



## Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI)

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### PRESS COVERAGE-DAY 1 (10 May 2017)

#### IPRI-HSF International Conference Achieving Peace in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects



## Pakistan has asked Afghan govt to take action against terrorist heavens

By: Online 10-May-17 **TOP NEWS**

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan has asked Kabul to take action against Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar sanctuaries on its soil.

The call was made by Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz while addressing a seminar in Islamabad on Wednesday.

He pointed out that the terrorist outfits have been crossing through the porous border and launching terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

Sartaj Aziz said Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad has been launched to eradicate the remnant terrorist elements. The operation is continuing successfully. He said terrorist sanctuaries have been destroyed in Waziristan.

The Adviser said Pakistan has always made sincere efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan. He stressed that political solution can only pave the way for durable peace in the neighboring country. He said peace in Afghanistan is vital for peace and security of Pakistan.

The Adviser said meaningful engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan is of key importance for peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region. In recent weeks, exchange of



visits has gained momentum. He said it is important that these visits and interactions are streamlined under the rubric of bilateral cooperation mechanism agreed upon between the two sides in March for cooperation in diplomatic, military and intelligence fields with political oversight.

Referring to Pakistan's assistance to Afghanistan, the adviser said Pakistan has undertaken development projects in Afghanistan worth 500 million dollars. 3000 scholarships have also been availed by the Afghan students for education in Pakistan's colleges and universities.

Later talking to the media persons, Sartaj Aziz said both Pakistan and Iran have agreed to constitute a new border management commission in order to address border related issues.

He said that the commission will comprise four members from each side and it will hold the first meeting this month.

He pointed out there is not only the issue of extremist elements on Pak-Iran border but also of illegal smuggling and others.

He said our aim is to further strengthen border mechanisms in such a manner that no security vacuum is created.

When asked about changes of any meeting between the prime ministers of Pakistan and India at the upcoming SCO summit, the adviser said it is early to say anything. He said Pakistan could consider the meeting if interest was shown from the other side. He, however, said the SCO summit is an important occasion as Pakistan will become permanent member of the organization. He was confident that the development will help Pakistan further strengthen its relations with the central Asian states, Russia and China.

The Adviser said Pak Afghan border at Chaman has partially been opened. He said in the first phase, sick Afghan nationals are being allowed to go back to their homes.

Sartaj Aziz said both Iran and Afghanistan are not enemies but friendly countries.



## 'Border management with Afghanistan, Iran priority'

• National

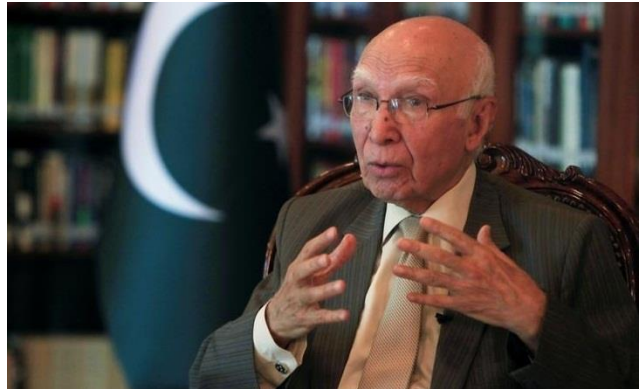
1 DAY AGO BY STAFF REPORT

### **Sartaj fingers at forces against Afghan reconciliation; asks Taliban to give up violence, join peace process**

Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz has said that strengthening of border management with Afghanistan and Iran is in the top priority of the government to avoid untoward terror incidents and cross-border infiltration of terrorists.

“Neither Afghanistan nor Iran is our enemy. We have already expressed our concerns over the tragic episode took place on the Pak-Iran border,” he told a questioner during an international conference on achieving peace in Afghanistan, organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF).

Adviser Sartaj said that the Pak-Iran border where the incident took place was very close to Afghanistan. Other than extremist elements, there were also smugglers in the area, he said. During Iranian foreign minister’s visit to Pakistan, strengthening of border management was discussed in detail, he said.



It was also decided between the two countries to strengthen the border commission which would consist of eight members, four each from Pakistan and Iran. The meeting of the commission would be held this month for tackling the border mechanism to avoid such untoward incidents in future, he said.

Regarding prime minister’s visit to Saudi Arabia for the Islamic summit, he said that the summit would discuss the issues pertaining to the Islamic world including Palestine and Kashmir. He said that US President Donald Trump has already indicated that he wanted to work on Kashmir issue.

Replying to another question, he said India has submitted an application before the International Court of Justice in Kulbhshan Jadhav's case. "The application and the jurisdiction of the court are being evaluated," he said, adding that the Foreign Office would soon issue its statement. He also said that the meaningful engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan was of key importance for peace and stability in the region.

Sartaj was of the view that the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have the immense scope and offer multiple opportunities. Pakistan extends transit trade facilities to Afghanistan through its ports under an Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) without any quantitative limits or barriers.

The revision of this agreement is due and the next meeting of the Transit Trade Coordination Authority would be convened soon. The adviser said that a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan was in the interest of Pakistan due to which it has been making sincere efforts to facilitate talks between the Afghan government and Taliban.

"We believe that a politically negotiated settlement will be the most viable option for bringing lasting peace to Afghanistan," he said, and reiterated that the future of the region lies in peaceful and stable Afghanistan. Pakistan remains committed to the goal of lasting peace in Afghanistan and the region, he said.

"Our consistent and clear message to the Taliban has been that they must give up violence and join the peace process. Our efforts led to Murree talks in July 2015 and the setting up of Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) in December 2015. However, both times the process was undermined by forces that were against reconciliation," he remarked.

He said that the lack of progress on the peace process, emerging threat of the Islamic State, drug trafficking, the resettlement of returning refugees were some of the issues that have been making it difficult for Afghanistan to create a stable country. "This situation is affecting not only Afghanistan's neighbours but the entire region," he said.

He said that the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were also being affected due to these factors, despite centuries-old bonds of common culture, heritage, traditions and religion. Besides security operations, FATA reforms were being introduced to mainstream the tribal region politically and administratively, and to accelerate its development and safeguard its security, he said.

