



ISLAMABAD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

5th Floor, Evacuee Trust Complex, Sir Aga Khan Road,
F-5/1, Islamabad, Pakistan
Tel: + 92 51 9211346-49; Fax + 92 51 9211350
Email: ipripak@ipripak.org
Website: www.ipripak.org



MEDIA COVERAGE

Guest Lecture – Ambassador (R) Riaz Mohammad Khan

“Pakistan-Afghanistan: Way Forward for Bilateral Relations”

1. DAWN

25 September 2019

Need to build better state-to-state ties with Afghanistan: ex-secretary

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan should build better state-to-state relationship with Afghanistan because there is hardly any example in the world where 50,000 people cross the border unrecognised by one side on a daily basis without any papers.

This was stated by former foreign secretary and ambassador Riaz Mohammad Khan said at a lecture, “Pakistan-Afghanistan: Way Forward for Bilateral Relations” organised by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) on Tuesday.

“There is also the relationship between Islamabad and Kabul, and here we need to be cautious not to make policy statements or give directions on Kabul’s behalf. Pakistan should not treat Afghanistan as its fifth province or a liability. Let them

work out their issues on their own. How the Afghans run their country, or want to, is their business. Not ours,” he said.

Providing his insights from the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to signing of the Geneva Accord, Mr Khan said the Soviet withdrawal did not prevent continuation of the conflict; the same is feared if the Americans leave Kabul precipitously.

“The current peace deal was tenuous to begin with since it was pushed by [US] President Donald Trump due to his re-election bid and past campaign promises. It had limited support from defence and diplomatic heavyweights in Washington because negotiations without a ceasefire or reduction in conflict gave Taliban the upper hand,” he said.

He suggested that Pakistan should also have a policy of having no favour-

ites in terms of future Afghan governance even to contain the mischief of India who will have to go through Kabul and Washington, not the Taliban.

“Reduction of violence will depend on a formal or informal ceasefire which is inextricably linked to the question of a timeline for withdrawal and the compulsions of the current US President,” he stressed.

The former ambassador observed that the leadership in Kabul needed to understand the miseries of their own people and think beyond the acrimonious past and work towards a coalition plan for peace in their country.

“The Taliban also need to be cognizant that while return to talks seems unlikely, especially before the Afghan elections, they would have to give more than they had conceded before. They would have to reduce violence, if

not complete ceasefire and have to scale down their positions,” he remarked.

He lamented that “Pakistan’s four decades of involvement with the Afghan conflict has led to monumental losses. We missed out on opportunities offered by globalisation, ascendance of geo-economics and the opening up of Central Asia. Our aspirations for becoming a hub of economic activities for surrounding regions remained just a dream.

Instead, we have been sucked into the vortex of extremist and religious violence and obscurantism ravaging the region, especially the greater Middle East. Now we have pinned hopes on CPEC but for realising the potential of that great enterprise we need to rethink Afghanistan.”

The concept of improved regional connectivity, prospects of Belt and Road initiative, especially CPEC, will

only materialise if there is an end to the political turmoil and war in Afghanistan.

“The interests of both the nations overlap, peace in Afghanistan guarantees prosperity in Pakistan and vice versa.”

On India’s presence in Kabul, he said New Delhi had its own nefarious agenda for the region which has nothing to do with establishing lasting peace in the country.

Mr Khan said the future of Afghan peace now largely depends on US policy under President Trump and the Afghan elections. Both are likely to determine the nature of Pak-Afghan relations as well.

“However, at the same time, Islamabad must ask for an end to Afghan-based subversion against Pakistan. Besides reconciliation, other issues, including management of the border, its fencing and Afghan

transit trade facilities also need to be worked out with Afghan counterparts. This is time for active diplomacy. Our friends can help. But success will rest on the clarity of our position,” he added.

Earlier, IPRI President Ambassador retired vice admiral Khan Hasham bin Saddique said the situation in Afghanistan had become a sordid affair - evolving from the infamous strategic depth to the current strategic mess. The pipelines of TAPI remain a pipe dream.

“Despite hosting more than two million Afghan refugees for decades, the animosity that stems from Afghanistan is palpable. Peace in South Asia can only be realised through peace in Afghanistan. To meet such ends, Pakistan has been making strides to play its role in achieving peace in the neighbourhood,” he remarked.

25 September 2019

'Pakistan should not treat Afghanistan as its liability'

Expert highlights need for coalition to chalk out peace plan for Kabul

ISLAMABAD

For Pakistan, it is safer to interact with Afghanistan on the basis of established state-to-state norms because this is a relationship we cannot insulate ourselves from. However, Pakistan should not treat Afghanistan as its fifth province or liability.

