



## **Press Release**

### **International Conference**

#### **Pakistan's Strategic Environment: Post 2014**

**May 28-29, 2014**

#### **Nawaz committed to building cooperative ties with India: Fatemi's address at strategic environment conference**

Delivering his keynote address on Wednesday at the two-day international conference on "Pakistan's strategic environment: Post- 2014", Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Syed Tariq Fatemi, said that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was committed to building cooperative ties with India. "In our interaction with the Indian leadership since June 2013, we have consistently emphasized the importance of working together to address common challenges, build sustainable peace, and promote the idea of shared prosperity," he explained.

The conference which concludes here today has been organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute in collaboration with Germany's Hanns Seidel Foundation, Islamabad.

Mr Fatemi said that in his telephonic conversation with Mr. Modi to greet him on his electoral victory the Prime Minister had emphasized that the main dynamic in South Asia should be cooperation, not confrontation. That is why he responded positively to Mr. Modi's invitation and participated in his swearing in ceremony in New Delhi on May 26. This was a first in the history of Pak-India relations. The bilateral meeting of the two leaders was fruitful in beginning the process of charting a future course for the relationship, he said. The two sides agreed that the

foreign secretaries would meet soon “to review and carry forward the bilateral agenda.” Mr. Fatemi said that the Prime Minister emphasized in New Delhi that “we were ready to pick up the thread where it was interrupted in October 1999. We also remain committed to moving towards normalizing the trade relationship, through a deliberate and well-considered process, that ensures mutual benefits.”

Meanwhile, we will continue to work for tangible progress towards resolution of all outstanding issues. A just and peaceful solution of the Kashmir issue, in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people was essential for durable peace in South Asia, he said.

Mr. Fatemi said that Pakistan had supported the peaceful democratic transition in Afghanistan and contributed to the efforts for a free and fair elections process including through enhanced security along the Pak Afghan border. We are hoping that, at the end of this process, the Afghan nation would emerge stronger and more unified. He said that Pakistan had affirmed that it would work with whoever would be the democratic choice of the Afghan people. It was gratifying that the leading contenders had expressed their desire to forge a cooperative relationship with Pakistan. He emphasized that Pakistan would continue to support and facilitate all efforts for an inclusive, Afghan led and Afghan owned process.

Speaking about relations with China Mr. Fatemi said that their relations had transformed into “a comprehensive strategic relationship” and the two countries had achieved a broad consensus on major infrastructure and energy projects in which respect he mentioned the China Pakistan Economic Corridor which will be a ‘game changer’ in ushering a new era of peace, cooperation and development in the region and beyond.

Mr. Fatemi described the United States as an “important part of our strategic environment and a key element in Pakistan’s foreign policy considerations. Though marked by periods of engagement and estrangement over the years, since June 2013 the relations have continued to improve through high level interactions and revival of the strategic dialogue. He said that in the post 9/11 period the US largely viewed Pakistan through the lenses of Afghanistan and terrorism. “We have conveyed that these must be balanced by giving due importance to Pakistan’s own

security concerns. The Pakistan-US relationship must develop on its own merit, as we move through 2014 and beyond”, he said.

Discussing relations with Iran which “plays a pivotal part in our vision” of regional peace and progress, he mentioned the Prime Minister’s successful visit to Iran where he had wide ranging consultations with a view to deepening and institutionalizing mutually beneficial cooperation in diverse fields.

Pakistan’s relations with the Russian Federation were growing steadily. “We share common interests in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan and central Asia with which Pakistan seeks Russia’s cooperation in building energy corridors, economic linkages and road and rail links. He mentioned Pakistan’s efforts to strengthen relationships with all other countries of the world as Pakistan had to “cruise through these uncharted waters with skill and resolve, which explains why the Prime Minister had been stressing geo-political and geo- economic imperatives with equal emphasis.

The first-day of the conference comprised two sessions during which scholars from India, France, Sweden, Bangladesh, Germany and Singapore read papers on post-2014 Afghanistan, the role of neighbours and regional organizations in stabilizing Afghanistan, dynamics of trade corridors, post 2014 US/NATO engagement in the region, EU-Pakistan relations and US Trade-aid balance and its implications on Pakistan.

Ambassador Sohail Amin, President IPRI and Mr. Kristof Duwaerts, Resident Representative of Hanns Seidel Foundation shed light on the purpose of holding the conference.