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PRESS COVERAGE

Two-Day International Conference (14-15 November 2017) Regional Dynamics and Strategic Concerns in South Asia November 15, 2017



International conference on ‘Regional Dynamics and Strategic Concerns in South Asia’ held

November 15, 2017

ISLAMABAD, Nov 15 (APP): The armed confrontation in Afghanistan which, despite the efforts of the country’s central government and external forces supporting it (including SCO members) remains the main destabilizing factor in South Asia. This was stated by Mr Vladimir Potapenko, Deputy Secretary-General, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) at the second day of the international conference organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute and the Hanns Seidel Foundation here Wednesday. Addressing the session on ‘Strategic Situation in Afghanistan and its Regional Implications’, he said that the SCO member states are interested in Afghanistan as a peaceful and neutral country that respects and observes human rights and freedoms and maintaining friendly relations with its neighbors. Outlining SCO’s vision, Mr Potapenko, highlighted that the Astana declaration resolutely supported the efforts of the Government and the people of Afghanistan aimed at asserting a peaceful and stable state free of terrorism, extremism and illegal drug trafficking based on the United Nations’ central

coordinating role in international efforts to stabilize the country and ensure its development.

Sharing Pakistan's concerns on India's influence in Afghanistan, Ambassador (R) Rustam Shah Mohmand said that the ongoing conflict has multidimensional implications for the former – from a stabilized border to acts of terrorism; decrease in the volume of bilateral trade to the plight of both refugees and returnees. He opined that 'ignoring the cost of not inviting attention to the root cause of the insurgency and the continuance of a conflict that has robbed the region of huge economic opportunities, Islamabad has instead remained preoccupied with India's role in the West Asian country, and not formulated a robust approach for peace-making in Afghanistan.'

Dr. Attaullah Wahidyar, Senior Advisor from the Ministry of Education, Kabul was of the view that Daesh, Islamic State or ISIS are all part of the same 'terrorism industry'. However, he felt that while the entire globe hosts such agar plates like the Islamic State of Iraq, Asia in general and central Asia specifically seems to be more generous where ISIS has over 8000 recruits.

Ambassador (R) Mohammad Sadiq, Former National Security Secretary and Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan said that while the stalemate in Afghanistan is not going to end soon, there are clear ethnic fault-lines which the Taliban cannot cross. 'No one knows what the US policy in Afghanistan will be under the Trump administration but there is no likelihood of a permanent pullout of America from the region. He stressed that Pakistan should not object to India's economic assistance to Afghanistan, rather Pakistan, should also offer the same.

Prof. Dr Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Dean, Faculty of Contemporary Sciences, National Defence University said that in the aftermath of the cold-blooded murder of Burhan Muzaffar Wani, a wave of carnage has been unleashed by India across the occupied Valley. According to him, the US's ever increasing cooperation with India and its lukewarm response to Islamabad's call, is yet another factor, which encourages New Delhi to adopt an offensive behavior towards Pakistan.

Dr. Christian Wagner, Senior Fellow from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Germany was of the view that while South Asia is still one of the most conflict-prone regions in the world, the role of global powers in building a cooperative security order here will remain limited. 'Global powers pursue their own strategic interests which are not necessarily in accordance with regional powers.

Mr Omer Ali, Programme Coordinator of HSF said that their mandate is informed by the very particular German experience which is to break through traditional perspectives and at times apply innovative, previously unthinkable approaches with regards to formulating policies.

Ambassador (R) Abdul Basit, President, IPRI was optimistic that the deliberations which emerged out of the conference had the potential to chalk out future trajectories for Pakistan's

foreign policy in a highly dynamic geographic and strategic environment. The Kashmir issue remains the core bone of contention between Pakistan and India – peace in the region is dependent on its amicable and just resolution, he concluded.

APP/saima/anm



Stability in Afghanistan key to promote regional integration, trade: Speakers

November 15, 2017

ISLAMABAD, Nov 15 (APP): A group of eminent speakers during a conference here on Wednesday emphasised that stability in Afghanistan would be key in promoting regional integration and trade and for carrying out energy projects across boundaries.

