



Inside this Issue



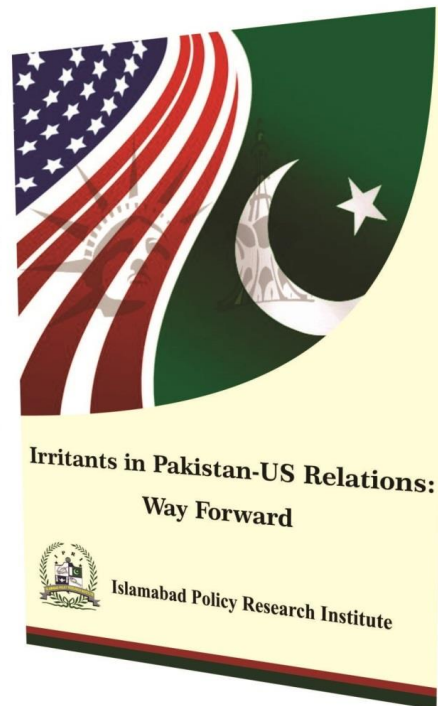
■ Forthcoming IPRI Publication: <i>Irritants in Pakistan -US Relations: Way Forward</i>	■ In-House Discussion: <i>China-India Competition in the Asia-Pacific: Balancing and Rebalancing Strategies</i>	3
■ In-House Discussion: <i>Future of Afghanistan: Geopolitics of Major Powers-Interplay of Interests and Regional Security</i>	■ IPRI Scholars' External Publications & Engagements	4
	■ IPRI Journal Call for Papers 2019-20	4

Forthcoming IPRI Publication: Irritants in Pakistan-US Relations: Way Forward

Pakistan would seem to be a natural partner for the United States. But as Pakistani diplomats and scholars assert in this new volume, the relationship between the two countries has underperformed its potential. They argue that the time has come to 'reset' ties and work on a state-to-state relationship based on sovereign equality and respect rather than one which is purely security or personality-driven or one focused on unpredictable single issue arrangements of narrow or indeterminate nature and period.

While the relationship, undoubtedly, suffers from mutual mistrust and suspicion, in order to 'remake' it, it is important to holistically and realistically debate key irritants that mar bilateral ties, understand each other's security concerns, acknowledge contributions made in achieving peace in South Asia and work on commonalities, in which, both sides can work together and expand cooperation in areas such as trade, sustainable development and culture.

The authors acknowledge that although resetting this bilateral relationship is essential, rebuilding trust will be a slow and difficult process and cannot be done through mere statements, but by actions on the ground.



Contents

1. **Inaugural Address**
Ambassador (R) Inam-ul-Haque
2. **Overview of Pakistan-US Relations: Strengths and Weaknesses**
Ambassador (R) Shamshad Ahmad
3. **Understanding the Making of US Foreign Policy and Pakistan**
Ambassador (R) Riaz Hussain Khokhar
4. **Relationship between India-Pakistan and Role of US**
Dr Salma Malik
5. **Afghanistan Crisis and Pakistan-US Disagreements on Operational Aspects of Countering Terrorism**
Dr Tughral Yamin and Faryal Khan
6. **The Third Partnership: Afghan War and Pakistan-US Relations**
Dr Rasul Baksh Rais
7. **Accommodating Mutual Concerns: Prospects of Pak-US Ties**
Dr Farhan Hanif Siddiqi

In-House Discussion

Future of Afghanistan: Geopolitics of Major Powers Interplay of Interests and Regional Security



On 8 April 2019, Mr Muhammad Nawaz Khan, Research Officer at IPRI, gave an in-house presentation on 'Future of Afghanistan: Geopolitics of Major Powers - Interplay of Interests and Regional Security.'

Mr Khan shared that there are number of variables, including geopolitics and conflicting interests of external stakeholders, ground realities, and internal dynamics, which are not just impacting but will also be determining the future of Afghanistan. In his presentation, he focused on the geopolitics of major powers and neighbouring countries; and remarked that geopolitics, like the country's topography, is extremely unstable. However, all the stakeholders now have a 'common interest' in establishing peace in Afghanistan, even if their approaches are different. For example, he highlighted that Pakistan and India are strategically engaged in minimising each other's influence in Afghanistan. On its side, India is fearful that a logical conclusion of the ongoing negotiations between the US and Afghan Taliban may have impact on the Kashmir dispute.

"India is capitalising on the unstable situation in Kabul by turning it into a battlefield of proxy war against Pakistan."

Discussing Russia's role, Mr Khan said that Moscow is not satisfied with the US Afghan strategy since it has failed to establish peace in the country. Therefore, it is expanding its role in order to shape politics of the region independent of the US.

On how other countries view the Afghan crisis, he opined that Iran and Saudi Arabia see it through the lens of Middle Eastern politics of competing interests; while China's engagement is for security and economic reasons.

Mr Khan further noted that if geopolitics continues to prevail in Afghanistan and South Asia, peace and stability would continue to be a remote dream. Consequently, the world would see realignment of interests that could affect the people, economies and the security environment of both Central and South Asia (CASA).

"The Soviet Union left Afghanistan at the mercy of the Afghans and its neighbours. But, the US is leaving the country at the mercy of various regional and global powers that are more likely to interfere in its internal matters."

Quoting data from the NATO-led Resolute Support mission, he said that the Afghan government has control or influence over 65 per cent of the population, but only 55.5 per cent of Afghanistan's 407 districts, less than at any other time since 2001.

"The Taliban recruit fighters as its territorial control grows; while the ANSF has been losing more people than it can recruit, Neither the Afghan government nor the Taliban will be able to gain a strategic advantage in the conflict owing to their capacity limitations."

