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One-Day Seminar:

Evolving Regional Dynamics and Future of Pakistan-Russia Relations

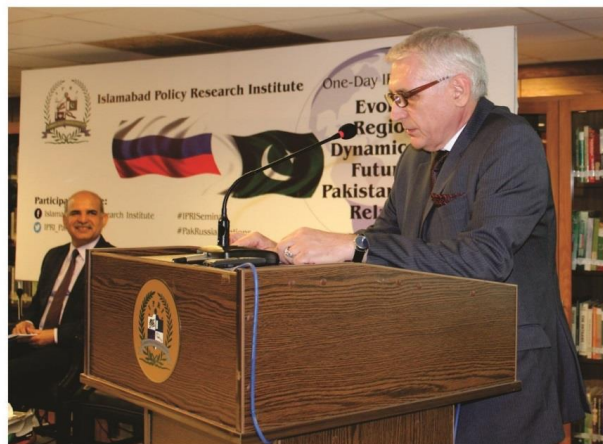
Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) organised a One-Day Seminar 'Evolving Regional Dynamics and Future of Pakistan-Russia Relations' on 2 May 2019.

Giving an overview of Pakistan-Russia bilateral relations in his Welcome Address, President of IPRI, **Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham bin Saddique**, outlined that the relationship carried the baggage of realpolitik when both states pursued their divergent national interests, but 'as the Cold war era ended, following a period of somewhat dormancy, both states re-established their relations at a basic level.' Vice Admiral Saddique stressed that there are common areas of cooperation between the two such as combating terrorism for peace and stability in the region, especially in Afghanistan, and bilateral trade.

As Asia emerges as a hub of economic corridors, Pakistan offers attractive opportunities to regional countries and beyond. CPEC, a pilot project of Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a case in point. Initiatives like Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI), Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) programme and ideas like South-South cooperation can provide the foundation for greater regional homogeneity and integration. Pakistan is an energy scarce country. Russia has the resources which, if taken advantage of, can boost our struggling economy.

He hoped the seminar discussion would answer critical questions, including how Russia will act in a multipolar world; how will India's role, given Indo-Russian strategic partnership, impact Pakistan-Russia relations; what are the prospects of Pakistan-China-Russia relations on trilateral basis; and what could be possible contours of a Pak-Russia strategic roadmap.

Dr Sergei A. Baranov, Counsellor, Embassy of the Russian Federation, Islamabad in his Keynote Address highlighted that Pakistan is an important partner of Russia and its significance is determined by its positive role in regional



politics, its influence in the Muslim world and its geostrategic position. He further added that the potential of Pakistan-Russia partnership significantly advanced when Islamabad became a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in June 2017. He also referred to the regular and frequent high-level meetings held between Russian and Pakistani officials in a cordial and friendly environment where state representatives from both sides discuss matters of mutual interest including bilateral, global and regional issues.

Discussing trade, he shared that Pakistan-Russia trade turnover in 2018 increased by 35.4 per cent up to USD 732.4 million; and that Moscow has put forward a number of proposals to enhance cooperation in construction of off-shore gas/oil pipelines, steel industry, railway tracks, water and sanitation facilities. Recent years have also witnessed intensification in military interaction in the form of high-level meetings and military exercises held between the two countries. In order to improve antiterrorism activities, Russia has provided four combat transport helicopters to Pakistan.

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Both countries are united by the aspirations of a multipolar world order, respect for international law and stance against interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states, Dr Baranov concluded.

Following the keynote, **Mr Nawaz Khan**, Research Officer at IPRI made a presentation on 'Pakistan-Russia Economic Relations.' He was of the view that Russian investment in the energy field will contribute to economic buoyancy; and ultimately pave way for regional integration, specifically through transnational energy cooperation. However, he warned that the unsettled issue of mutual financial obligations and lack of connection between corresponding banks was



impeding economic cooperation between Pakistan and Russia.

In the Working Session, chaired by Ambassador (R) Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General, Institute of Strategic Studies, **Dr Ahmed Ijaz Malik**, Assistant Professor at the School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University, highlighted that in view of the global changes post-9/11 and Russia's rebalancing towards South Asia, Pakistan is likely to benefit from its economic assistance, military and technological exchange. This cooperation, however, should not be seen as anti-India since Moscow has been systemically and continually supporting Delhi militarily. Dr Malik further pointed out that in Russia's greater designs, Iran and India figure more prominently than Islamabad. 'While Pakistan needs to remain cautious about this, there are areas of convergence. For example, Russia supports Pakistan's accession to the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Accession of both Pakistan and India to SCO signifies the importance of our country as one of the pivotal states,' he shared.



Providing a bird's eye view of the scope for economic cooperation in bilateral relations, **Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri**, Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, said that it is important to understand Russia's geography, especially when it comes to enhancing economic relations since it borders 14 other countries. He said that since becoming part of the World Trade Organization, Russia has consistently worked to improve its



Policy Recommendations

The 'Look East' Policy announced by President Putin underscores the importance of the Asia-Pacific region for Russia which aims to diversify its market portfolio for its military hardware, industrial goods and energy products. As a country of more than 200 million people, Pakistan presents an attractive market for Russian goods and services. Both countries should work diligently to reap the benefits of this opportunity. The seminar delegates made the following key recommendations:

- Pakistan and Russia face a common challenge due to the situation in Afghanistan. To this end, increased cooperation in the fields of counterterrorism and organised crime is vital.
- Pakistan and Russia enjoy robust military relations. Pakistan should further this momentum and seek Russia's assistance in acquiring a nuclear submarine.
- Apart from close military interaction, intelligence sharing is imperative. For this, direct cooperation between the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CTO) and General Headquarters (GHQ) is required.
- To make the relationship more broad-based, both countries should endeavor to understand each other's history and culture through student exchange programmes and interactions between think tanks.
- In order to improve economic ties, Russia and Pakistan should work to eliminate the current counter financial credit claims.
- Pakistan should consider establishing a currency swap agreement with Russia.

trade and commerce environment due to which its Ease of Doing Business ranking is 35, more than a 100 points better than Pakistan. 'What is also important to note is that while Pakistan has a trade deficit with many countries, including China, with Russia, we have a huge trade surplus.'