In order to strengthen these gains, "we have been emphasising the need for effective border management with Afghanistan," he said. This would prevent the unnecessary movement and would help address the Afghan allegations regarding Taliban and Haqqani Network presence, he said. Pakistan has also been stressing upon the Afghan government to take action against the TTP and JuA sanctuaries in Afghanistan, he said.

Afghanistan has vast mineral resources which made the connectivity with Pakistan more important so that it could export the same to the outer world. Projects including Peshawar-Kabul motorway and Quetta-Kandahar rail link are in pipeline which would only come to fruition if an environment of peace and stability is achieved.

Moreover, energy cooperation through projects like CASA-1000 and TAPI will bring huge dividends for Pakistan, Afghanistan and the region, he added. Besides Pakistan, scholars from Afghanistan, China, Iran, Russia and the United States also participated in the conference.

Institute's Acting President Sohail Tirmizi said that converting Afghanistan into a Western-styled democracy has failed because sustainable peace in the country was not possible without a political settlement. In his opening remarks, Hanns Seidel representative Kristof Duwaerts said that a 'bad' public image of Pakistan in Afghanistan does not reflect the contributions and sacrifices which Pakistanis have made for Afghan nationals.

"There is a huge constituency for understanding and dialogue in and between Pakistan and Afghanistan," he said. Former foreign minister Inamul Haque, former defence secretary Asif Yasin Malik, Former Anti-Narcotics Force director general Khawar Hanif, Dr Farhan Hanif Siddiqui, Dr Attaullah Wahidyar, Sayed Mahdi Munadi, and senior journalist Rahimullah Yusufzai also addressed the conference.

## Pak-Iran border commission formed

May 11, 2017

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Our staff reporter/Agencies

Islamabad - The government on Wednesday announced the formation of a joint border commission with Iran to curb cross-border movement of terrorists, just days after the Iranian army chief threatened to bomb militant hideouts allegedly inside its nuclear-armed neighbor.

Talking to journalists in Islamabad, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz said that Pakistan and Iran had agreed to constitute a new border management commission in order to address border-related issues.

He said the first meeting of the commission, which comprises of four members from each side, would be held within a month, either in Iran or Pakistan.

Last week, the two sides had agreed to form the commission during a meeting between Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan in Islamabad that came after the death of 11 Iranian border guards at the hands of militants along the Pak-Iran border.

Tehran had blamed the militant group - Jaish-e-Adl - for carrying out the attack allegedly from the Pakistani side of the border. Iranian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Maj-Gen Mohammad Baqeri then threatened to bomb the militant hideouts inside Pakistan if Islamabad did not take action against them.

The threat led to Pakistan summoning the Iranian ambassador to Islamabad to lodge a protest over the remarks, which said such comments went against the “spirit of brotherly relations existing between the two countries”.

Sartaj Aziz said a large number of militants loyal to Jaish-e-Adl, which has been involved in attacks on government forces in Iran’s Sunni-majority Sistan-Baluchistan province in the recent past, were also present on the Iranian side of the border.

“Smugglers and other elements are also present along the Pak-Iran border. Terrorists can enter Pakistan from Iran as well,” he said and added: “Iran and Afghanistan are not enemies of Pakistan”.

About the threatening statement of an Iranian army general, ISPR DG Major General Asif Ghafoor, while addressing a news conference in Islamabad on Wednesday, said that the foreign ministry has already responded to that statement.

When asked about former Army Chief General Raheel Sharif heading a Saudi-led military alliance, the ISPR DG said it was a state decision.

## Sartaj Aziz asks Afghan govt to prevent cross-border movement of terrorists

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### **Sartaj Aziz asks Afghan govt to prevent cross-border movement of terrorists**

By News Desk

Published: May 10, 2017

Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz says peace in Afghanistan is vital for Pakistan's security. PHOTO: Reuters

Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz asked Afghan authorities on Wednesday to increase surveillance to prevent cross-border movement of terrorists.

Aziz also demanded that the Afghan government should crack down on terrorist outfit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's sanctuaries on its soil.

#### **Afghan president may visit Pakistan despite border attack: Sadiq**

The adviser's statement came two days after Pakistani forces' retaliatory fire to Afghan army's aggression on the border town of Chaman. The Pakistan Army killed 50 Afghan soldiers and border security personnel, injured more than 100 troops and destroyed five Afghan check posts.

On May 5, 11 people, including women, children and a FC man, were killed and 47 injured when Afghan border forces resorted to 'unprovoked' firing at Pakistani troops guarding a census team.

#### **Pakistan army kills 50 Afghan troops in Chaman: IGFC**

Aziz went on to say that Pakistan had always made efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

"Peace in Afghanistan is vital for Pakistan's security," he added.

Commenting on the ongoing raids by the Pakistan Army, the adviser said Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad was launched to cleanse the region of the remaining terrorist elements.

"All terrorist sanctuaries have been destroyed in Waziristan after the successful operation," he added.



# Pakistan-Iran Border Commission formed

Kabul needs to take action against TTP, JUA: Sartaj

**ZAHID CHAUDHARY**

**ISLAMABAD**

Commenting on the current situation prevailing at borders with Iran and Afghanistan, Adviser on Foreign Affairs Wednesday said both the countries are not enemies but friendly countries.

He was talking to the media persons and addressing a seminar on Afghanistan here. About relations with Afghanistan, he said Pakistan has been stressing upon Afghan government to take action against TTP and Jamaatul Ahrar sanctuaries as these terrorist outfits have been crossing through the porous border and launching terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

The adviser said Pakistan has always made sincere efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan. He stressed that political solution can only pave the way for durable peace in the neighboring country. He said peace in Afghanistan is vital for peace and security of Pakistan. The adviser said meaningful engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan is of key importance for peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region.

In recent weeks, exchange of visits has gained momentum. He said it is important that these visits and interactions are streamlined under the rubric of bilateral cooperation mechanism agreed upon between the two sides in March for cooperation in diplomatic, mili-

tary and intelligence fields with political oversight.

