



Press Release

International Conference

“Policy Approaches of South Asian Countries and their Impact on the Region”



SCHOLARS OPPOSE INDIAN INTERFERENCE IN NEIGHBOURS ECONOMIC PLANS

In his inaugural speech at the two-day international conference “ Policy Approaches of South Asian Countries and their Impact on the Region” organised by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany (HSF), former Secretary General and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador (R) M. Akram Zaki said that all South Asian countries had relatively new governments

and had sufficient tenure time available to them to take important policy decisions to determine the direction of their common future. The drawdown of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan was a major development which required revision of policies, he said. Policies of a global geo-strategic triangle of three great powers i.e. US, China and Russia had impact on South Asia. He also added that South Asia having a population of 1.7 billion was facing many problems and conflicts. Terrorism, extremism, separatism, drug trafficking, organized crime leave less time and resources to deal with basic problems of poverty, ignorance and health in South Asia. He further said that energy crisis, water shortage, food security and human development were major issues of South Asian countries.

Ambassador (R) Sohail Amin, President IPRI said that political will and political action could positively contribute towards breaking the vicious circle of conflict, insecurity and underdevelopment in South Asia. He said that China had a great potential to change the destiny of South Asian region. To achieve the objectives of SAARC, South Asian countries needed to grant China full membership of SAARC.

Mr. Kristof Duwearts, Resident Representative Hans Seidel Foundation (HSF) said that there was an urgent need for greater integration at regional level for which it was necessary that SAARC committees held regular meetings to push the regional agenda forward.

Ambassador (R) Masood Khan, Director General, Institute of Strategic Studies said that South Asian countries had restricted space for policy formulation and domestic settings influenced the policies and politics. He said that Kashmir issue, trade, investment, water, rise of Hindutva in India, terrorism in Pakistan are the biggest issues of South Asia. All South Asian countries needed to reduce divergence and increase convergence, he said. Policies should be principle based on the basis of equality. He said that India should not interfere in any of its neighbouring countries in any respect whether in terms of undermining economic betterment, security or stability etc. particularly by using its intelligence agencies.

Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal of Quaid-i-Azam University said that consultative process was missing in the policy formulation of almost all the South Asian countries. Bureaucracies were the policy formulators and bottom to top approach did not exist in the political decision making of South Asian countries.

Dr. Rashid of Sargodha University said that political cultures in South Asia had been shaped by historical processes. General masses had no say in decision making, he said.

Dr. Riffat Hussain of NUST University said that Disrupting terrorist networks required international cooperation. He also said that state must become visible in the defence of moderates.

Former Ambassador of Nepal, Bishnu Hari Nepal said that South Asia could be the Hub of Asia if “Water Energy” was planned well. He also discussed SAARC energy ring involving China, Pakistan and Nepal.

Former Secretary of Petroleum, Dr. Gulfaraz Ahmad said that democracies would only work if the elected personnel had low vested interests. He also said that in South Asia, there was a big neighbour syndrome and big neighbours were always in active mode while small neighbours were in reactive mode.

Concluding Day



INDIA'S STANCE ON CPEC INEXPLICABLE, SAYS FATEMI

In his concluding remarks at the two-day international conference “Policy Approaches of South Asian Countries and their Impact on the Region” (June 2-3, 2015) organised by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Hanns Seidel Foundation of Germany (HSF), Ambassador (R) Tariq Fatemi, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs who was Chief Guest at the conference said that the present government had a vigorous and sincere policy that aimed at establishing a peaceful neighbourhood. He said that Pakistan government had always offered India to sit down and engage in result-oriented and constructive dialogue. But india’s response was always disappointing. He said, “there was a spate of allegations and charges by India against Pakistan which have no reality. In reality much of the turbulence in Pakistan came through the neighbour.” He said that there was evidence of involvement of foreign agencies in the gruesome militant incidents in Pakistan. While talking about China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said,

“Remarks of Indian Prime Minister on CPEC are inexplicable. CPEC will promote peace and stability not only in Pakistan and China but in the entire region. CPEC will benefit three billion people.” He said the recent statements of Foreign Minister of India and Indian Prime Minister were totally disappointing; Pakistan always invited India for peace building measures; now it was for India to accept or not to accept, Mr. Fatemi said.

On Pak-Afghan relations, Mr. Fatemi said that relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan had never been better. But now with the change in leadership of Afghanistan, Pakistan government had found Mr. Ashraf Ghani to be a ready partner to reinforce cooperation and intelligence sharing to fight terrorism and militancy. He said that engaging in real time and meaningful intelligence sharing would be beneficial for both Pakistan and Afghanistan to fight the challenges of terrorism and militancy.

While talking about Pak-China friendship, Ambassador Fatemi said that Pak-China friendship is in true sense “an all-weather friendship” and CPEC projects are for the peoples of the region and not against any other third country.

Mr. Inam ul Haque, former foreign Minister and chairman IPRI Board of Governors said that South Asia could not remain isolated from the bigger game of strategic competition between US and China. US would never contain China militarily. It would build alliances with China’s neighbours to undermine it.

Dr. Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema of NDU University said, “Kashmir issue has to be resolved, whether someone likes it or not.” He further added that until unless Kashmir has not been resolved, the relations between Pakistan and India would remain tense.

Economist, Dr. Kamal Monnoo, Director Samira Fabrics and Member IPRI Board of Governors said, “We need to ensure that trade in SAARC is fair and "equitable" for all and not skewed in just one country's favor.”

Mr. Ahmad Nader Nadery, Director Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU), Kabul said that the governments of South Asian countries should engage in 'economic diplomacy' throughout the region. Also, he said that CPEC could not be a substitute to a route from Pakistan to Central Asia through Afghanistan.

Sri Lankan senior journalist, Mr. Shamindera Ferdinando, said that Pakistan, India, China and US were important countries vis-à-vis South Asia as the decisions about the fate of South Asian countries were being made in Islamabad, Delhi, Beijing and Washington.

Chinese scholar, Mr. ye Hallin said that CPEC was not only a strategic project but an economic project, too.

President IPRI Sohail Amin thanked the Chief Guest Ambassador Tariq Fatemi to grace the event, and to national and international scholars for participating in the conference. Mr. Kristof Duwearts also thanked IPRI for organizing the international conference and participants of the conference.