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## Special Webinar

### The Contrast: Indian Hegemonistic Policies in South Asia and Pakistan's Quest for Regional Peace and Stability



The Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) organized a webinar titled *The Contrast: Indian Hegemonistic Policies in South Asia and Pakistan's Quest for Regional Peace and Stability* on 11 August 2020. **Senator Sherry Rehman** delivered the Keynote Address; **Ambassador (R) Ashraf Jehangir Qazi** spoke on 'India's Illegal Occupation in Kashmir: One Year after 5 August and Implications for Regional Peace', and **Dr Liu Zongyi** spoke on 'India's Border Conflicts with China and Nepal: Prognosis for Peace and Security'. **Brig. (R) Raashid Wali Janjua**, SI(M), Acting President and Director Research, IPRI, presented the Welcome Address.

The speakers pointed out that it is important that the world take notice of the contrast between India as a regional hegemon; and Pakistan as a peace-seeking nation. India has continuously disturbed the peace and stability of South Asia, and faces problems with every neighbour, be it the border spats with China in Ladakh or with Nepal in the Lipulekh Pass area. With the illegal annexation of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as cross-border air attacks on the Line of Control (LoC) and arms build-up, India has ratcheted up tensions with Pakistan and disturbed the delicate strategic arms balance. By pursuing a xenophobically exclusivist

*Hindutva*-driven ideology, India has also marginalized its own minorities through the discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC). India is no longer a state that upholds its Nehruvian legacy of secular nationalism. A cultural apartheid is unfolding in IIOJ&K by alteration of the demography and the new domicile law. Pakistan has put forward sincere peace overtures, while India has thwarted all attempts at peace.

According to the panel, India's internal and external policies define three aspects of the *Hindutva* ideology that are impacting its policies and bringing about a new normal in South Asia. First, *Hindutva* has become more and more dominant at a time when India has been trying to present itself as a modern and economically sound state. Second, the *Hindutva* ideology is providing a political-based narrative to define New Delhi's domestic security policy and justify an aggressive foreign policy. Third, this new narrative has shifted from political pragmatism to an overly ideological commitment. With the help of a hypersensitive media, Prime Minister Modi has effectively used the ideology to justify India's posturing and narrative. The plan to strip the Muslim identity of the Kashmiris with the abrogation of Article 370 has given the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) a distinct Hindu and

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nationalist identity. The CAA is a clear symbol to build a new India, exclusively for Hindus.

The panelists lamented that Prime Minister Modi has escaped moral censure, both by Muslim countries and India's principle ally, the United States (US). The discussion also sought to understand the US' open-armed embrace of India despite its myopic foreign policy and security imperatives. It was felt that this has occurred firstly, by virtue of Modi and Trump's shared yet dangerous populism; secondly, structural realities like the strength of India's diaspora and the fact that it remains one of the largest defense purchasers in the world.

The experts warned that the US and India will continue to be wary of China. Of particular concern is how the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) may enable Beijing to become a two-ocean power. The recent inability of India to react militarily to the Galwan valley crisis along with China's masterstroke of including Iran into BRI has battered the efficacy of Modi's external goals.

***India's quest for hegemony is not a new phenomenon. However, it has become more fortified due to the overt diplomatic and material support it has received from the US.***

On Jammu & Kashmir, it was highlighted that India's decision to abrogate Article 370 and annex the territory has been New Delhi's final solution to eliminate Kashmir as a political entity and reduce its Muslim majority to a minority.

It was also argued that Pakistan's decision to declare 5 August as 'Youm-e-Estehsal'; renaming the Kashmir Highway as Srinagar Highway and re-issuing maps, are only symbolic and far more needs to be done.

On the recent China-India conflict, speakers outlined that it was largely a result of India's misdirected domestic political processes and Hindu nationalism. The Galwan valley is an important strategic transportation route, but one that falls primarily in the Chinese area along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Therefore, Beijing had to employ countermeasures. India's massive infrastructure development, along with the mechanization and modernization of its armed forces has led to its forces becoming more aggressive along the

LAC. By contrast, China has adhered to confidence building measures and does not hold an aggressive military stance.