Speaking at an international conference on “Regional Dynamics and Strategic Concerns in South Asia”, former ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan Rustom Shah Mohmand said ongoing conflict in Afghanistan had multidimensional implications for the countries in the region including Pakistan.

The conference was organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) in collaboration with Hanns Seidel Foundation.

Rustom Shah said instability in Afghanistan would jeopardise regional energy projects, affect trade on different routes and would obstruct smooth execution of work on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Rustom said concerted and relentless efforts were needed to keep stability in Afghanistan as continuing violence had robbed the region of immense economic opportunities.

The former envoy said Pakistan would benefit the most if there was stability and calm in Afghanistan and in the same way it would suffer the most if conflict continued in the country. He said India had investment of \$ two billion in various projects in Afghanistan which increased

its influence in the country.

Afghanistan wanted that it should be treated as a sovereign country, which decided on its own what kind of relations it would have with other countries in the region, he noted.

He said however, Afghan soil should never be used for creating trouble in neighbouring countries.

Deputy Secretary General Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Vladimir Potapenko said SCO member states wanted Afghanistan to be peaceful and stable and as a country which respected human rights and freedoms and maintained friendly relations with its neighbours.

He said the Astana declaration resolutely supported the efforts of the government and the people of Afghanistan aimed at creating a peaceful and stable state, free of terrorism, extremism and illegal drug trafficking.

Dr Attaullah, Wahidiyar, Senior Advisor, Ministry of Education, Government of Afghanistan in his presentation stressed that only regional cooperation would result in sustainable security.

He said better relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan would pave the way for a more secure and prosperous region.

He said Pakistan had concerns about India's interest in Afghanistan, which wanted good relations with all neighbouring countries.

He said there was no chance of exploitation of mineral resources of Afghanistan unless normalcy returned to the country.

Former National Security Secretary and former ambassador Mohammad Sadiq said there was a war going on in Afghanistan and it was a stalemate between the forces in conflict.

He opined that the government in Afghanistan would not collapse, adding lack of unity in the Afghan government was one of the reasons that the country could not achieve peace.

Former Secretary Defence and member Advisory Board of the Center for Strategic and Contemporary Research (CSCR) Lt Gen (R) Naeem Khalid Lodhi said countries in the region should be talking to each other to resolve issues as maintaining status quo was not the way to overcome problems.

Professor Dr Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Dean Faculty of Contemporary Sciences, National Defence University Islamabad discussed in detail the genesis of the Kashmir dispute.

He said the imperative of regional peace could not be achieved without resolving the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

He said Kashmir dispute could not be resolved as India was refusing to come to the

negotiating table.

Dr Christian Wagner, Senior Fellow, Asia Division, German Institute for International Security Affairs, described in detail the role of global powers in building cooperative security order in South Asia.

He said United Nations, United States, China, Russia and some other countries at different times played a role in shaping South Asia and mediating conflicts between the countries like India and Pakistan.

He said South Asia was afflicted with the problems of terrorism and instability and the countries needed to build consensus for long term solution of issues.



Armed confrontation in Afghanistan is main destabilising factor in South Asia

Islamabad :The armed confrontation in Afghanistan which despite the efforts of the country's central government and external forces supporting it including SCO members remains the main destabilising factor in South Asia.

This was stated by Vladimir Potapenko, deputy secretary-general, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) at the second day of the international conference 'Regional Dynamics and Strategic Concerns in South Asia' organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and the Hanns Seidel Foundation here.

Addressing the session on 'Strategic Situation in Afghanistan and its Regional implications' Vladimir Potapenko said that the SCO member's states are interested in Afghanistan, as a peaceful and neutral country that respects and observes human rights and freedoms, and maintaining friendly relation with its neighbours.

He said that Astana declaration resolutely supported the efforts of terrorism, extremism and illegal drug trafficking based in United National central coordinating role in international efforts to stabilize the country and ensure its development.

He said SCO members take an active part in a number of important international and regional projects that that also involves Afghanistan. However the presence of Islamic State (ISIS) militants in Afghanistan many of whom are originally rooted from SECO member states causes additional concern.

