. He was of the view said that sheer use of force had not been a successful strategy and there was a need for employing political and economic approaches to overcome internal security threats. The drawdown of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan was a major development which required revision of policies, he said. Policies of a global geostrategic triangle of three great powers — US, China and Russia — had impact on South Asia, the former ambassador to China said.

Ipri president Dr Sohail Amin said that political will and action could positively contribute towards breaking the vicious circle of conflict, insecurity and underdevelopment. "It is home to two nuclear states — Pakistan and India. The growth of the region has made it an important player in the global economic market and the presence of China makes the region even more important," he remarked. He said that China had a great potential to change the destiny of South Asian region. To achieve the objectives of SAARC, member states should grant China full membership of the association.

In his opening remarks, Kristof Duwaerts, resident representative of Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) said, that policy approaches define the outlook of the contemporary world. "They can impact the world

positively or negatively and result in wars, which makes their formation an important process,” he added. The first session focused on policy formulation and implementation challenges in South Asia, which was chaired by Ambassador Masood Khan, director-general of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI). Khan said that South Asian countries had restricted space for policy formulation and domestic settings influenced the policies and politics. He said that Kashmir issue, trade, investment, water and terrorism are the biggest issues of South Asia. “All South Asian countries needed to reduce divergence and increase convergence.”

Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, director at the School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University, said that consultative process was missing in the policy formulation of almost all the South Asian countries. Bureaucracies were the policy formulators and bottom to top approach did not exist in the political decision making of South Asian countries.

Dr Rashid Ahmad Khan, chairperson Department of International Relations and Political Science at the University of Sargodha said that political cultures in South Asia had been shaped by historical processes. General masses had no say in decision making, he said. Dr Andrea Fleschenberg, guest professor at the Quaid-i-Azam University discussed the external challenges. The second session, chaired by Dr Gulfaraz Ahmed, former secretary Ministry of Petroleum, focused on the imperatives of non-traditional security in South Asia. Former Ambassador of Nepal, Bishnu Hari said that South Asia could be the hub of Asia if “Water Energy” was planned well. He also discussed SAARC energy ring involving China, Pakistan and Nepal. Dr Gulfaraz Ahmad said that democracies would only work if the elected personnel had low vested interests. He also said that in South Asia, there was a big neighbour syndrome who were always in active mode while small neighbours were in reactive mode.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/896550/meeting-challenges-speakers-call-for-regional-integration-better-policy/>

# The Nation

## **India’s stance on CPEC inexplicable, says Fatemi**

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Islamabad - Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Tariq Fatemi said on Wednesday that the government had a vigorous and sincere policy that aimed at establishing a peaceful neighbourhood. Addressing concluding session of the two-day international conference “Policy Approaches of South Asian Countries and their Impact on the Region” organised by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany (HSF), he said that Pakistan government had always offered India to sit down and engage in result-oriented and constructive dialogue.

But India’s response was always disappointing, Tariq Fatemi said, adding that there was a spate of allegations and charges by India against Pakistan which have no reality. “In reality much of the

turbulence in Pakistan comes through the neighbour,” he said adding that there are evidences of involvement of foreign agencies in the gruesome militant incidents in Pakistan.

While talking about China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said, “Remarks of Indian Prime Minister on CPEC are inexplicable. The CPEC will promote peace and stability not only in Pakistan and China but in the entire region. The CPEC will benefit three billion people.” He said the recent statements Indian prime minister and foreign minister were totally disappointing; Pakistan always invited India for peace building measures; now it was for India to accept or not to accept, Fatemi said.

On Pak-Afghan relations, Fatemi said that relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan had never been better. But now with the change in leadership of Afghanistan, Pakistan government had found Ashraf Ghani to be a ready partner to reinforce cooperation and intelligence sharing to fight terrorism and militancy. He said that engaging in real time and meaningful intelligence sharing would be beneficial for both Pakistan and Afghanistan to fight the challenges of terrorism and militancy.

While talking about Pak-China friendship, Fatemi said that Pak-China friendship is in true sense “an all-weather friendship” and CPEC projects are for the peoples of the region and not against any other third country. Inamul Haque, former foreign minister and chairman IPRI board of governors, said that South Asia could not remain isolated from the bigger game of strategic competition between the US and China. The US would never contain China militarily. It would build alliances with China’s neighbours to undermine it. Dr Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema of NDU said, “Kashmir issue has to be resolved, whether someone likes it or not.” He further added that until and unless Kashmir issue remains unresolved, the relations between Pakistan and India would remain tense. Chinese scholar Ye Hallin said that CPEC was not only a strategic project but an economic project too.

<http://nation.com.pk/islamabad/04-Jun-2015/india-s-stance-on-cpec-inexplicable-says-fatemi>