These were the views of former foreign secretary Ambassador (Retd) Riaz Khan, at a guest lecture on Pakistan-Afghanistan: Way Forward for Bilateral Relations organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) held in Islamabad on Tuesday.

The former foreign secretary providing his insights from the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to signing of the Geneva Accord said that the Soviet withdrawal did not prevent continuation of the conflict; the same is feared if the

Americans leave Kabul too soon.

"There is a relationship between Islamabad and Kabul; and here we need to be cautious not to make policy statements or give directions on Kabul's behalf. Let them work out their issues on their own. How the Afghans run their country, or want to, is their business. Not ours."

"The current peace deal was tenuous to begin with since it was pushed by President Trump due to his re-election bid and past campaign promises.

"It had limited support from defence and diplomatic heavy weights in Washington because negotiations without a ceasefire or reduction in conflict gave the Taliban the upper hand.

"Withdrawal without a plan of action to ensure that there is no civil war and the gains on the ground are

not lost is unwise," he said. Pakistan should also have a policy of having no favorites in terms of the future of Afghan governance even to contain the mischief of India who will have to go through Kabul and Washington, not the Taliban.

"We will not target the Taliban or their families. We will be candid and upfront on this approach with Washington and Kabul," he advised.

The former foreign secretary was of the view that the Afghan conflict is complex and Afghanistan is riven with deep schisms of a political, ethnic, sectarian and ideological character.

The hope that this 40-year-old conflict has run its course depends on two trajectories: reduction in violence and some form of intra-Afghan dialogue for a political settlement.

"Reduction of violence will depend on a formal or informal ceasefire which is inextricably linked to the question of a timeline for withdrawal and the compulsions of the current United States president," he stressed.

Former foreign secretary lamented that Pakistan's four decades of involvement with the Afghan conflict has led to monumental losses

He observed that the leadership in Kabul needs to understand the miseries of their own people and think beyond the acrimonious past and work towards a coalition plan for peace in their country.

"The Taliban also need to

be conscious that while return to talks seems unlikely, especially before the Afghan elections, they would have to give more than they had conceded before. They would have to reduce violence, if not work toward a complete ceasefire. They will have to scale down their positions," he remarked.

On the role of Pakistan, he observed that the focus should be on looking at positive results rather than kudos for helping the process.

He lamented that Pakistan's four decades of involvement with the Afghan conflict has led to monumental losses.

"We missed out on opportunities offered by globalisation, ascendance of geo-economics and the opening up of Central Asia.

Our aspirations for becoming a hub of economic activities for surrounding regions

remained just a dream. Instead, we have been sucked into the vortex of extremist and religious violence and obscurantism ravaging the region especially the greater Middle East.

Now we have pinned hopes on CPEC, but for realising the potential of that great enterprise, we need to rethink Afghanistan," he said.

Earlier, IPRI President Ambassador Vice Admiral (Retd) Khan Hasham bin Saddique said that the situation in Afghanistan had become a sordid affair—evolving from infamous strategic depth to the current strategic mess.

"Despite hosting more than 2 million Afghan refugees for decades, the animosity that stems from Afghanistan is palpable. Peace in South Asia can only be realised through peace in Afghanistan," he

said. DNA

Pakistan OBSERVER

3.

25 September 2019

Pakistan should not try to play sponsors or custodians of the Taliban

For any peace settlement to find traction in Afghanistan, it must emerge from the Afghans themselves

Star Tribune

For Pakistan, it is better and safer to interact with Afghanistan on the basis of established state-to-state norms because this is a relationship from which we cannot insulate ourselves nor simply push aside. There are few examples in the world where 50,000 people cross a border, unrecognized by one side, on a daily basis without any papers. This, in itself, and the people-to-people interactions make Pak-Afghan relations very close and intimate. "However, there is also the relationship between Islamabad and Kabul, and here we need to be cautious not to make policy statements or give directions on Kabul's behalf. Pakistan should not treat Afghanistan as its fifth province or liability. Let

them work out their issues on their own. How the Afghans run their country, or want to, is their business. Not ours."

These were the views of Ambassador (R) Riaz Mohammad Khan, former Foreign Secretary, Government of Pakistan, at the Guest Lecture on Pakistan-Afghanistan: Way Forward for Bilateral Relations organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute here in Islamabad today.