“The return of militants who fought on the side of international terrorist’s organizations to their home countries can add to regional instability,” he warned. Ambassador (r) Rustam Shah Mohmand former ambassador to Afghanistan said that the ongoing conflict has multidimensional implications from the former from a stabilized border to acts of terrorism, decrease in the volume of bilateral trade to the plight of both refugees and returnees.

He said that ignoring the cost of not inviting attention to the root cause of the insurgency and the continuance of conflict that has robbed the region of huge economic opportunities, Islamabad has instead remained preoccupied with India’s role in the West Asian country, and not formulated a robust approach for peace-making in Afghanistan.

Senior Adviser from Ministry of Education, Kabul Dr Attaullah Wahidyar said that Daesh, Islamic State or ISIS are all part of the same terrorism industry. Asia in general and central Asia specifically seems to be a more generous where ISIS has over 8000 recruits. “IS is focusing on conquering weak states and weakening strong states and to address this challenges a two dimensional approach is needed- reform in social architecture of societies and popular Muslim scholarships needs to come forward and reinforce the true message of Islam by calcifying the true meaning of Jihad.

He said we as nation states need to recognise that shared security is more secure than ensured security. “Investment in violent non-state actors for achieving state objectives has historically failed and any state which pursues such policies will suffer sooner or later,” he added.

Ambassador (r) Mohammad Sadiq, former National Security Secretary and Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan said that while the stalemate in Afghanistan is not going to end soon, there are clear ethnic fault-lines which the Taliban cannot cross.

“No one knows what the US policy in Afghanistan will be under the Trump administration but there is no likelihood of permanent pullout of America from the region,” he added. Dean Faculty of Contemporary Sciences, National Defence University Professor Dr Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema provided comprehensive overview of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Afghan armed confrontation termed as core destabilizing factor in South Asia

Int'l Conference: Regional Dynamics and Strategic Concerns in South Asia

Mohammad Arshad

Deputy Secretary-General, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Vladimir Potapenko, Wednesday, said that the armed confrontation in Afghanistan remained the main destabilizing factor in South Asia. SCO member states are interested in Afghanistan as a peaceful and neutral country that respects and observes human rights and freedoms, and maintaining friendly relations with its neighbors.

While addressing international conference on Regional Dynamic and Strategic Concerns in South Asia, he highlighted that the Astana declaration resolutely supported the efforts of the Government and the people of Afghanistan aimed at asserting a peaceful and stable state free of terrorism, extremism and illegal drug trafficking based on the United Nations' central coordinating role in international efforts to stabilize the country and ensure its development. He observed that Kabul was being provided wide-scale assistance in areas as defense, law enforcement, transport development, energy, anti-drug operations, training national experts, etc., both on bilateral and multilateral bases. The SCO members take an active part in a number of important international regional projects that also involve Afghanistan.

Sharing Pakistan's concerns on India's influence in Afghanistan, Ambassador (R) Rustam Shah Mohmand, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan, said that the ongoing conflict has multidimensional implications for the former – from a stabilized border to acts of terrorism; decrease in the volume of bilateral trade to the plight of both refugees and returnees.

Dr. Attaullah Wahidyar, Senior Advisor from the Ministry of Education, Kabul, discussing the ingress of non-state actors in South Asia was of the view that Daesh, Islamic State or ISIS are all part of the same 'terrorism industry'. However, he felt that while the entire globe hosts such agar

plates like the Islamic State of Iraq, Asia in general and central Asia specifically seems to be more generous where ISIS has over 8000 recruits.

Ambassador (R) Mohammad Sadiq, Former National Security Secretary and Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan, Government of Pakistan, while chairing the session “Strategic Situation in Afghanistan and its Regional Implications” said that while the stalemate in Afghanistan is not going to end soon, there are clear ethnic fault-lines which the Taliban cannot cross.