Referring to Pakistan's assistance to Afghanistan, the adviser said Pakistan has undertaken development projects in Afghanistan worth 500 million dollars.

3000 scholarships have also been availed by the Afghan students for education in Pakistan's colleges and universities. He a new border management commission has been constituted by Pakistan and Iran in order to address border related issues. The commission will comprise four members from each side and it will hold the first meeting this month.

He pointed out there is not only the issue of extremist elements on Pak-Iran border but also of illegal smuggling and others. He said our aim is to further strengthen border mechanisms in such a manner that no security vacuum is created.

When asked about changes of any meeting between the prime ministers of Pakistan and India at the upcoming SCO summit, the adviser said it is early to say anything. He said Pakistan could consider the meeting if interest was shown from the other side.

He, however, said the SCO summit is an important occasion as Pakistan will become permanent member of the organization. He was confident that the development will help Pakistan further strengthen its relations with the Central Asian states, Russia and China.

Continued on Page 7

adviser said Pak Afghan border at Chaman has partially been opened. He said in the first phase, sick Afghan nationals are being allowed to go back.

Welcoming the scholars from Afghanistan, China, Iran, Russia, the United States and Pakistan to International Conference on 'Achieving Peace in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects' Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi, Acting President of the IPRI said that converting Afghanistan into a Western styled democracy has failed because sustainable peace in the country is not possible without a political settlement.

'This requires that all those who are supposed to be at the negotiating table are there. Bringing parties in conflict to the negotiating table is not just Pakistan's responsibility. It is a difficult undertaking and will require patience and continued effort,' he said.

Mr Sayed Mahdi Munadi, Head of Research, Centre for Strategic Studies, Kabul, discussed three important aspects of the Afghan Unity Government in terms of security, governance and economic management.

He discussed the various projects un-

### From Page 1

derway in Afghanistan and said that among all the important projects, TAPI is one of most important projects, followed by CASA 1000 and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan 500-KV which seeks to export year round power to both Afghanistan and Pakistan and is commissioned for completion by 2018.

He was optimistic about the Belt and Road initiatives since the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor would facilitate connection between Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and expand cultural and economic cooperation. 'These economic projects are crucial because they are changing the narrative from 'economy for security' to the narrative of 'security for the economy'. 'It is a mistake to put emphasis just on security for security'.

Addressing the conference, organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation, Maj. Gen. (R) Ijaz Hussain Awan, HI (M), former High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam, was of the view that the Pak-Afghan bor-

der is described as the most volatile area because of the presence of terrorist safe havens and lax governmental control.

He said various forms of illegal activities such as smuggling of weapons, narcotics, vehicles, timber and electronic goods are routine matters between this border, he said.

The Major General stressed that border management is an important issue for both countries as previously people living near border areas entered without any legal documents. 'Given its successful military operations in the border areas, Pakistan can ill-afford an open border with Afghanistan anymore', he cautioned.

He said that while the United Nations has been deliberately kept out of the Afghan region, it needs to be included at the negotiating table if a peaceful settlement of Afghanistan is to be achieved. He shared that when borders between two countries are contested, military management is the answer but in case of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the situation is unique with a mix of both traditional tribal management as well as the Frontier Corps management.

*Thursday May 12, 2017*

# Iran, Afghanistan not enemies: Sartaj Aziz

ISLAMABAD (INP): Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz confirmed on Wednesday that India has moved International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Kulbhushan Jadhav's conviction and the government is reviewing the jurisdiction of the ICJ.

While talking to media in Islamabad, Sartaj Aziz said that a statement will be issued in this regard in a couple of days.

Answering about threatening statements coming from Teheran and Kabul, Sartaj Aziz said that Iran and Afghanistan are not our enemies but friendly countries. He said during Iranian foreign minister's visit to Pakistan they agreed to form a border management commission with four members from each side. He said this commission will meet within this month. Any complaint that comes up from any side will be sorted out by this commission.

The Adviser said that Chaman border has been

particullly opened for the sick people or those who want to go back to Afghanistan having valid visas. He said the Chaman incident was unfortunately as the border line passes through between two vil-lages. He hoped that a solution would be found as Pakistan do not have any desire to have access into Afghan territory. "Border management with Afghanistan is very important," the adviser said, urging the Afghan government to take action against militants belonging to the Islamic State group and the Afghanistan Taliban operating on its soil.

Regarding Islamic countries and US summit, Sartaj Aziz said important issues will include Palestiian problem. President Trump will have bilateral meetings with GCC and Islamic countries leaders. He said a collec-tive message of Ummah would go to President Trump about the concern of the Islamic Ummah. He said no meeting between Prime Minister Nawaz

Sharif and President Trump has been set so far.

Asked the possibility of meeting between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the SCO summit, the Advisor said it is too early to say about it.

Earlier addressing a seminar , the Advisor on Foreign Affairs asked Afghan authorities to take action against banned TTP operating from the Afghan soil and cross border movements. Sartaj Aziz said Operation Raddul Fasad has been launched to eradicate remnant terrorist elements. He said terrorist sanctuaries have been destroyed in Waziristan.

The Adviser said Pakistan has always made sincere efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

He stressed that political solution can only pave the way for durable peace in the neighboring country. He said peace in Afghanistan is vital for peace and security of Pakistan.

## Afghan government must act against Daesh, Taliban: Sartaj Aziz

May 10, 2017

Video Player

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ISLAMABAD, May 10 (APP): Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz here Wednesday said the Afghan government must have to eliminate Daesh and Taliban hideouts in Afghanistan in order to keep maintain peace in the country and region. Addressing the seminar on peace in Afghanistan Sartaj Aziz said that Pakistan has called upon Afghanistan to check cross border movement of terrorists.

Sartaj Aziz asked Afghan government to take action against the banned TTP and Daesh activists operating from Afghanistan.

The Adviser said that peace in the region is linked with peace in Afghanistan. "Pakistan has always made sincere efforts to restore peace and stability in Afghanistan", he said. He stressed that political solution can only pave the way for durable peace in the neighbouring country.