***China is and would be resolute in protecting its territorial sovereignty.***

It was also pointed out that the Chinese media provided muted coverage of the Galwan valley crisis so that the situation would not escalate. On the question of prospects of a dialogue between India, China and Pakistan, it was felt that this would be a difficult proposition for India to accept due to the COVID-19 crisis and its deteriorating relations with both countries.

### Recommendations

1. There is a need for consistent and coherent advocacy on the Kashmir cause after evolving national consensus through a 'Grand National Dialogue'. It is important to maintain political unity within Pakistan on this territorial dispute.
2. Lawfare options should be exercised by making a 'Comprehensive Lawfare Strategy' at the national level.
3. A long-term policy including moral, material and legal response should be consistently applied. International Humanitarian Law should also be employed as an instrument of foreign policy by strengthening the Foreign Office's legal acumen.
4. Pakistan must liaise closely with other nations of South Asia, especially Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and the Maldives to resist India's hegemony. Frequent interaction at the highest political level would be needed to create the necessary goodwill and thwart Indian machination to isolate Pakistan.
5. Pakistan should use the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as a platform to reflect its quest for regional stability, continue to participate in the organization's activities; and raise awareness about the plight of the people of IIOJ&K as well as the minorities of India.

## Panel Discussion

### A Year after Annexation:

## Challenges to Restoring Peace and Autonomy in Indian Occupied Kashmir

IPRI organized a Panel Discussion titled *A Year after Annexation: Challenges to Restoring Peace and Autonomy in Indian Occupied Kashmir* on 4 August 2020.



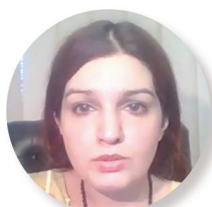
**Brig. (R) Raashid Wali Janjua, SI(M)**, Acting President and Director Research, IPRI, formally launched *The Paradise under Siege. A Tale of Unremitting Atrocities in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir* from

IPRI's platform. The book is a fact-based pictorial primer on Indian atrocities and repression in Jammu and Kashmir. Brig. Janjua highlighted that annexation and illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir on 5 August 2019 has set in motion a chain of events that have exposed the evil face of Indian expansionism in the region.



Discussing India's evolving strategic imperatives in Kashmir, **Lt. Gen. (R) Naeem Khalid Lodhi**, former Secretary Defence, lauded the government's successful internationalization of the dispute but cautioned that Pakistan's

sole reliance on diplomacy will not yield results. 'It is important to formulate a multidimensional strategy utilizing diplomacy, lawfare, and military option,' he said. Lt. Gen. Lodhi was of the view that Pakistan should abrogate the Simla Agreement as India has only used it to delay meaningful negotiation and engagement.



Speaking on 'The State of Internal Resistance: Humanitarian and Security Challenges', **Ms Mushaal Mullick**, Chairperson, Peace and Cultural Organisation, discussed India's move to grant domiciles to

500,000 non-Kashmiris to change the demographic status of the occupied territory. She suggested that since Kashmir-based leadership is being unlawfully detained, Kashmiri diaspora should establish a 'Jammu and Kashmir Government in Exile' that engages with the UNSC, International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC).

She recommended that the Kashmir Committee should be headed by a Kashmiri.



**Mr Jamal Aziz**, Executive Director, Research Society of International Law (RSIL), highlighted that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir is tense, but the international community remains silent proving that principles of

justice can be ignored due to geostrategic interests. He argued that introduction of Articles 370 and 35-A was a constitutional step to give special status to the occupied territory. When it was felt that the special status was not serving India's interests, it was scrapped unilaterally.

Mr Aziz observed that Pakistan's policy on Kashmir is reactive and the state has not been able to effectively respond to India's aggression on legal and diplomatic fronts due to which New Delhi has justified its unlawful acts by twisting legal definitions. He recommended that Pakistan needs to proactively project legal aspects of the Kashmir dispute at international forums.