Future Implications

About what the future holds for the region, Mr Khan concluded that:

- The security situation in Afghanistan is deteriorating and militancy is spreading day by day with the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) incapable of establishing the writ of the state.
- Regional stakeholders are concerned about the endgame in the country because there have already been many 'endgames'. Besides, there is fear regarding the possible politicization of the Afghan Army as well as its potential dismemberment into smaller like-minded militant factions after complete withdrawal of the US forces. Any abrupt and hasty exit could also encourage external non-state actors to find safe havens and worsen an already precarious security situation in the country.
- Regional countries are also suspicious about the presence of permanent US military bases in Afghanistan; and how they could impact the overall security environment of CASA.

In-House Discussion

China-India Competition in the Asia-Pacific: Balancing and Rebalancing Strategies

On 22 April 2019, Ms Amna Ejaz Rafi, Assistant Research Officer at IPRI, gave an in-house presentation on 'China-India Competition in the Asia Pacific: Balancing and Rebalancing Strategies.'

In terms of Asia Pacific's power dynamics, she said that the region depicts both cooperative and competitive trends since its economic growth is reflective of intra-regional harmony, while the conflicting claims over South China Sea and the inclination towards external foreign players is indicative of divergence. The Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) – Malacca, Sunda and Lombok – are important trading links for regional as well as global players. The littoral states (Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore) can exercise a degree of control over the passage of trade flows. Besides, any untoward incident, involving a terrorist activity or an act of piracy can disrupt shipments, she warned.

Ms Rafi shared that India's role in the Asia-Pacific under its 'Look East' and 'Act East' policies is driven to enhance political, military and economic ties with the regional states. Both bilaterally and through collaborative interaction with the region's economic vehicle – Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) - India is trying to make inroads in the region. Its eastward moves and emerging military/strategic linkages with the regional states other than bilateral interaction could be termed as a 'trans-regional aspiration.'

However, she shared that despite the vision (and geographic proximity), India's policy towards the Asia-Pacific remained handicapped until the 1990s when New Delhi started to look at the region with fervor. This was the beginning of the 'Look East' policy. The policy not only gave direction to India's relations with regional states, its scope of interaction was also not limited to political and economic spheres, rather, it expanded to non-traditional spheres as well.

In November 2014, India launched the 'Act East' policy to fortify its already established politico-military and



economicities.

The policy shows the growing importance of East Asia in India's security calculus. The region's significance stems from the fact that 40 to 55 per cent of its trade passes through the South China Sea.

Owing to New Delhi's strategic partnership with Washington, she opined that this regional maneuvering could be targeted at China since both countries look at a burgeoning People's Republic as a challenge.



“China's likely response in a situation where India (along with US and allies) is trying to create impediments could prompt the East Asian power to formulate (and adopt) a policy to enhance its leverage over the region. Another response could be that it might accommodate the ASEAN countries security concerns in South China Sea. These developments will have an impact on the political and security landscape - the outcome could be new alliance structures.”

Ms Rafi shared that the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, including the US, Japan, Australia and India, is poised to play an instrumental role in the region. These countries owing to their 'maritime commons in the Indo-Pacific' might try to introduce a 'new regional architecture'. The principles of democracy and securing freedom of navigation could be employed as tools to justify their regional role.

“Balancing and rebalancing strategies of competition and influence between India and China are likely to engender dynamics of insecurity and crisis in the Asia-Pacific region.”

IPRI Scholars' External Publications & Engagements

Newspaper Articles

Khurram Abbas
Assistant Research Officer
"Trump-Israel Nexus"
The Nation

Maryam Nazir
Assistant Research Officer
"When Push Comes to Shove"
Daily Times

External Engagements

President IPRI Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham bin Saddique participated in the 17th Anniversary Celebration organised by MTBC (A Unique Healthcare IT Company) in Islamabad held on 15 April 2019.

President IPRI Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham bin Saddique participated in a roundtable titled 'Pulwama: A Strategic understanding' organised by the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS) in collaboration with the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI) University in Islamabad on 18 April 2019.

Assistant Research Officer at IPRI, Ms Gulshan Bibi, participated the 'International Turkey-Pakistan-Iran Cooperation Symposium' organised by the Center for Iranian Studies in Ankara (IRAM) in Ankara, Turkey from 25-26 April 2019.

The mission of the IPRI Journal is to promote scholarly research in the academic fields related to International Relations and Political Science, as reported by academics, researchers, and social scientists from around the world, especially Pakistan.



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Call for Papers 2019-20

The biannual Journal welcomes original high-quality papers/studies, review articles and book reviews on topics such as:

- International Affairs
- Geopolitics
- Diplomacy
- Security and Conflict
- Political Economy
- Terrorism
- Governance
- Defence and Strategic Studies
- Nuclear Issues

Submission Process

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.

Authors of published articles are paid a modest honorarium.

The IPRI Journal has zero tolerance for plagiarism.

Editorial and Peer Review Process

All submissions are screened using Turnitin - a similarity detection software. Articles shortlisted by the Editorial Board undergo **three double-blind peer reviews (one national and two international)**. During this stage, articles may not be approved for publication by the referees. However, if they are found suitable for the Journal, reviewers may recommend either major or minor changes in the manuscript. The revision process might comprise multiple rounds. Peer review timelines vary depending on reviewer availability and responsiveness.

Important Dates

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

Potential authors can access submission guidelines at:
<<http://www.ipripak.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Guidelines-Contributors-IPRI-Journal-27-Feb-2019-ED-SSA.pdf>>

Word Limit

- Articles: 5000-8000 words
- Book Reviews: 1000 words
- Referencing Style: Chicago Manual of Style 16th Ed. (FN)

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رمضان كريم
RAMADAN KAREEM

IPRI wishes its readers a Peaceful & Blessed Month