The Adviser said Pak Afghan border at Chaman has been partially opened. He said in the first phase, sick Afghan nationals are being allowed to go back to their homes. Talking about Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad he said that the operation has successfully launched and terrorist sanctuaries have been destroyed in Waziristan.

APP/Ahsan/mka

*Thursday May 12, 2017*

*Thursday May 12, 2017*



**RADIO PAKISTAN**

## **PAKISTAN URGES AFGHANISTAN TO CHECK CROSS BORDER MOVEMENT OF TERRORISTS: SARTAJ**

**Sartaj Aziz says Pakistan making sincere efforts for peace, stability in Afghanistan.**

06:32 PM, 10 May, 2017

The call was made by Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz while addressing a seminar in Islamabad today. The Adviser also asked Afghan authorities to take action against banned TTP operating from the Afghan soil. Pakistan has always made sincere efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan. He stressed that political solution can only pave the way for durable peace in the neighboring country. He said peace in Afghanistan is vital for peace and security of Pakistan.



**RADIO PAKISTAN**

## **TEXT BULLETIN 2100 HRS**

**AZIZ**

Pakistan has called upon Afghan government to take action against TTP and Jamaatul Ahrar sanctuaries.

The call was made by Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz while addressing a seminar in Islamabad today.

He pointed out that the terrorist outfits have been crossing through the porous border and launching terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

The Adviser said Pakistan has always made sincere efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Later talking to the media persons, Sartaj Aziz said both Pakistan and Iran have agreed to constitute a new border management commission in order to address border related issues.

He said the commission will comprise four members from each side and hold its first meeting this month.

He pointed out there is not only the problem of extremist elements on Pak-Iran border but also of illegal smuggling and other issues.



## **Iran and Afghanistan are not enemies but friendly countries: Sartaj Aziz**

By Web Desk

Posted on May 10, 2017

**ISLAMABAD: Advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on Wednesday said that Iran and Afghanistan are not enemies but friendly countries.**

The advisor while speaking to media said that Pakistan and Iran have agreed to constitute a new border management commission in order to address border related issues. He said that the commission will comprise four members from each side and it will hold the first meeting this month. He pointed out there is not only the issue of extremist elements on Pak-Iran border but also of illegal smuggling and others.

He said our aim is to further strengthen border mechanisms in such a manner that no security vacuum is created. He said that the Afghan border at Chaman has partially been opened, and sick Afghan nationals are being allowed to go back to their homes.

Sartaj Aziz stressed upon Afghanistan to take action against sanctuaries of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar. He pointed out that proscribed outfits have been crossing through the porous border and launching terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

Addressing a seminar, the Adviser said Pakistan has made sincere efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan. He stressed that political solution can pave the way for durable peace, which also vital for peace and security of Pakistan.

Mr. Aziz said meaningful engagement between both countries is of key importance for peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region. He said that exchange of visits has gained momentum in recent weeks, and it is essential that these interactions are streamlined to enhance the bilateral cooperation mechanism agreed upon in March for cooperation in political, diplomatic, military and intelligence fields.

Referring to Pakistan's assistance to Afghanistan, Aziz said Pakistan has undertaken development projects in Afghanistan worth 500 million dollars, and has provided three scholarships to Afghan students for education colleges and universities in Pakistan. He said Operation Radd-ul-Fasaad has been launched to eradicate the remnant terrorist elements, which is continuing successfully and have destroyed terrorist sanctuaries in Waziristan.

## IPRI-HSF International Conference Achieving Peace in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects

DNA News | May 10, 2017



‘A politically negotiated settlement is the most viable option for bringing lasting peace to Afghanistan. Towards this end, Pakistan has been making sincere efforts for facilitating talks between the Afghan Government and Taliban. The Taliban must give up violence and join the peace process.’ This was emphasized by **Mr Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs** in Islamabad today at the International Conference on ‘Achieving Peace in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects’ organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF). Mr Aziz said that the challenges in Afghanistan have multiplied since January 2015 when the NATO ended its combat mission and Afghan forces assumed direct security responsibilities. He pointed out that the peace process during the Murree talks in July 2015 was undermined by forces which are against reconciliation. He said that Pakistan has been a victim of brutal terrorism but since 2014, the Government’s resolve to root out this menace from society has remained firm. ‘Our success in counterterrorism has been recognized by US Congressional leaders and military commanders who visited the Pakistan-Afghanistan border including North Waziristan’ he shared. FATA reforms are being introduced to mainstream FATA politically and administratively and to accelerate its development and safeguard its security. ‘Effective border management with Afghanistan is essential as it would prevent the movement of terrorists and miscreants and



would help address the Afghan allegations regarding TTA and Haqqani networks' presence in Pakistan', he highlighted. Mr Aziz also pointed that Pakistan extends transit trade facilities to Afghanistan through its ports under the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) without any quantitative limits or barriers, and that under the bilateral assistance package, Pakistan has undertaken development projects in Afghanistan worth USD 500 million. He underscored that 'connectivity with Afghanistan is an important element on our agenda. Projects including Peshawar-Kabul motorway and Quetta-Kandahar Rail link are in the pipeline which would only come to fruition if an environment of peace and stability is achieved. Energy cooperation through projects like CASA-1000 and TAPI will bring huge dividends for Pakistan, Afghanistan and the region.'

Welcoming the distinguished scholars from Afghanistan, China, Iran, Russia, the United States and Pakistan, **Brig. (R) Sohail Tirmizi**, Acting President of the Institute said that converting Afghanistan into a Western styled democracy has failed because sustainable peace in the country is not possible without a political settlement. 'This requires that all those who are supposed to be at the negotiating table are there. Bringing parties in conflict to the negotiating table is not just Pakistan's responsibility. It is a difficult undertaking and will require patience and continued effort,' he said. Brig. Tirmizi also highlighted that central to Afghanistan's problems was chronic dependence on foreign aid, flourishing illegal parallel economies, drug trafficking, gender inequalities, poverty, illiteracy and radicalization of society. Any effort for peace in Afghanistan cannot succeed without simultaneous improvement in these social indicators, he concluded.