Professor Dr Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Dean, Faculty of Contemporary Sciences, National Defence University provided a comprehensive overview of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and said that in the aftermath of the cold-blooded murder of Burhan Muzaffar Wani, a wave of carnage has been unleashed by India across the occupied Valley. In his concluding Vote of Thanks, Ambassador (R) Abdul Basit, President, IPRI was optimistic that the deliberations which emerged out of the conference had the potential to chalk out future trajectories for Pakistan’s foreign policy in a highly dynamic geographic and strategic environment. ‘The Kashmir issue remains the core bone of contention between Pakistan and India – peace in the region is dependent on its amicable and just resolution.

Pakistan OBSERVER

Indian funding to sabotage CPEC

Dr Muhammad Khan

INDIAN opposition of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has never been a secret. However, how much India is spending to sabotage the project was not known to many in Pakistan. The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), General Zubair Mahmood Hayat revealed in a seminar that, “India has set aside Rs55 billion against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).” The General was speaking at an international conference, entitled, “Regional Dynamics and Strategic Concerns in South Asia” which was organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI). This is a huge venture; a country like India is investing against a project which will be beneficial for all regional states of Asia, upon its

completion. India was invited by both Pakistan and China to be part of this project but, owing to its traditional anti-China and anti-Pakistan stance in the region it has decided to oppose it to the level of its disruption.

Analysing the cynical Indian role towards resolution of bilateral issues and the core issue of Kashmir, there is a greater realization that, South Asia may get into a conflict with horrifying results. This is primarily because of nuclear dimension of any future conflict in this part of the world. Therefore, sooner India and Pakistan come to the resolution of Kashmir issue, better it would be for the regional peace and stability. In case of any conflict, India being the major population centre will be at a disadvantage. The General also emphasized on a positive role of United States and China, which otherwise are influencing the geo-strategic direction of the region. Since China and Pakistan are cooperating towards building of a communication network in this region, therefore India is trying to build its own nexuses with extra-regional powers to neutralize the development, rather accruing the benefits. Traditionally, these extra regional powers had their strategic and economic interest in South Asia.

As part of Chinese 'One Belt, One Road' strategy, the CPEC, once fully constructed would integrate India, Afghanistan, Central Asia and West Asia. Through India, other states of South Asia will be direct and indirect beneficiary of the CPEC. The economies of these countries would be connected to the other region of Asia and even with the global economy. This fact is very much known to India, but, its enmity and rivalry with Pakistan and China is the main factor, where it opposes the concept of CPEC. Indeed, this project (CPEC) is not a new concept, rather a continuation and expansion of the Karakorum Highway (KKH), constructed in 1960s/70s jointly by Pakistan and China through difficult and very high altitude terrain. It is the same KKH which will be expanded to the level of corridor; the CPEC. The people of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) has the right to develop and economically grow and CPEC will further enhance the opportunities for the economic and socio-political development of these people. Why should, India oppose development of a community and area, just for the reason that, it has illegally occupied a major portion of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the IOK.

On a number of occasions, Pakistan provided evidence to US about Indian RAW's linkages with the TTP and Balochistan sub-nationalists. In 2015, Indian political leadership came under serious criticism from US team over the confessions of Ajit Doval of funding and utilizing TTP terrorists to destabilize Pakistan and Modi was asked to tame Doval and Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). Modi was told to end India's patronization of Mulla Fazalullah in Afghanistan and made it clear to Modi and his team that the US was about to place Mulla Fazalullah on list of global

terrorists.

The current wave of terrorism under the RAW is aimed at sabotaging the economic development of Pakistan, through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). In many ways, the CPEC offers a panacea to most of its problems, facing the state and society of Pakistan at economic, social and political level. Pakistan has authentic evidence of the involvement of RAW in the terrorism activities in Pakistan. CJCSC also said that, “RAW established a new cell with a special allocation of over \$500 million in 2015 to sabotage CPEC projects [in Pakistan]. India’s indirect interference in Pakistan is manifested in sponsoring Tehreek-i-Taliban-Pakistan, Baloch and other sub-nationalist outfits and many other terrorist groups. Besides, “India has set up a Balochistan operational cell under RAW to devise a radical force for subversion and terrorist activities in the province. At national level, there is a need of national integrity and cohesion besides strict vigilance against the Indian sabotaging strategy of CPEC.

