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### One-Day International Seminar

## Current Geopolitical Trends in the Region and Prospects for Deeper Relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan



Brig. (R) Mohammad Mehboob Qadir and Dr Cavid Veliyev

The Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), in collaboration with the Azerbaijan Center for Strategic Studies (Strateji Araşdırmalar Mərkəziis-SAM), organized a one-day international seminar on “Current Geopolitical Trends in the Region and Prospects for Deeper Relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan” on 22 November 2018. The aim of the seminar was to analyze Pakistan-Azerbaijan relations in their broader perspective and the effects of regional geopolitics.

**Acting President, IPRI, Brig. (R) Mohammad Mehboob Qadir** in his welcome address said Pakistan and Azerbaijan believe that they

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The challenges stem from extremism, indefinite presence of the US forces in the region, expanding pockets of the ISIL in Afghanistan, the Indo-US strategic alliance, US attempt to counter Chinese and Russian influence in the region, and the hostile measures to engineer instability in Pakistan.”

are destined to play an important role in helping to establish peace, security and economic progress in South and West Asia. The emerging geopolitical and economic realities in the region offer both challenges and opportunities. The opportunities emanate from trans-regional economic initiatives such as China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Russia-led Eurasian community, he stated.

**Ambassador of Azerbaijan, H.E. Ali Alizada** highlighted that there has been a 23% increase in trade between both countries, and visa procedures for Pakistanis have been eased to facilitate travel and tourism. Energy projects and scholarship programs for Pakistani students are also being implemented, he informed.



Ambassador Ali Alizada

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Pakistan is a strategic, brotherly country and the government and people of Azerbaijan are always ready to improve and strengthen relations.”

In his keynote address, **Dr Cavid Veliyev**, Head of Foreign Policy Analysis Department at SAM said that Azerbaijan’s landlocked geography has had a deep impact on its economic and social development as well as identity.

Located between the East and West, North and South, Azerbaijan is fast becoming an important transport and trade hub, Dr Veliyev shared.

*Continued on p. 2*

## Current Geopolitical Trends in the Region and Prospects for Deeper Relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan



L-R: Amb. Andrei Ermolovich, Amb. Ali Alizada, Brig (R) Mohammad Mehmoob Qadir, Dr Fazal-ur-Rahman, Dr Nazir Hussain, Amb. (R) Fauzia Nasreen, Mr Fuad Chiragov and Mr Mahir Humbatov

*Continued from p. 1*

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Given its balanced foreign policy, Azerbaijan's trilateral relations with Pakistan and Turkey are equally important which are project-oriented; and also help to discuss and resolve regional problems through diplomacy and peaceful means.”

In the working session chaired by **Ambassador (R) Fauzia Nasreen**, Advisor COMSATS Secretariat, **Mr Fuad Chiragov**, Research Fellow from SAM, pointed out that Pakistan has been one of the few countries that has not closed its eyes to the injustice, openly condemned the aggression and spoke about the true nature of events in Nagorno-Karabakh. Discussing the Kashmir issue, he said, “Azerbaijan has always supported the position of Pakistan in international affairs and UN Security Council resolutions regarding the Kashmir problem; and will always be committed to this position.” The sincere relations, similar vision to international issues and positive synergy between Azerbaijan and Pakistan are the very foundation for cooperation, peace, stability, and security from which not only people of our countries, but also all people in the region might benefit, he stressed.

**Dr Nazir Hussain**, Director, School of Politics and International Relations at the Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan, spoke about how with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and newly developing geopolitical realities, there is scope for much more interaction vis-à-vis security and strategic cooperation and in the energy sector between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

**Mr Mahir Humbatov**, Research Fellow from SAM highlighted Azerbaijan's development as a transit country and shared details about its infrastructure and logistics projects. Located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, Baku is becoming an important transport and logistics center of the region.

Mr Humbatov also mentioned developments in the country's IT sector which now has its own satellite, multilateral initiatives and special free IT zones.

Deliberating on the prospects and challenges of connectivity between CPEC and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), **Dr Fazal-ur-Rahman**, Director, Pakistan Institute of China Studies, University of Sargodha was of the view that both have huge potential for creating direct or multimodal transport connectivity which could enhance regional economic integration.

He added, “ECO has the potential of becoming a strong and viable economic bloc if it connects with BRI and CPEC; member states strengthen its Secretariat; increase funding; re-negotiate the ECO trade agreement and turn it into a Free Trade Agreement; focus on multilateral agreements; and increase networking of the ECO Bank with other IFIs.”

### Major Recommendations

The seminar concluded with following important take-aways:

- Pakistan Armed Forces' experience in countering extremism and terrorism over the years has transformed it into a war-hardened military, making it a potentially unique partner and a source of learning for other countries. Therefore, there is a need to improve and diversify the defense ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.
- Both the countries can set up a joint counterterrorism mechanism, and together address the menace of drug trafficking and terrorism. The joint mechanism should include officials from the security agencies of the two countries.
- On the issues of Nagorno-Karabakh and Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, both countries should support each other at the United Nations Security Council.
- Both countries, in view of their strategic location, have a common interest to promote inter-regional connectivity. Their support of BRI and CPEC is a proof of this. Together, they should develop each other's transport infrastructure.
- Azerbaijan has made significant progress in the IT sector and the country has its own satellite. Pakistan can benefit from its communications technology.
- Trade needs to be improved through greater interaction between their Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

## India's Growing Influence in the GCC: Political, Strategic and Economic Risks for Pakistan



Mr Khurram Abbas, Assistant Research Officer, IPRI, gave a presentation on the above subject on 6 November 2018.