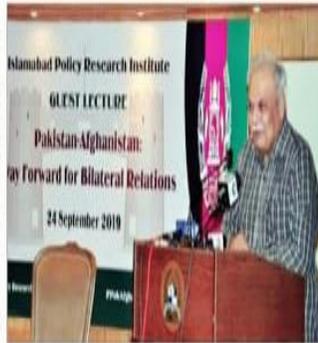
Ambassador Khan providing his insights from the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to signing of the Geneva Accord said that Soviet withdrawal did not necessitate continuation of the conflict; the same is feared if the Americans leave Kabul precipitously. "The current peace deal was tenuous to begin with since it was pushed by

President Trump due to his re-election bid and past campaign promises. It had limited support from defence and diplomatic heavyweights in Washington because negotiations without a ceasefire or reduction in conflict gave Taliban the upper hand. Withdrawal without a plan of action to ensure that there is no civil war and the gains on the ground are not lost is unwise," he said. Pakistan should also have a policy of having no favourites in terms of future Afghan governance even to contain the mischief of India who will have to go through Kabul and Washington, not the Taliban. "We will not target the Taliban or their families, and be candid and upfront on this approach with Washington and Kabul," he advised.

He was of the view that the Af-

ghan conflict is complex and Afghanistan is riven with deep sections of a political, ethnic, sectarian and ideological character. The hope that this 40-year old conflict has run its course depends on two trajectories: reduction in violence and some form of intra-Afghan dialogue for a political settlement. "Reduction of violence will depend on a formal or informal ceasefire which is inextricably linked to the question of a timeline for withdrawal and the compulsions of the current US President," he stressed.

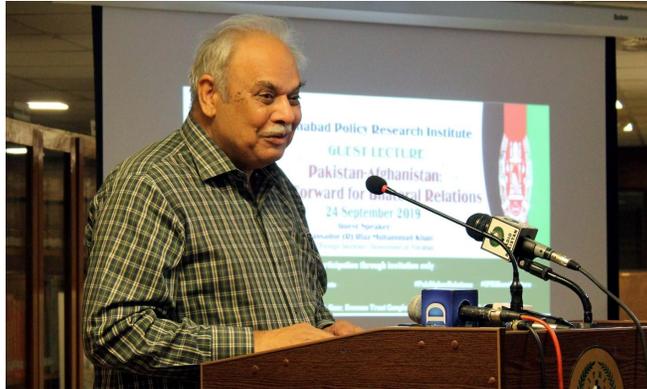
The Ambassador observed that the leadership in Kabul needs to understand the miseries of their own people and think beyond the acrimonious past and work towards a coalition plan for peace in their country.



Ambassador (Retd) Riaz Mohammad Khan, former Foreign Secretary at the guest lecture on Pakistan-Afghanistan: Way Forward for Bilateral Relations organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute.

4.

CPEC success linked to stability in Afghanistan: ex-foreign secretary



24 September 2019

- -America’s exit from Kabul is no guarantee of conflict resolution
- -Pakistan’s involvement with Afghan conflict led to monumental losses and status as third world country

Former foreign secretary Riaz Mohammad Khan on Tuesday said that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would only succeed if China and Pakistan along with world powers bring political stability, peace and development to war-torn Afghanistan.

“Stability of both countries go hand-in-hand. The way forward is through mutual understanding and good working relations. The concept of improved regional connectivity, prospects of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), especially CPEC, will only materialise if there is an end to the political turmoil and war in Afghanistan. The interests of both nations overlap, peace in Afghanistan, guarantees prosperity in Pakistan, vice versa,” said Riaz Mohammad Khan while speaking at a seminar titled ‘Pakistan-Afghanistan: Way Forward for Bilateral Relations’ organised by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI).

Ambassador Khan also urged the government to improve state-to-state relations with Afghanistan and let Afghanistan work on its own.

“For Pakistan, it is better and safer to interact with Afghanistan on the basis of established state-to-state norms because this is a relationship from which we cannot insulate ourselves nor simply push aside. There are few examples in the world where 50,000 people cross a border, unrecognised by one side, on a daily basis without any papers,” he added.

“However, there is also the relationship between Islamabad and Kabul; and here we need to be cautious not to make policy statements or give directions on Kabul’s behalf. Pakistan should not treat Afghanistan as its fifth province or liability. Let them work out their issues on their own. How the Afghans run their country or want to, is their business. Not ours,” he added.

Ambassador Khan, while providing his insights from the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to signing the Geneva Accord, said that Soviet withdrawal did not prevent the continuation of conflict; the same is feared if the Americans leave Kabul precipitously.

“The current peace deal was tenuous to begin with since it was pushed by President Trump due to his re-election bid and past campaign promises. It had limited support from defence and diplomatic heavyweights in Washington because negotiations without a ceasefire or reduction in conflict gave Taliban the upper hand. Withdrawal without a plan of action to ensure that there is no civil war and the gains on the ground are not lost is unwise,” he said.