Pakistan OBSERVER

Indian plot against CPEC to bite dust

CHAIRMAN Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Gen Zubair Mehmood Hayat, while addressing a conference in the Capital on Tuesday highlighted the threats faced by the country and the region at the hands of India, which is resorting to extreme steps to establish its hegemony in the region. He specifically mentioned that RAW has established a special cell and spending \$ 500m to sabotage the multi billion dollars China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project.

In fact the conspiracies that India is hatching to destabilise Pakistan and undermine the CPEC are not new but an open secret now. Whatever Gen Zubair said in the conference is not rhetoric but something that is based on genuine facts and evidence. The very confessional statements of Kulbushan Jhadav and the former spokesperson of TTP Ehsanullah Ehsan are sufficient to prove what kind of ugly game India is playing in the region. The plan is undoubtedly being executed from the consulates that New Delhi has established in Afghanistan where it has developed nexus with NDS and different terrorist outfits to perpetrate acts of terror in Pakistan. Quite recently, we saw a couple of terrorist attacks in Balochistan in which a senior police officer also embraced martyrdom. On the one hand, RAW is using a mammoth amount to finance terror in Pakistan and

on the other hand the Indian government is also engaged in undermining the importance of Gwadar port by entering into different arrangements with some regional countries. It is however a matter of satisfaction that our leadership is fully cognizant of the threats and has put in place some measures including the establishment of Special Security Division and special task force by Pakistan Navy to ensure security of CPEC related projects. So far, the enemies have miserably failed to create any hurdle in the execution of the mega project as energy and road infrastructure projects are near completion and it is now entering an important phase of industrial development under which special economic zones will be set up in all the provinces. Over and above, the project enjoys full support of all the political parties and the entire nation. Therefore, we have no doubt in saying that all the conspiracies against the CPEC are bound to bite the dust. Nevertheless, it would have been far better for India to spend these millions of dollars on establishing the infrastructure linking itself with the CPEC rather than wasting the money on undermining the project that is bound to accrue the benefits envisaged both by Beijing and Islamabad.

Afghan situation main cause of instability in region

DNA News | November 15, 2017



‘The armed confrontation in Afghanistan which, despite the efforts of the country’s central government and external forces supporting it (including SCO members) remains the main destabilizing factor in South Asia.’ This was stated by His Excellency Mr Vladimir Potapenko, Deputy Secretary-General, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) at the second day of the international conference organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute and the Hanns Seidel Foundation here in Islamabad today. Addressing the session on ‘Strategic Situation in Afghanistan and its Regional Implications’, he said that the SCO member states are interested in Afghanistan as a peaceful and neutral country that respects and observes human rights and freedoms, and maintaining friendly relations with its neighbors. Outlining SCO’s vision, Mr Potapenko, highlighted that the Astana declaration resolutely supported the efforts of the Government and the people of Afghanistan aimed at asserting a peaceful and stable state free of terrorism, extremism and illegal drug trafficking based on the United Nations’ central coordinating role in international efforts to stabilize the country and ensure its development. He informed the packed hall that Kabul is being provided wide-scale assistance in areas as defense, law enforcement, transport development, energy, anti-drug operations, training national experts, etc., both on bilateral and multilateral bases. The SCO members take an active part in a number of important international regional projects that also involve Afghanistan. However, the presence of Islamic State (ISIS) militants in Afghanistan, many of whom are originally rooted from SCO member states, causes additional concern. ‘The return of militants, who fought on the side of international terrorist organizations, to their home countries can add to regional instability’, he warned.