### Recommendations

1. The Foreign Office should establish a legal cell in order to confront India proactively through lawfare.
2. Exchange of nuclear threats by India during the Pulwama-Balakot 2019 crisis gives enough leverage to Pakistan to advocate its case under the UN Trusteeship Council.
3. There is a need for a new UNSC Resolution directing India to halt its actions of changing IIOJ&K's demography.
4. Pakistan should ask the UN to hold a partial plebiscite in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir under its auspices.
5. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) should devise a policy under which consistent prime time is devoted to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.
6. A record of Indian atrocities should be meticulously documented. Such a record can strengthen Pakistan's lawfare initiatives at the UN and other multilateral fora.

## IPRI Scholars' Opinion Articles

### **Brig. (R) Raashid Wali Janjua** Director Research

1. "Kashmir - The Way Ahead"  
*Daily Times*
2. "A Tale of Two Cities"  
*Daily Times*
3. "Rise in Indian Nationalism Obstacle for Regional Peace"  
*The Brussels Times*
4. "Kashmir: A Wound That Won't Heal"  
*The Muslim Times*

### **Ambassador (R) Asif Durrani** Senior Research Fellow

1. "UAE's Decision: A Wakeup Call or Ground Reality?"
2. "Kashmir: Did Nehru Plead for 'Forced Marriages'?"
3. "Intra-Afghan Dialogue and Pitfalls Ahead"  
*Daily Times*

### **Khalid Chandio** Research Fellow

"The Largest Prison in the World"  
*Global News Pakistan*

### **Muhammad Nawaz Khan** Research Officer

"Double Whammy of Nested Lockdowns"  
*Daily Times*

### **Gulshan Bibi** Assistant Research Officer

"The Roar of the Lambs"  
*Geopolitica*

### **Adeel Mukhtar Mirza** Assistant Research Officer

1. "Lying in Between"  
*Geopolitica*
2. "Kashmiri's Pakistan Resolve"  
*Global News Pakistan*
3. "An Undependable Ally"
4. "This is Pakistan"
5. "Plight of Kashmiri Students in Kyrgyzstan"  
*Modern Diplomacy*

### **Hamzah Rifaat Hussain** Assistant Research Officer

1. "Why Washington's Arms Embargo Extension on Iran at the UNSC is Muddled with Trouble"  
*Daily Times*
2. "Why Germany Should Avoid the American Route"
3. "German and French Withdrawal Leaves U.S. Isolated on WHO Reforms"
4. "Afghanistan's Lingering Quagmire, Has the Trump Formula Worked?"
5. "After 73 Years of Independence, Pakistan's Relationship with China Remains Unbreakable"
6. "U.S. Binary Approaches Risk Igniting a Tinderbox in the Middle East"
7. "Sri Lanka-China Ties to Improve Further with the Rajapaksas in Power"
8. "Why Citing China as a Security Threat in the Middle East is Delusional"  
*China Global Television Network (CGTN)*

### **Usama Nizamani** Junior Consultant

"Why Proclaiming the Kashmiri Identity is Important"  
*The Nation*

### **Zeeshan Javed** Junior Consultant

1. "The Arrival of the Rafale and India's False Bravado"  
*Strafasia*
2. "Do We Not Bleed?"  
*Daily Times*

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### Policy Beats



IPRI scholars discussed Pakistan's achievements and the challenges it faces in a fast changing world in a special episode focused on Pakistan's 73<sup>rd</sup> Independence Day.

### IPRI on Television



**Brig. (R) Raashid Wali Janjua**, Acting President and Director Research, IPRI, was part of the 'Youm-e-Istehsal' Kashmir Live Transmission on **PTV News** on 5 August 2020.

**Ambassador (R) Asif Durrani**, Senior Research Fellow, IPRI, was part of 11 panel discussions during the month of August, appearing on various local news channels.