He said Pakistan should also have a policy of having no favourites in terms of future Afghan governance even to contain the mischief of India who will have to go through Kabul and Washington, not the Taliban. “We will not target the Taliban or their families; and be candid and upfront on this approach with Washington and Kabul,” he advised.

He was of the view that the Afghan conflict is complex and Afghanistan is riven with deep schisms of a political, ethnic, sectarian and ideological character. The hope that this 40-year old conflict has run its course depends on two trajectories: reduction in violence and some form of intra-Afghan dialogue for a political settlement.

“Reduction of violence will depend on a formal or informal ceasefire which is inextricably linked to the question of a timeline for withdrawal and the compulsions of the current US president” he stressed.

The ambassador observed that the leadership in Kabul needs to understand the miseries of their own people and think beyond the acrimonious past and work towards a coalition plan for peace in their country.

“The Taliban also need to be cognizant that while a return to talks seems unlikely, especially before the Afghan elections, they would have to give more than they had conceded before, they would have reduced violence, if not complete ceasefire. They will have to scale down their positions,” he remarked.

On the role of Pakistan, he observed that the focus should be on looking at positive results rather than kudos for helping the process.

He lamented, “Pakistan’s four decades of involvement with the Afghan conflict has led to monumental losses. We missed out on opportunities offered by globalisation, the ascendance of geo-economics and the opening up of Central Asia. Our aspirations for becoming a hub of

economic activities for surrounding regions remained just a dream. Instead, we have been sucked into the vortex of extremist and religious violence and obscurantism ravaging the region especially the greater Middle East. Now we have pinned hopes on CPEC, but for realising the potential of that great enterprise, we need to rethink Afghanistan”.

On India’s presence in Kabul, he held that India has its own nefarious agenda for the region which has nothing to do with establishing lasting peace. Ambassador Khan concluded that the future of Afghan peace now largely depends on US policy under President Trump and the Afghan elections. Both are likely to determine the nature of Pak-Afghan relations as well.

“However, at the same time, Islamabad must ask for an end to Afghan-based subversion against Pakistan. Besides reconciliation, other issues including management of the border, the fence, Afghan transit trade facilities also need to be worked out with Afghan counterparts. This is the time for active diplomacy. Our friends can help. But success will rest on the clarity of our position,” he urged.

Earlier, IPRI President and Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham bin Saddique welcomed the esteemed speaker, diplomats, academicians and journalists in his inaugural address.

He said that the situation in Afghanistan had become a sordid affair – evolving from infamous strategic depth to the current strategic mess, the pipelines of Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India Pipeline (TAPI) remain a pipe dream.

“Despite hosting more than 2 million Afghan refugees for decades, the animosity that stems from Afghanistan is palpable. Peace in South Asia can only be realised through peace in Afghanistan. To meet such ends, Pakistan has been making strides to play its role in achieving peace in the neighbourhood,” he remarked.

He further said that the recent stalled US-Taliban negotiations were actively facilitated by Pakistan. “India, on the other hand, with its USD 3 billion investment, has had cold feet about the peace process since it does not want a peaceful Western front for Pakistan,” he added while observing that US President Donald Trump’s overtures during Prime Minister Imran Khan’s visit were reflective of Pakistan’s efforts and role in establishing peace in Afghanistan.

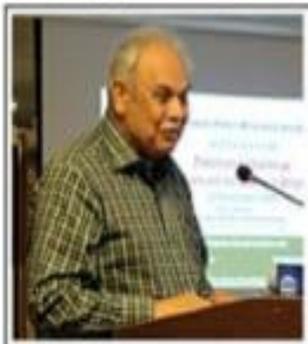
“Regional countries want trade connectivity with Afghanistan and beyond. Trade, of course, can only thrive if peace and stability are achieved. For Pakistan, it is important that we synchronise our bilateral narrative with Afghanistan keeping in mind the engagement of regional players,” he concluded.

<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/09/24/cpec-success-linked-to-stability-in-afghanistan-ex-foreign-secretary/>

5. NATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

25 September 2019

Pakistan should not try to play role of sponsors or custodians of Taliban - For any peace settlement to find traction in Afghanistan, it must emerge from the afghans themselves



ISLAMABAD, September 24: For Pakistan, it is better and safer to interact with Afghanistan on the basis of established state-to-state norms because this is a rela-

tionship from which we cannot insulate ourselves nor simply push aside. There are few examples in the world where 50,000 people cross a border, unrecognized by one side, on a daily basis without any papers. This, in itself, and the people-to-people interactions make Pak-Afghan relations very close and intimate. "However, there is also the relationship between Islamabad and Kabul; and here we need to be cautious not to make policy statements or give directions on Kabul's behalf. Pakistan should not treat Afghanistan as its fifth province or liability. Let them work out their issues on their own. How the Afghans run their country, or want to, is their business. Not ours."

