



Press Release

International Conference

Pakistan's Strategic Environment: Post 2014

May 28-29, 2014

Concluding Day

CRITICAL CHOICES FOR PAKISTAN MOSTLY INTERNAL, SAYS MALEEHA LODHI

Summing up the proceedings of the second day of the international conference on “Pakistan’s Strategic Environment :Post 2014” eminent journalist and former ambassador to USA and High commissioner to UK, Dr. Maliha Lodhi said that the region of South Asia was in a state of flux with competing economic visions being offered for its future. For Pakistan the critical choices were mostly internal. The stress on geo-economics was for the good but peace and prosperity that were being offered as the panacea needed some strategy to be realized.

Referring to the Prime Minister’s visit to Delhi and the hopes it inspired she said good neighbourly relations were a must but neighbours had their limitations and strategies could not be based on hopes.

She discounted the assertion by a scholar that the time of military solutions was over. She said that despite what President Obama had said in his important policy statement at the West Point academy the other day, military component in external policy will continue to play its role. We shall have to be vary in this fast changing world.

In Pakistan we needed to align all our powers to put our own house in order. For this we needed a business model based on leadership, an effective team, a plan and institutional support.

Later in his concluding address the chief guest, General (R) Ehsan ul Haq, former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of staff Committee, also emphasized that all efforts should be directed towards this sole goal of achieving good governance and revival of the economy. The rest could take care of itself. He surveyed Pakistan's strategic environment and marked out the areas of concern in terms of uncertainty that loomed large over Afghanistan where though the Taliban may not return to power but could continue to harass the government in areas where the ISAF had not been able to subdue them. The fall out of the drawdown was to be closely watched. He referred to US strategic partnership with India and the talk of Asia pivot and China's Asia centric policy, a climate in which Pakistan needed to adjust its seasons.

Earlier in the first session of the conference chaired by Ms Sherry Rahman, former federal minister and ambassador to US, and chairperson Jinnah Institute, papers were read by Russian scholar Mr. Yury Krupnov , Dr. Nazir Hussain of Quadi Azam university, Islamabad, and Chinese scholar Dr. Hu Shisheng. Dr Mohammad Hafeez of Punjab University, IPRI scholar Air commodore (R) Khalid Iqbal and Khwaja Khalid Farooq, former chairman of NACTA addressed the second session. The proceedings of the conference will be published soon. IPRI president Ambassador Sohail Amin and Mr. Kristof Duwaerts, Resident Representative of HSF thanked the participants.