Sharing Pakistan's concerns on India's influence in Afghanistan, Ambassador (R) Rustam Shah Mohmand, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan, said that the ongoing conflict has multidimensional implications for the former – from a stabilized border to acts of terrorism; decrease in the volume of bilateral trade to the plight of both refugees and returnees. He opined that 'ignoring the cost of not inviting attention to the root cause of the insurgency and the continuance of a conflict that has robbed the region of huge economic opportunities, Islamabad has instead remained preoccupied with India's role in the West Asian country, and not formulated a robust approach for peace-making in Afghanistan.' While Pakistan's apprehensions about India's increasing role in Kabul are natural, there can be no compromise on Islamabad insisting that Afghan soil should not be used covertly or overtly against its territory or people. At the same time, Afghanistan's right to formulate its own policies both internal and external must also be acknowledged and respected. But no such policy that creates space for any force or country to operate against Pakistan's interest should be allowed to practice', he stressed.

Dr. Attaullah Wahidyar, Senior Advisor from the Ministry of Education, Kabul, discussing the ingress of non-state actors in South Asia was of the view that Daesh, Islamic State or ISIS are all part of the same 'terrorism industry'. However, he felt that while the entire globe hosts such agar plates like the Islamic State of Iraq, Asia in general and central Asia specifically seems to be more generous where ISIS has over 8000 recruits. 'IS is focusing on conquering weak states and weakening strong states and to address this challenge a two-dimensional approach is needed – reform in social architecture of societies; and popular Muslim scholarship needs to come forward and reinforce the true message of Islam by clarifying the true meaning of Jihad. 'We as nation states need to recognize that shared security is more secure than ensured security. Investment in violent non-state actors for achieving state objectives has historically failed and any state which pursues such policies will suffer sooner or later', he cautioned. He clarified that Pakistan should not be concerned about Indo-Afghan relations. 'While Kabul welcomes economic assistance from any side, these relations with India will never be at the cost of Pakistan's security.'

Ambassador (R) Mohammad Sadiq, Former National Security Secretary and Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan, Government of Pakistan, while chairing the session "Strategic Situation in Afghanistan and its Regional Implications" said that while the stalemate in Afghanistan is not going to end soon, there are clear ethnic fault-lines which the Taliban cannot cross. 'No one knows what the US policy in Afghanistan will be under the Trump administration but there is no likelihood of a permanent pullout of America from the region.

He stressed that Pakistan should not object to India's economic assistance to Afghanistan, rather Pakistan, should also offer the same.

In the session on 'Addressing Security Concerns in South Asia: A Way Forward', **Professor Dr Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema**, Dean, Faculty of Contemporary Sciences, National Defence University provided a comprehensive overview of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and said that in the aftermath of the cold-blooded murder of Burhan Muzaffar Wani, a wave of carnage has been unleashed by India across the occupied Valley. According to him, the US's ever increasing cooperation with India and its lukewarm response to Islamabad's call, is yet another factor,

which encourages New Delhi to adopt an offensive behavior towards Pakistan. Modi's Kashmir policy has resulted in failure, causing despondency among the people of the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). He said that an unresolved Kashmir issue is a historical fact, which cannot be sidelined and ignored for too long. Even a minor miscalculation by India, in pursuit of its foreign policy objectives for undermining Islamabad's will to resist, could put the entire region in trouble. India and the international community should, therefore, realize that none of the strategies other than 'dialogue' involving all the stakeholders would succeed in resolving this core issue. He warned that India's decision to pursue an aggressive foreign policy to subdue Pakistan and its tactic to implement such policy entails a perilous course of action. 'Under the prevailing security and political situation in the region and beyond, no single-track approach by Pakistan would work against India. Pakistan will have to evolve a simultaneous response aggressively to include diplomatic maneuvers and security counter measures,' he concluded.

Dr. Christian Wagner, Senior Fellow from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Germany was of the view that while South Asia is still one of the most conflict-prone regions in the world, the role of global powers in building a cooperative security order here will remain limited. 'Global powers pursue their own strategic interests which are not necessarily in accordance with regional powers. There is a divergence in the threat perceptions between global powers and regional powers on nuclear issues and terrorism. These differences will limit the role of global powers', he shared. 'It remains the responsibility of regional states to establish new forms of cooperation in order to tackle common security threats,' he urged. This session was chaired by Lt. General (R) Naeem Khalid Lodhi, HI (M)

Former Secretary Defence and Member, Advisory Board of the Center for Strategic and Contemporary Research (CSCR), Islamabad.