In his opening remarks, **Mr Kristof Duwaerts**, Resident Representative of Hanns Seidel warned that abridging notions such as 'Turban, Taliban, Terrorism' are hurtful and do not contribute to sustainable relationships. According to him, the bad public image of Pakistan in Afghanistan does not reflect the contributions and sacrifices which Pakistanis have made for their Afghan brethren. He argued that the number of common and shared challenges between Pakistan and Afghanistan have increased since 9/11 and the international troops' withdrawal. 'There is a huge constituency for understanding and dialogue in and between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Commonalities by far outweigh the few political topics. Those divergences should not keep down the relationship between two brotherly nations, and a wide scale dialogue must be started to address the outliers,' he recommended.

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In the first session on the 'Existing Situation in Afghanistan' chaired by Mr Inamul Haque, Former Foreign Minister, Government of Pakistan, **Dr Farhan Hanif Siddiqi** Associate Professor, School of Politics & International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University presented his paper on 'Regional Dynamics and Implications for Afghanistan' and discussed geopolitical and geo-economic trends. He stressed that Pakistan-centered geo-economic pursuits need to be translated into a regional game of playoffs where unit-level gains lead to regional prosperity; and geopolitical competition needs to be tempered through elimination or suspension before geo-economic gains can be concretely realized. Looking at Afghanistan's history, he said that if geo-political trends manifest themselves, Afghanistan will resemble a 'game without an end' but if geo-economic trends manifest themselves, the country can become a part of a regional

nexus of trade and development. He reflected that it is essential for Pakistan and Afghanistan to move beyond the immediate threatening issues to medium to longer term horizons which are conciliatory.

**Dr Attaullah Wahidyar**, Senior Policy and Program Advisor, Ministry of Education, Kabul, Afghanistan spoke candidly about the 'Ingress of Non-State Actors (NSA) in Afghanistan – Islamic State (ISIS) & Al-Qaeda'. He shared that NSA are the officially disowned subsidiaries of states who perform legitimate or illegitimate tasks which a state does not want to perform itself; and in doing so they often create mayhem and societal chaos. He said that while both internal factors like violent state policies, injustice, discrimination, over-ambition of state power, and external factors like the holes created by hegemonic rivalries, lack of confidence or mistrust between states, societies and individuals continue to feed and grow non-state actors, it is the external factors that have been responsible for their creation and workings in Afghanistan. In fact, even globally there is hardly any extremist NSA that does not have some kind of institutional or financial or moral support from someone, somewhere. While much damage has been done and is still going on due to the workings of these NSA, he called on the global, regional and local powers to look into symbiotic bonds of prosperity and opportunity. 'It is time for the world to look at Afghanistan as a 'connector' rather than as an 'insulator', and to stop the blame game, he urged.

**Maj. Gen. (R) Ijaz Hussain Awan**, HI (M), Former High Commissioner to Brunei Darussalam provided his insight on 'Effective Border Management between Afghanistan and Pakistan'. He was of the view that the Pak-Afghan border is described as the most volatile area because of the presence of terrorist safe havens and lax governmental control. Various forms of illegal activities such as smuggling of weapons, narcotics, vehicles, timber and electronic goods are routine matters between this border, he said. The Major General stressed that border management is an important issue for both countries as previously people living near border areas entered without any legal documents. 'Given its successful military operations in the border areas, Pakistan can ill-afford an open border with Afghanistan anymore', he cautioned. He said that while the United Nations has been deliberately kept out of the Afghan region, it needs to be included at the negotiating table if a peaceful settlement of Afghanistan is to be achieved. He shared that when borders between two countries are contested, military management is the answer but in case of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the situation is unique with a mix of both traditional tribal management as well as the Frontier Corps (FC) management. In this case, since the lines between freedom and control have remained blurred for so many years, a hybrid (military-administrative) model needs to be explored. He remarked that while raising the FC cadre, construction of more border posts and fencing in many places are now underway, much more needs to be done given Pakistan's pressing national security imperatives and in furtherance of the fulfillment of its international legal obligations to effectively counter terrorism.

In the second session on 'Structural Problems to the Security of Afghanistan: Review of Non-Traditional Challenges', chaired by Lt. General (R) Asif Yasin Malik, Former Defence Secretary, **Mr Sayed Mahdi Munadi**, Head of Research, Center for Strategic Studies (CSS),

Kabul, Afghanistan discussed three important aspects of the Afghan Unity Government in terms of security, governance and economic management. He discussed the various projects underway in Afghanistan and said that among all the important projects, TAPI is one of most important projects, followed by CASA 1000 and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan- Pakistan 500-KV which seeks to export year round power to both Afghanistan and Pakistan and is commissioned for completion by 2018. He was optimistic about the Belt and Road initiatives since the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor would facilitate connection between Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey and expand cultural and economic cooperation. 'These economic projects are crucial because they are changing the narrative from 'economy for security' to the narrative of 'security for the economy'. 'It is a mistake to put emphasis just on security for security'. However, one must remember that it is important to keep local communities on board even for large scale projects since such inclusiveness ensures that projects are protected by the local people as they offer jobs and economic security. He cautioned that while the Afghan Unity Government has brought important political parties to the table, the process of change is slow. The NUG is strengthening the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF)'s ability to counter insurgencies and is also in the process of consultations with ethnic communities. He recommended that for a peaceful Afghanistan, it is essential for major stakeholders to support economic initiatives multilaterally; convince local people to own and protect the economic initiatives; start to negotiate with the Taliban and others to save these initiatives. Only through economic security will the security dilemma of Afghanistan change for the better, he predicted.

Discussing 'Poppy Cultivation and Drug Trafficking: A Financial Resource of Terrorism', **Major General (R) Khawar Hanif**, HI (M), Former DG, Anti-Narcotics Force, Pakistan, shared that farm gate value of Afghan opium is USD 1 billion and the total value of poppy is USD 150, while the money coming back to Afghanistan is USD 10 billion. He emphasized that there is an urgent need to stop the inflow of drugs from Afghanistan to Pakistan; interdict drugs and precursors trafficking in order to stop their proliferation/ spread within the country. The speaker shared that financial resources of transnational terrorism include both legitimate sources like charities, ethnic communities, religious funding, endowments, diaspora donations and business enterprises; as well as illegal sources like drug, arms and diamonds trafficking, oil and human smuggling and the Hawala system. As a way forward, counter narcotic efforts should be delinked from geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economic competition. A stricter control on movement of controlled substances and timely and transparent intelligence sharing at international and regional level is needed, he recommended.