These were the views of Ambassador (R) Riaz Mohammad Khan, Former Foreign Secretary, Government of Pakistan at the Guest Lecture on Pakistan-Afghanistan:

Way Forward for Bilateral Relations organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute here in Islamabad today.

Ambassador Khan providing his insights from the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to signing of the Geneva Accord said that Soviet withdrawal did not prevent continuation of the conflict; the same is feared if the Americans leave Kabul precipitously. "The current peace deal was ominous to begin with since it was pushed by President Trump due to his re-election bid and past campaign promises. It had limited support from defence and diplomatic heavyweights in Washington because negotiations without a ceasefire or reduction in conflict gave Taliban the upper hand. Withdrawal without a plan of action to ensure that there is no civil war and the gains on the ground are not lost is unwise," he said.

He was of the view that the Afghan conflict is complex and Afghanistan is driven with deep schisms of a political, ethnic, sectarian and ideological character. The hope that this 40-year old conflict has run its course depends on two trajectories: reduction in violence and some form of intra-Afghan dialogue for a political settlement.

The Ambassador observed that the leadership in Kabul needs to understand the miseries of their own people and think beyond the acrimonious past and work towards a coalition plan for peace in their country. "The Taliban also need to be cognizant that while return to talks seems unlikely, especially before the Afghan elections, they would have to give more than they had conceded before, they would have reduce violence, if not complete ceasefire. -PR

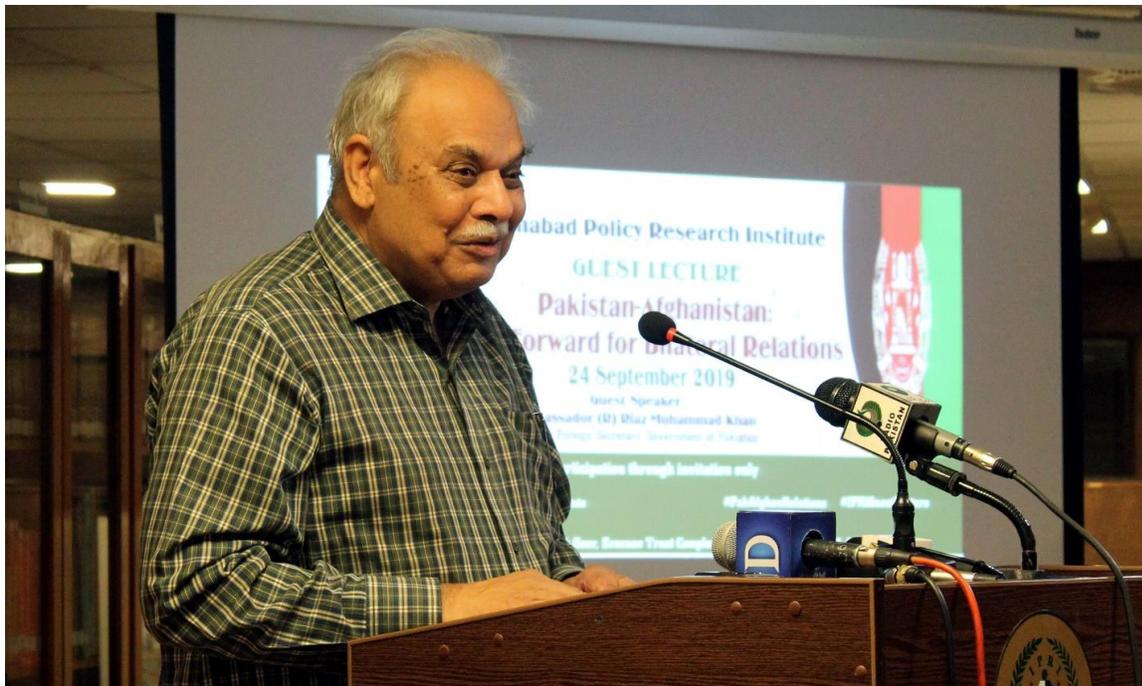
National Herald Tribune, Wednesday, September 25, 2019

<http://dailyNHT.com/epaper/main.php?action=epaper&id=main&page=2&dt=25-09-2019>

6.

‘Success Of Peace Process, Conditional To Ceasefire In Afghanistan’

24 September 2019



Success of Afghan Peace process was directly conditional to Taliban's efforts for ceasefire and their sincere support for withdrawal of US troops in Afghanistan, said former foreign secretary Riaz Muhammad Khan.