Sharing the views about the Hanns Seidel Foundation, Mr Omer Ali, Programme Coordinator of HSF said that their mandate is informed by the very particular German experience which is to break through traditional perspectives and at times apply innovative, previously unthinkable approaches with regards to formulating policies. 'This started off with the Franco-German rapprochement, and has culminated in a number of transnational bodies, the most important of which certainly would be the European Union, which might soon replace the nation-state through continuous supra-national integration', he explained. Mr Ali hoped that the 'concerned authorities in Pakistan will assess all those bits and pieces which have been presented in a very condensed manner during this two-day international conference, and draw conclusions as to where Pakistan can move, and subsequently make a normative move and say where it *should* move.'

In his concluding Vote of Thanks, Ambassador (R) Abdul Basit, President, IPRI was optimistic that the deliberations which emerged out of the conference had the potential to chalk out future trajectories for Pakistan's foreign policy in a highly dynamic geographic and strategic environment. 'The Kashmir issue remains the core bone of contention between Pakistan and India – peace in the region is dependent on its amicable and just resolution,' he concluded.

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NATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE Thursday November 16, 2017

Regional Dynamics and Strategic Concerns in South Asia

By RAJAJAVED ALI BHATTI

The most confrontation in Afghanistan which, despite the efforts of the country's central government and external forces supporting it (including NATO members) remains the main destabilising factor in South Asia. This was stated by His Excellency Mr Vladimir Potemkin, Deputy Secretary-General, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) at the second day of the international conference organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute and the Heresfeld Foundation here in Islamabad today. Addressing the session on 'Strategic Situation in Afghanistan and its Regional Implications', he said that the SCO members show an interest in Afghanistan as a peaceful and neutral country that respects and observes human rights and freedoms, and maintaining friendly relations with its neighbours. Outlining SCO's vision, Mr Potemkin highlighted that the Astana declaration resolutely supported the efforts of the Government and the people of Afghanistan aimed at asserting a peaceful and stable future of terrorism, extremism and illegal drug trafficking based on the United Nations' overall coordinating role in international efforts to stabilize the country and ensure its development. He informed the passed half an hour of his visit provided his assistance in various fields: law enforcement, transport development, energy, anti-drug operations, trade bilateral relations etc. The SCO members also



an active part in a number of important international regional projects that also involve Afghanistan. However, the presence of Islamic State (ISIS) militants in Afghanistan, many of whom are originally rooted from SCO member states, causes additional concern. The return of militants, who fought on the side of international terrorist organisations, to their home countries can add to regional instability, he warned.

Sharing Pakistan's concerns on India's influence in Afghanistan, Ambassador (R) Raza ul Ghani Mohmand, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan, said that the ongoing conflict has multi-dimensional implications for the former—from a stabilised border to rise of terrorism; decrease in the volume of informal trade in the plight of both refugees and returnees. He opined that 'ignoring the root cause of the insurgency and the continuance of a conflict that has robbed the region of huge

economic opportunities, Islamabad has instead remained preoccupied with India's role in the West Asian country, and not formulated a robust approach for peace-making in Afghanistan.' While Pakistan's apprehensions about India's increasing role in the region would, there can be no compromise on Islamabad insisting that Afghan soil should not be used covertly or overtly against its territory or people, at the same time, Afghanistan's right to formulate its own policies both internal and external must also be acknowledged and respected. But no such policy that creates space for any force or security to operate against Pakistan's interests should be allowed to practice, he stressed.

Dr. Ataulah Wahid, Senior Advisor from the Ministry of Information, Kabul, discussing the progress of interstate talks in South Asia was of the view that India, Islamic State (IS) are all part of the same 'terrorist industry'. However, he felt that while the entire globe hosts such type of

like the Islamic State of Iraq, Asia in general and central Asia specifically seems to be more generous where ISIS has over 8000 recruits. IS is focusing on conquering weak states and weakening strong states and to address this challenge a two-dimensional approach is needed: reform in social architecture of societies; and popular Muslim scholarship needs to come forward and reinforce the true message of Islam by clarifying the true meaning of Jihad. We as nation states need to recognise that shared security is more secure than ensured security. Investment in violent non-state actors for achieving state objectives has historically failed and any state which pursues such policies will suffer sooner or later', he cautioned. He clarified that Pakistan should not be concerned about India-Afghan relations. While Kabul receives massive assistance from any side, discussions with India will never be the end of Pakistan's security.