According to political analyst, **Mr Rahimullah Yusufzai**, the issue of IDPs and returning Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran are contributing to challenges of poverty and unemployment in Afghanistan. He was presenting his paper on 'Poverty, Unemployment and Illiteracy: State of Human Security in Afghanistan'. Poverty and unemployment rose after the withdrawal of foreign forces, and the growth rate is now down to 2 per cent from 10 per cent. While skilled jobs were created in large numbers due to the presence of foreign forces, there has been little international spending on agriculture which employs most poor Afghans, he lamented. While actual figures are either incorrect or inflated, nearly 42 per cent children are out of school in

Afghanistan, he said. 'What kind of leaders can such a ratio produce?' he asked. Jobless young Afghans could join the insurgency, resort to easily available drugs in a country that produces more than 90 per cent of the world's opium production, or embark on a risky journey in high seas to Europe, he warned. While there are improvements such as better school facilities and new enrollment of children which is gradually increasing the literacy level, progress is slow and time is of the essence if future generations of Afghans are to see a brighter, more peaceful and prosperous future.

Lt. General (R) Asif Yasin Malik, Former Defence Secretary, concluded the session by saying that the US created a strategic mess in Afghanistan. "We are witnessing a manifestation of 'controlled chaos' in Afghanistan that is prevailing almost in the entire region," he stated. Peace is not only necessary for Afghanistan but it is very much needed for the people of Pakistan as well. Sociopolitical development is the only solution for Afghanistan, which the Afghan people rightly deserve due to decades of war in the country.



## **Region's future lies in peaceful, stable Afghanistan: Sartaj Aziz**

May 10, 2017

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan: The Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz has reiterated that the future of the region lies in peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

“Pakistan remains committed to the goal of lasting peace in Afghanistan and the region,” the adviser said while addressing a Conference titled “Achieving Peace in Afghanistan: Challenges & Prospects” at Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) in Islamabad on Wednesday.

The adviser said that a peaceful prosperous Afghanistan is in Pakistan’s interest, and it believes that a politically negotiated settlement will be the most viable option for bringing lasting peace to Afghanistan.

Sartaj Aziz said that Pakistan has been making sincere efforts for facilitating talks between the Afghan government and Taliban.

“Our consistent and clear message to the Taliban has been that they must give up violence and join the peace process,” he said.

Talking about the Pak-Afghan border, the adviser said that Pakistan has been emphasizing the need for effective border management with Afghanistan, adding that it would prevent the movement of terrorists and miscreants and would help address the Afghan allegations regarding Tehreek-e-Taliban Afghanistan (TTA) and Haqqani networks presence in Pakistan.

Sartaj Aziz further said that Pakistan has also been stressing upon the Afghan government to take action against the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar (JuA) sanctuaries in Afghanistan who have been crossing through the porous border and launching terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

Moreover, he said that meaningful engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan is of key importance for peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region.

The adviser also underscored the importance of high-level visits and interactions between Pakistan and Afghanistan as streamlined under the rubric of bilateral cooperation mechanism agreed upon between the two sides in March for cooperation in diplomatic, military and intelligence fields with political oversight.

## Future of the region lies in peaceful and stable Afghanistan: Pak adviser

Islamabad, May 10, IRNA -- Pakistan's Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz reiterated that the future of the region lies in peaceful and stable Afghanistan and Pakistan remains committed to the goal of lasting peace in Afghanistan and the region.

He made the remarks while addressing a seminar "Achieving Peace in Afghanistan: Challenges & Prospects" in Islamabad on Wednesday.

He pointed out that the terrorist outfits have been crossing through the porous border and launching terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

He stressed upon Afghan government to take action against TTP (Tahrik-e-Taliban Pakistan) and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar sanctuaries.

He was of the view that lack of progress on peace process, emerging threat of Daesh, drug trafficking, the resettlement of returning refugees are some of the issues that have been making it difficult for Afghanistan to create a stable country.

'This situation is affecting not only Afghanistan's neighbors, but the entire region,' he said.

He noted that relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are also being affected due to these factors, despite our age-old bonds of common culture, heritage, traditions and religion.

'A peaceful prosperous Afghanistan is in our interest. We believe that a politically negotiated settlement will be the most viable option for bringing lasting peace to Afghanistan,' Sartaj Aziz added.

He said Pakistan extends transit trade facilities to Afghanistan through its ports under an Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) without any quantitative limits or barriers.

The diplomat noted for past four decades, Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghan refugees with dignity and honour.

# FIRSTPOST.

## Pakistan and Iran to set up Joint Border Commission to defuse tensions after reports of militants attack on Iranian posts

**World** PTI May, 11 2017 13:46:04 IST

[#Bordertensions](#)[#Hassan rouhani](#)[#Iran](#)[#Iranian guards](#)[#Nawaz sharif](#)[#Newstracker](#)[#Pakistan](#)[#Sartaj aziz](#)

**Islamabad:** Pakistan and Iran have set up a joint commission to ensure better border management, two days after Islamabad had summoned the Iranian envoy to express its concern over Tehran's assertion that it will hit terror "safe havens" in the neighbouring country.

Pakistan had summoned the Iranian ambassador on Tuesday to express its concern over Iran Army Chief's remarks that Tehran will hit "safe havens" of terrorists in Pakistan until Islamabad takes steps to stop militants from carrying out cross—border attacks.

The commission has been set up to ensure better border management, Sartaj Aziz said. PTI



The commission has been set up to ensure better border management, Pakistan Prime Minister's Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz had said on yesterday. Relations between the neighbours are tense due to the killing of Iranian border guards in a clash with militants.