ISLAMABAD, (APP - UrduPoint/Pakistan Point News - 24th Sep, 2019) :Success of Afghan Peace process was directly conditional to Taliban's efforts for ceasefire and their sincere support for withdrawal of US troops in Afghanistan, said former foreign secretary Riaz Muhammad Khan.

Addressing a conference at Islamabad Policy of Research Institute (IPRI) on "Pakistan-Afghanistan: Way forward for bilateral relations", Riaz Muhammad Khan said Taliban should

have clinched the regional situation in their favor and should have opted to support peaceful withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan.

"They should have lessened the violence for the sake of these dialogues to proceed. America also felt the need to have intra Afghan dialogues and Taliban should have grabbed this opportunity", he added.

He said that Pakistan has played a significant role in making the Afghan peace process, a success as it was in national interest to have stable Afghanistan in the region. "This conflict has not affected any other country in the region, more than Pakistan", he added.

To a question, he said that Afghanistan was as a regional issue. "We need to make the international community realize the extent of damage Pakistan has been through due to this war in Afghanistan," he added.



Talking about the post-failure scenario of the peace process, Riaz said that now Taliban have to offer more than what they were offering on the dialogue table earlier as now the situation was in Trump's favor due to upcoming elections in US.

He said US President Donald Trump had enormous pressure from defense circles in US to proceed with the dialogues adding he said it was not in Donald Trump's interest to have a peace deal with Taliban as it would not be effective in public for his election campaign.

Riaz said that Pakistan played its respective role and pushed Taliban towards dialogues but world needed to realize that its influence with Taliban has limitations.

<https://www.urdupoint.com/en/pakistan/success-of-peace-process-conditional-to-cea-719422.html>

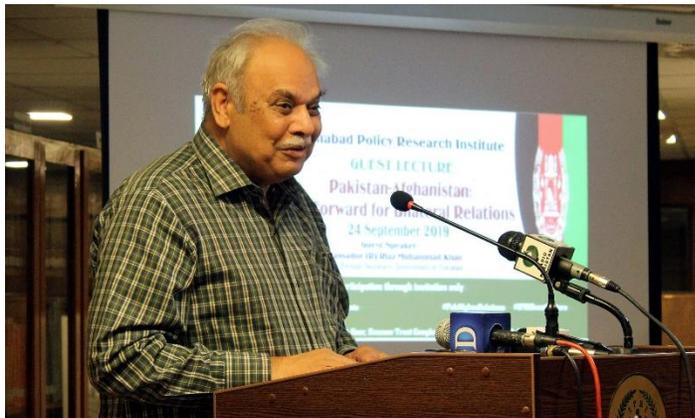


7.

For Pakistan, it is better & safer to interact with Afghanistan on the basis of established state-to-state norms: Riaz Mohammad Khan

24 September 2019

For Pakistan, it is better and safer to interact with Afghanistan on the basis of established state-to-state norms because this is a relationship from which we cannot insulate ourselves nor simply push aside. There are few examples in the world where 50,000 people cross a border,



unrecognized by one side, on a daily basis without any papers. This, in itself, and the people-to-people interactions make Pak-Afghan relations very close and intimate. “However, there is also the relationship between Islamabad and Kabul; and here we need to be cautious not to make policy statements or give directions on Kabul’s behalf. Pakistan should not treat Afghanistan as its fifth province or liability. Let them work out

their issues on their own. How the Afghans run their country, or want to, is their business. Not ours.” These were the views of Ambassador (Retd) Riaz Mohammad Khan, former foreign secretary, Government of Pakistan at the Guest Lecture on Pakistan-Afghanistan: Way Forward for Bilateral Relations organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) here in Islamabad on Tuesday.