Sharing details about the export-import potential between the two, he said that the bulk of Russia's imports from Pakistan consist of citrus, articles of apparel and surgical goods; while Russia's exports consist mainly of bituminous coal, helicopters, newsprint, iron roll, and edible vegetables. Dr Suleri said that it is important to focus on value chain integration with Russia, particularly in surgical instruments; medicines; cotton-based clothing; and fisheries. 'In the agriculture sector, it is important to focus on adapting to Non-Tariff Barriers in citrus; and tapping Russian investment in oil and gas sector besides inviting private sector interest in SEZs', he said. The speaker was of the view that one of the key reasons why foreign investors ask for government guarantees is because of legal and bureaucratic bottlenecks which need to be addressed by the Ministry of Finance. He recommended initiating a currency swap agreement with Russia.

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IPRI-NIMA Collaboration on Maritime Issues Visit by National Institute of Maritime Affairs

A delegation from the National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA), Bahria University, Islamabad visited IPRI on 15 May 2019. The delegation was led by Director General NIMA Vice Admiral (R) Syed Khawar Ali.

The delegation was given a brief overview of IPRI's structure and research orientation. President IPRI, Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham bin Saddique highlighted the Institute's vision and mission of promoting Pakistan's narrative at the regional and international level. He highlighted that while the Institute's prime focus has been research on security, international affairs and diplomacy, domestic issues like governance are also of interest to the organisation. He further stated that efforts are now underway to strengthen IPRI's research output by bringing new researchers on board.

Given regional developments and the prevailing transnational challenges, Pakistan needs to project its case fervently to the international audience. In this context, the role of think tanks is extremely vital.

On maritime affairs, Vice Admiral Saddique said that the area is of significance to Pakistan, but more research needs to be undertaken on the subject. He suggested joint research projects with NIMA scholars.

Vice Admiral (R) Syed Khawar Ali, DG NIMA opined that Pakistan lacks a strong research culture; and that apart from maritime affairs, security issues also need serious attention. He shared that Pakistan has USD 80 billion



trade via sea, but has no ships which is indicative of lack of strategic foresight in the country's policies.

Lack of coherence within the government machinery coupled with the divergent approach of various departments has impeded development of the maritime sector.

DG NIMA said that the maritime tourism is non-existent in Pakistan due to lengthy procedures which discourage foreign and local tourists. The lack of infrastructure and transportation facilities is another area which needs to be developed. He informed that NIMA has experts on maritime economics, and through collaborative research initiatives, both think tanks can produce focused research.

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Ambassador (R) Mohammad Khalid Khattak, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Russia, was of the view that it is important to look into the history, psyche and mind of Russia and that of the Afghans in order to build a relationship of trust with them. About the issue of peace in Afghanistan, he lamented that the country faces two major problems - one, its transition from a tribal state into a national state has been very turbulent; and two, it came into existence without any defined borders or frontiers. He stressed that while an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process is an important construct, global powers have to do a lot of basic homework and provide a cohesive, national governance format, if there is to be any eventual peace in the territory.

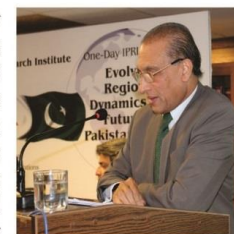


In his Concluding Remarks, **Ambassador (R) Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry** stated that the United States, under Donald Trump, has identified Russia and China as its competitors. It is believed that a new Cold War is emerging where Russia and China are reorienting towards new alignments for a bigger stake in the World Order. He further mentioned that

the arms control understanding between Washington and Moscow is collapsing, giving impetus to an arms race not just between major powers, but also in various regions of the world, including South Asia.

Ambassador Chaudhry highlighted that India is being projected by the US as a regional power in the Indian Ocean, and as an extra-regional power in the Pacific Ocean to counter China. He opined that these are far-reaching developments that also impact Russian decision-makers.

He pointed out that India remains a limiting factor in Pakistan-Russia relations as the latter does not want to completely shift away from its traditional ally, with which it still has robust economic and defence relations. However, this should not be treated as a zero-sum game. 'Alliances in the contemporary period are issue-based, where allies on one particular issue can be rivals on another', he concluded.



IPRI Scholars' External Publications

Newspaper Articles

Muhammad Nawaz Khan
Research Officer
 "Economic Diplomacy"
Daily Times

Amna Ejaz Rafi
Assistant Research Officer
 "Understanding Widodo's
 Lead in Presidential Race"
Daily Times

Khurram Abbas
Assistant Research Officer
 "Looming Fears of Conflict
 in Persian Gulf"
The Nation

Maryam Nazir
Assistant Research Officer
 "Easter Bombing - A Call for
 Introspection"
Daily Times

The IPRI Journal promotes scholarly research related to International Relations and Political Science, as reported by academics, researchers, and social scientists from around the world, especially Pakistan.



Call for Papers 2019-20

The biannual Journal welcomes original high-quality papers/studies, review articles and book reviews on themes 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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