Iran's state news agency *IRNA* on Tuesday quoted Major General Mohammed Baqeri as saying that "unless Pakistan controls the borders, arrests the terrorist and shuts down their bases, we will hit their safe havens and cells wherever they are".

Aziz, while giving details of the Joint Border Commission to the media said, "four members from each side will be its members and it will be functional soon".

He said that apart from militants, smugglers and other elements were also present along the Pakistan—Iran border.

Aziz also stated that a larger number of members of Jaish—e—Adl, a militant group responsible for the recent attack on Iranian guards, were present on the Iranian side of the border.

Published Date: May 11, 2017 01:46 pm | Updated Date: May 11, 2017 01:46 pm

## Pakistan accuses 'certain forces' of stalling Afghan peace process

Published May 10, 2017, 7:11 pm IST

Aziz said a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan is in our interest.

**Islamabad:** Pakistan on Wednesday accused "certain forces" of stalling Islamabad's efforts for political settlement in war-torn Afghanistan and appealed to the Afghan Taliban to shun violence and join the peace process.

Advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz issued the appeal to Taliban while addressing a conference on 'Achieving Peace in Afghanistan: Challenges & Prospects' organised by Islamabad Policy Research Institute, a think-tank.

He said Pakistan has been making sincere efforts for facilitating talks between the Afghan government and Taliban to achieve peace through talks. However, he accused "certain forces" who shot down efforts by Pakistan.

Aziz said "a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan is in our interest. We believe that a politically negotiated settlement will be the most viable option for bringing lasting peace to Afghanistan".

He said challenges in Afghanistan have multiplied since January, 2015, when the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) ended its combat mission and Afghan forces assumed direct security responsibilities.

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are low after a series of terrorist attacks in the two countries for which both sides blame each other.

"The lack of progress on peace process, emerging threat of Daesh (Islamic State), drugs trafficking, the resettlement of returning refugees are some of the issues that have been making it difficult for Afghanistan to create a stable country," he said.

He said relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were also being affected due to these factors, despite centuries-old bonds of common culture, heritage, traditions and religion.

He said terrorism was a major threat to regional and international peace. He claimed that Pakistan has been a victim of brutal terrorism.

He also talked about connectivity with Afghanistan and said that projects like Peshawar-Kabul motorway and Quetta-Kandahar Rail link were in pipeline but peace and stability was needed to complete them.

Islamabad has been under international pressure to try and bring Taliban leaders, who have been based in Pakistan since their rule in Afghanistan was overthrown in the 2001 US invasion, into some form of negotiations with Kabul.



## **Pak accuses 'certain forces' of stalling Afghan peace process in Afghan peace process**

**Wed, 10 May 2017-06:53pm , PTI**

Pakistan today accused "certain forces" of stalling Islamabad's efforts for political settlement in war-torn Afghanistan and appealed to the Afghan Taliban to shun violence and join the peace process.

Advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz issued the appeal to Taliban while addressing a conference on 'Achieving Peace in Afghanistan: Challenges & Prospects' organised by Islamabad Policy Research Institute a think-tank.

He said Pakistan has been making sincere efforts for facilitating talks between the Afghan government and Taliban to achieve peace through talks.

However, he accused "certain forces" who shot down efforts by Pakistan.

Aziz said "a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan is in our interest. We believe that a politically negotiated settlement will be the most viable option for bringing lasting peace to Afghanistan".

He said challenges in Afghanistan have multiplied since January, 2015, when the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) ended its combat mission and Afghan forces assumed direct security responsibilities.

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are low after a series of terrorist attacks in the two countries for which both sides blame each other.

"The lack of progress on peace process, emerging threat of Daesh (Islamic State), drugs trafficking, the resettlement of returning refugees are some of the issues that have been making it difficult for Afghanistan to create a stable country," he said.

He said relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were also being affected due to these factors, despite centuries- old bonds of common culture, heritage, traditions and religion.

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Islamabad has been under international pressure to try and bring Taliban leaders, who have been based in Pakistan since their rule in Afghanistan was overthrown in the 2001 US invasion, into some form of negotiations with Kabul.

## Sartaj Aziz accuses 'certain forces' of stalling Afghan peace process

**Published:** May 10, 2017, 7:11 pm IST

Aziz said Pak has been making sincere efforts for facilitating talks between the Afghan govt and Taliban to achieve peace through talks.

**Islamabad:** Pakistan on Wednesday accused "certain forces" of stalling Islamabad's efforts for political settlement in war-torn Afghanistan and appealed to the Afghan Taliban to shun violence and join the peace process.

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"The lack of progress on peace process, emerging threat of Daesh (Islamic State), drugs trafficking, the resettlement of returning refugees are some of the issues that have been making it difficult for Afghanistan to create a stable country," he said.

He said relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were also being affected due to these factors, despite centuries-old bonds of common culture, heritage, traditions and religion.

He said terrorism was a major threat to regional and international peace. He claimed that Pakistan has been a victim of brutal terrorism.

He also talked about connectivity with Afghanistan and said that projects like Peshawar-Kabul motorway and Quetta-Kandahar Rail link were in pipeline but peace and stability was needed to complete them. Islamabad has been under international pressure to try and bring Taliban leaders, who have been based in Pakistan since their rule in Afghanistan was overthrown in the 2001 US invasion, into some form of negotiations with Kabul.



## **Pak accuses 'certain forces' of stalling Afghan peace process**

**From Sajjad Hussain**

**Islamabad, May 10 (PTI)** Pakistan today accused "certain forces" of stalling Islamabad's efforts for political settlement in war-torn Afghanistan and appealed to the Afghan Taliban to shun violence and join the peace process. Advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz issued the appeal to Taliban while addressing a conference on 'Achieving Peace in Afghanistan: Challenges & Prospects' organised by Islamabad Policy Research Institut a think-tank.

He said Pakistan has been making sincere efforts for facilitating talks between the Afghan government and Taliban to achieve peace through talks.

However, he accused "certain forces" who shot down efforts by Pakistan. Aziz said "a peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan is in our interest. We believe that a politically negotiated settlement will be the most viable option for bringing lasting peace to Afghanistan".