**Salient points are given below:**

- In the post-Cold War era, India has successfully cultivated strong relations with all the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states, namely Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.
- High-level mutual visits and bilateral agreements for economic and security cooperation have contributed in creating a conducive environment for state-to-state cooperation and private investments. These measures have considerably enhanced economic bilateral relations between India and the GCC countries.
- Unlike economic ties, security cooperation between India and the

Gulf region is still limited in scope but enhancing gradually. If the country's GCC linkages continue to expand, it could deprive Pakistan of strong political and economic partners in the region.

- Due to the rapidly changing nature of warfare, asymmetric threats have become a dominant feature in today's world. Since Pakistan has been dealing with threats like extremism, it should formalize exchange of knowledge on counterterrorism and counter-insurgency with countries in the Gulf region.



## Visit of *Le Monde's* Chief Editor to IPRI



**Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi and Mr Jacques Follorou**

Mr Jacques Follorou, Chief Editor of *Le Monde* (The World) newspaper visited the Institute on 12 November 2018 for a discussion on the "Security Situation of Afghanistan and its Impact on Pakistan". The session was chaired by Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi, which included a presentation by Senior Consultant Dr Syed Adnan Ali Shah Bukhari on "Evolving Situation in Afghanistan: Prospects of Political Reconciliation Process". This was followed by an interactive discussion between IPRI scholars and Mr Follorou on issues like security, border fencing, Durand Line and reconciliation/peace process in Afghanistan.

Regarding the militant landscape in Afghanistan, Dr Bukhari highlighted that various groups are operating in the country such as the Afghan Taliban, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS)/Daesh, East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Uighur fighters and Tehreek-i-Taliban (TTP) fugitives.

On the political situation in Afghanistan vis-à-vis negotiations and

reconciliation, he said that there are voices that equally support and oppose the idea of talks with the Taliban. He added that the major ethnic factions view the existence and strategies of Taliban very differently. He opined that since the next Presidential elections are expected in April 2019, any meaningful development on the reconciliation front is unlikely.

Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi in his remarks said that there is a need to understand what "peace" actually means in Afghanistan. "More so, there is a need to look at the real issues which are not letting both regional and international stakeholders achieve peace in the country."

In the Q/A session, scholars discussed that Afghanistan needs to resolve the Durand Line issue in the light of international law and that both countries should work to reduce the trust deficit. They also pointed out that Pakistan looks at India's role in Afghanistan as that of a spoiler.

Mr Follorou said that the peace process is the only way to reach a political settlement with the warring factions. He opined that an absolute pullout of foreign troops from Afghanistan would enhance competition between Russia and China since both are likely to encourage the peace process which supports their own interests in that region.

Given the November 2018 direct talks between the US and Taliban in Qatar, he suspected that the former now plans to link the political and peace processes together to ensure participation of all stakeholders in order to come up with a concrete outcome.

ARTICLES BY IPRI SCHOLARS/  
IPRI JOURNAL CALL FOR PAPERS

**Asghar Ali Shad**  
Research Fellow  
(Urdu Articles)



“Sikh Nasal Kushi Aur Kashmir ...”

*Daily Pakistan*

“Shohda-e-Jammu se Maqbool Sheikh Takk”

*Nawa-i-Waqt*

“Bharat: Doosri Bari 'Aksariat' ke Ahwaal”

*Nawa-i-Waqt*

“Bharti Sazishen, Mumbai Dehshatgardi Aur”

*Nawa-i-Waqt*

“Captain ka Modi ko phir Sayeb Mashwara”

*Daily Pakistan*

**Muhammad Nawaz Khan**  
Research Officer



“Afghan Reconciliation Process”

*Pakistan Observer*

**Amna Ejaz Rafi**  
Assistant Research Officer  
“Moving Forward”  
*The Express Tribune*



**Khurram Abbas**  
Assistant Research Officer  
“Will Imran's Gulf Yatra Mean Serious Compromises?”  
*Global Village Space*



**Maryam Nazir**  
Assistant Research Officer  
“The Long Haul for Afghanistan”  
*Daily Times*



**Umar Farooq Khan**  
Assistant Research Officer  
“Pakistan's Diplomacy in a Post-Broadcast Era”  
*Daily Times*



## Call for Papers IPRI Journal 2019-20

**IPRI**  
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HEC Recognised X-category Journal  
Covered in Emerging Sources Citation Index; International  
Bibliography of Social Sciences; Worldwide Political Science  
Abstracts;  
Asianet-Pakistan; & International Political Science Abstracts.

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as reported by academics, researchers,  
and social scientists from around the world,  
especially Pakistan.

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### Submission Procedure

Author/s are required to submit manuscripts in MS Word format, along with their brief introduction, complete contact details and a letter certifying that the submission has not been previously published nor currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. Articles submitted for publication are subject to three double blind peer-reviews (one national and two international). Authors of published articles are paid a generous honorarium. The *IPRI Journal* has zero-tolerance for plagiarism. Potential authors can access submission guidelines at: <http://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Guidelines-Contributors-IPRI-Journal-1-August-2018.pdf>.

### Format

- Word Length of Articles: 5000-8000 words
- Word Length of Book Reviews: 1000 words
- Referencing Style: The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition (Full Note)

### Important Dates

- For the Summer issue: End of March
- For the Winter issue: End of September

### Submission Email:

Editor IPRI Journal  
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