Ambassador (R) Muhammad Saif, Former National Security

Secretary and Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan, Government of Pakistan, while sharing the session 'Strategic Situation in Afghanistan and its Regional Implications' said that while the statements in Afghanistan are not going to end soon, there are clear ethnic fault-lines which the Taliban cannot cross. 'No one knows what the US' policy in Afghanistan will be under the Trump administration but there is no likelihood of a permanent pull-out of America from the region. He stressed that Pakistan should not object to India's economic assistance to Afghanistan, rather Pakistan should also offer this. In the session on 'Addressing Security Concerns in South Asia: A Way Forward', Professor Dr Pervaiz Iqbal Chishti, Dean, Faculty of Contemporary Studies, National Defence University provided a comprehensive overview of the terrain and Kashmir dispute and said that in the aftermath of the cold-blooded murder of Borhan Mandir War, a wave of carnage has been unleashed by India across the occupied Valley. According to him, the US' over increasing cooperation with India and its lukewarm response to Islamabad's call, is yet another factor, which encourages New Delhi to adopt an offensive behavior towards Pakistan. Mr Saif's session policy has resulted in failure, causing dependency among the people of the Indian occupied Kashmir (OCM). He said that an unresolved Kashmir issue is a historical fact, which cannot be sidelined and ignored for so long. Even a minor miscalculation by India, in pursuit of its foreign poli-

cy objectives for undermining Islamabad's will to resist, could put the entire region in trouble. India and the international community should, therefore, realize that some of the strategies other than 'Military' involving all the stakeholders would be effective in resolving this core issue. He warned that India's decision to pursue an aggressive foreign policy to subdue Pakistan and its role as implementer such policy entails a perilous course of action. Under the prevailing security and political situation in the region and beyond, no single-track approach by Pakistan would work against India. Pakistan will have to evolve a simultaneous response aggressively to include diplomatic maneuvers and security counter measures', he concluded.

Dr. Christian Wagner, Senior Fellow from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Germany was of the view that while South Asia is still one of the most volatile regions in the world, the role of global powers in building a cooperative security order here will remain limited. 'Global powers pursue their own strategic interests which are not necessarily in accordance with regional powers. There is divergence in the threat perceptions between global powers and regional powers on nuclear issues and terrorism. These differences will limit the role of global powers', he shared. 'It remains the responsibility of regional states to establish new focus of cooperation in order to tackle common security threats', he urged. This session was chaired by Lt. General (R) Nazim Khalid Lodhi, H Q.

Former Secretary Defense and

Member, Advisory Board of the Center for Strategic and Contemporary Research (CSCR), Islamabad.

Sharing the views about the Heresfeld Foundation, Mr Omar Ali, Programs Coordinator of IHSI said that their mandate is informed by the very particular German experience which is to look through traditional perspectives and at times apply innovative, previously unthinkable approaches with regards to formulating policies. This started off with the Franco-German rapprochement, and has culminated in a number of international bodies, the most important of which certainly would be the European Union, which might soon replace the nation-state through continuous supra-national integration, he explained. Mr Ali hoped that the concerned authorities in Pakistan will assess all these bits and pieces which has been presented in a very condensed manner during this two-day international conference and draw conclusions as to where Pakistan can move, and subsequently make a proactive move and say when it should move.

In his concluding Vote of Thanks, Ambassador (R) Akhbar Butt, President, IHSI, was overwhelmed at the deliberations which emerged out of the conference had the potential to chalk out future trajectories for Pakistan's foreign policy in a highly dynamic geographic and strategic environment. The Kashmir issue remains the core bone of contention between Pakistan and India - peace in the region is dependent on its amicable and just resolution, he concluded.