He said challenges in Afghanistan have multiplied since January, 2015, when the NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) ended its combat mission and Afghan forces assumed direct security responsibilities. Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are low after a series of terrorist attacks in the two countries for which both sides blame each other.

"The lack of progress on peace process, emerging threat of Daesh (Islamic State), drugs trafficking, the resettlement of returning refugees are some of the issues that have been making it difficult for Afghanistan to create a stable country," he said. He said relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan were also being affected due to these factors, despite centuries- old bonds of common culture, heritage, traditions and religion.

He said terrorism was a major threat to regional and international peace. He claimed that Pakistan has been a victim of brutal terrorism. He also talked about connectivity with Afghanistan and said that projects like Peshawar-Kabul motorway and Quetta- Kandahar Rail link were in pipeline but peace and stability was needed to complete them.

Islamabad has been under international pressure to try and bring Taliban leaders, who have been based in Pakistan since their rule in Afghanistan was overthrown in the 2001 US invasion, into some form of negotiations with Kabul.



## Sartaj Aziz Says Pakistan To ‘Tighten Border Management’

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Addressing a conference in Islamabad, the foreign affairs adviser said insecurity in Afghanistan was affecting the entire region



**Foreign Affairs adviser to the Pakistani prime minister, Sartaj Aziz, said on Wednesday that Islamabad needs to tighten up on border management with Afghanistan so as to “prevent the movement of terrorists and miscreants.”**

He said challenges in Afghanistan have multiplied since January 2015 and that the deteriorating security situation is affecting the entire region.

Addressing a conference in Islamabad, organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) in collaboration with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), and entitled "Achieving Peace in Afghanistan: Challenges & Prospects", Aziz said: “The persistent conflict and the failure of military strategy to bring peace has taken a heavy toll on both Afghan security forces and the civilians.

“The lack of progress on peace process, emerging threat of Daesh, drugs trafficking, the resettlement of returning refugees are some of the issues that have been making it difficult for Afghanistan to create a stable country. This situation is affecting not only Afghanistan's neighbors but the entire region,” he said.

He said that these issues were also affecting relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan “despite our centuries old bonds of common culture, heritage, traditions and religion.”

Aziz stated that a peaceful prosperous Afghanistan was in Pakistan's interest and that they believed a politically negotiated settlement was the most viable option for bringing lasting peace to Afghanistan.

“Towards this end, Pakistan has been making sincere efforts for facilitating talks between the Afghan government and Taliban. Our consistent and clear message to the Taliban has been that they must give up violence and join the peace process. Our efforts led to Murree talks in July, 2015 and the setting up of Quadrilateral Coordination Group (QCG) in December, 2015. However, both times the process was undermined by forces who were against reconciliation.”

He said that terrorism was a major threat to regional and international peace and that Pakistan had also suffered at the hands of terrorism over the past few years but that achievements have been made in their efforts to eliminate terrorist organizations from around the country.

“The tribal areas particularly North Waziristan have been cleared. Any remnants of the dismantled groups are now being targeted through Operation Rad-ul-Fasad. Our success in counter-terrorism has been recognized by U.S Congressional leaders and military commanders who visited the Pakistan-Afghanistan border including North Waziristan.”

He said that in line with this, Pakistan needs to ramp up border management with Afghanistan.

According to him the aim of this is to prevent the movement of terrorists.

“This would prevent the movement of terrorists and miscreants and would help address the Afghan allegations regarding TTA (Tehrik-i-Taliban Afghanistan) and Haqqani networks presence in Pakistan. We have also been stressing upon the Afghan government to take action against the TTP (Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan) and JuA (Jamaat-ur-Ahrar) sanctuaries in Afghanistan who have been crossing through the porous border and launching terrorist attacks in Pakistan.”

Meaningful engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan was of key importance to Islamabad, he said adding that in recent weeks a number of high-profile delegations have visited Kabul as part of efforts to strengthen engagement between the two neighbors.

He also outlined the assistance Pakistan has provided to Afghanistan including transit trade facilities through its ports under the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), the housing of refugees and development projects Islamabad has undertaken in Afghanistan.

“I would also like to highlight that connectivity with Afghanistan is an important element on our agenda. Exploitation of Afghanistan's vast mineral resources need rail-road connectivity between Afghanistan and Pakistan so that the transportation of the extracted minerals to the outer world could be realized.

“Projects including Peshawar-Kabul motorway and Quetta-Kandahar Rail link are in (the) pipeline which would only come to fruition if an environment of peace and stability is achieved. Moreover, energy cooperation through projects like CASA-1000 and TAPI will bring huge dividends for Pakistan, Afghanistan and the region,” he said.

In conclusion, Aziz stated that “the future of the region lies in peaceful and stable Afghanistan. Pakistan remains committed to the goal of lasting peace in Afghanistan and the region.”

## Sartaj Aziz: Peaceful and stable Afghanistan, to the region beneficial



11 May 2017

Future of the region lies in peaceful and stable Afghanistan and Pakistan remains committed to the goal of lasting peace in Afghanistan and the region said Sartaj Aziz, the Pakistan's Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs.

Addressing a seminar "Achieving Peace in Afghanistan: Challenges & Prospects" in Islamabad, he pointed out that the terrorist outfits have been crossing through the porous border and launching terrorist attacks in Pakistan.

He stressed upon Afghan government to take action against TTP (Tahrik-e-Taliban Pakistan) and Jamaat-ul-Ahrar sanctuaries.

He was of the view that lack of progress on peace process, emerging threat of Daesh, drug trafficking, the resettlement of returning refugees are some of the issues that have been making it difficult for Afghanistan to create a stable country.

‘This situation is affecting not only Afghanistan’s neighbors, but the entire region,’ he said.

He noted that relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are also being affected due to these factors, despite our age-old bonds of common culture, heritage, traditions and religion.

‘A peaceful prosperous Afghanistan is in our interest. We believe that a politically negotiated settlement will be the most viable option for bringing lasting peace to Afghanistan,’ Sartaj Aziz added.

He said Pakistan extends transit trade facilities to Afghanistan through its ports under an Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) without any quantitative limits or barriers.