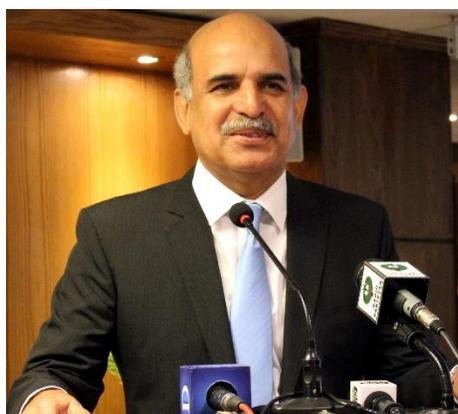


Ambassador Riaz Mohammad Khan providing his insights from the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to signing of the Geneva Accord said that Soviet withdrawal did not prevent continuation of the conflict; the same is feared if the Americans leave Kabul precipitously. “The current peace deal was tenuous to begin with since it was pushed by President Trump due to his re-election bid and past campaign promises. It had limited support from defence and diplomatic heavyweights in Washington because negotiations without a ceasefire or reduction in conflict gave Taliban the upper hand. Withdrawal without a plan of action to ensure that there is no civil war and the gains on the ground are not lost is unwise,” he said. Pakistan should also have a policy of having no favorites in terms of future Afghan governance even to contain the mischief of India who will have to go through Kabul and Washington, not the Taliban. “We will not target the Taliban or their families; and be candid and upfront on this approach with Washington and Kabul,” he advised. He was of the view that the Afghan conflict is complex and Afghanistan is driven with deep schisms of a political, ethnic, sectarian and ideological character. The hope that this 40-year old conflict has run its course depends on two trajectories: reduction in violence and some form of intra-Afghan dialogue for a political settlement. “Reduction of violence will depend on a formal or informal ceasefire which is inextricably linked to the question of a timeline for withdrawal and the compulsions of the current US President” he stressed. The Ambassador observed that the leadership in Kabul needs to understand the miseries of their own people and think beyond the acrimonious past and work towards a coalition plan for peace in their country. “The Taliban also need to be cognizant that while return to talks seems unlikely, especially before the Afghan elections, they would have to give more than they had conceded before, they would have reduce violence, if not complete ceasefire. They will have to scale down their positions,” he remarked. On the role of Pakistan, he observed that the focus should be on looking at positive results rather than kudos for helping the process. Ambassador Khan lamented that “Pakistan’s four decades of involvement with the Afghan conflict has led to monumental losses. We missed out on opportunities offered by globalisation, ascendance of geo-economics and the opening up of Central Asia. Our aspirations for becoming a hub of economic activities for surrounding regions remained just a dream. Instead, we have been sucked into the vortex of extremist and religious violence and obscurantism ravaging the region especially the greater

Middle East. Now we have pinned hopes on CPEC, but for realising the potential of that great enterprise, we need to rethink Afghanistan.” Ambassador Riaz Mohammad Khan further discussed that stability of both countries go hand-in-hand, and the way forward is through mutual understanding and good working relations. The concept of improved regional connectivity, prospects of Belt and Road initiative, especially CPEC, will only materialize if there is an end to the political turmoil and war in Afghanistan. “The interests of both nations overlap, peace in Afghanistan, guarantees prosperity in Pakistan, vice versa.” On India’s presence in Kabul, he held that India has its own nefarious agenda for the region which has nothing to do with establishing lasting peace.

Ambassador Khan concluded that future of Afghan peace now largely depends on US policy under President Trump and the Afghan elections. Both are likely to determine the nature of Pak-Afghan relations as well. “However, at the same time, Islamabad must ask for an end to Afghan-based subversion against Pakistan. Besides reconciliation, other issues including management of the border, the fence, Afghan transit trade facilities also need to be worked out with Afghan counterparts. This is time for active diplomacy. Our friends can help. But success will rest on the clarity of our position,” he urged.

Earlier, President IPRI Ambassador Vice Admiral (Retd) Khan Hasham bin Saddique, welcomed the esteemed speaker, diplomats, academicians and journalists in his inaugural address. He said



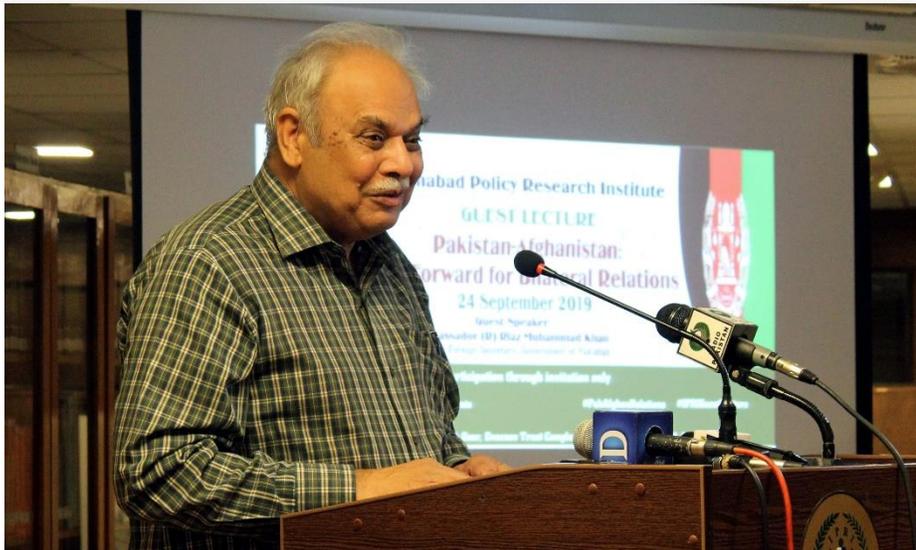
that the situation in Afghanistan had become a sordid affair – evolving from infamous strategic depth to the current strategic mess, the pipelines of TAPI remain a pipedream. “Despite hosting more than 2 million Afghan refugees for decades, the animosity that stems from Afghanistan is palpable. Peace in South Asia can only be realized through peace in Afghanistan. To meet such ends, Pakistan has been making strides to play its role in achieving peace in the neighborhood,” he remarked. He further said that the recent stalled US-Taliban negotiations were actively facilitated by Pakistan. India, on the other hand, with its USD 3billion investment, has had cold feet about the peace process since it does not want a peaceful Western front for Pakistan.” US President Donald Trump’s overtures during Prime Minister Imran Khan’s visit were reflective of Pakistan’s efforts and role in establishing peace in Afghanistan. “Regional countries want trade connectivity with Afghanistan and beyond. Trade, of course, can only thrive if peace and stability is achieved. For Pakistan, it is important that we synchronize our bilateral narrative with Afghanistan keeping in mind the engagement of regional players”, he concluded. An interactive Question Answer session followed the talk.

<http://www.sabahnews.net/english/archives/11135>



8. DIPLOMATIC NEWS AGENCY

Pakistan should not try to play sponsors or custodians of Taliban: expert



24 September 2019

For Pakistan, it is better and safer to interact with Afghanistan on the basis of established state-to-state norms because this is a relationship from which we cannot insulate ourselves nor simply push aside.

There are few examples in the world where 50,000 people cross a border, unrecognized by one side, on a daily basis without any papers. This, in itself, and the people-to-people interactions make Pak-Afghan relations very close and intimate.

“However, there is also the relationship between Islamabad and Kabul; and here we need to be cautious not to make policy statements or give directions on Kabul’s behalf. Pakistan should not treat Afghanistan as its fifth province or liability. Let them work out their issues on their own. How the Afghans run their country, or want to, is their business. Not ours.”

These were the views of Ambassador (R) Riaz Mohammad Khan, Former Foreign Secretary, Government of Pakistan at the Guest Lecture on Pakistan-Afghanistan: Way Forward for Bilateral Relations organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute here in Islamabad today.

Ambassador Khan providing his insights from the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to signing of the Geneva Accord said that Soviet withdrawal did not prevent continuation of the conflict; the same is feared if the Americans leave Kabul precipitously.

“The current peace deal was tenuous to begin with since it was pushed by President Trump due to his re-election bid and past campaign promises. It had limited support from defence and diplomatic heavyweights in Washington because negotiations without a ceasefire or reduction in conflict gave Taliban the upper hand.

Withdrawal without a plan of action to ensure that there is no civil war and the gains on the ground are not lost is unwise,” he said. Pakistan should also have a policy of having no favorites in terms of future Afghan governance even to contain the mischief of India who will have to go through Kabul and Washington, not the Taliban. “We will not target the Taliban or their families; and be candid and upfront on this approach with Washington and Kabul,” he advised.

He was of the view that the Afghan conflict is complex and Afghanistan is riven with deep schisms of a political, ethnic, sectarian and ideological character.

The hope that this 40-year old conflict has run its course depends on two trajectories: reduction in violence and some form of intra-Afghan dialogue for a political settlement. “Reduction of violence will depend on a formal or informal ceasefire which is inextricably linked to the question of a timeline for withdrawal and the compulsions of the current US President” he stressed.

The Ambassador observed that the leadership in Kabul needs to understand the miseries of their own people and think beyond the acrimonious past and work towards a coalition plan for peace in their country.

“The Taliban also need to be cognizant that while return to talks seems unlikely, especially before the Afghan elections, they would have to give more than they had conceded before, they would have to reduce violence, if not complete ceasefire. They will have to scale down their positions,” he remarked.

On the role of Pakistan, he observed that the focus should be on looking at positive results rather than kudos for helping the process. Ambassador Khan lamented that “Pakistan’s four decades of involvement with the Afghan conflict has led to monumental losses. We missed out on opportunities offered by globalisation, ascendance of geo-economics and the opening up of Central Asia. Our aspirations for becoming a hub of economic activities for surrounding regions remained just a dream. Instead, we have been sucked into the vortex of extremist and religious

violence and obscurantism ravaging the region especially the greater Middle East. Now we have pinned hopes on CPEC, but for realising the potential of that great enterprise, we need to rethink Afghanistan.”

Earlier, President IPRI Ambassador Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham bin Saddique, welcomed the esteemed speaker, diplomats, academicians and journalists in his inaugural address. He said that the situation in Afghanistan had become a sordid affair –evolving from infamous strategic depth to the current strategic mess, the pipelines of TAPI remain a pipe dream. “Despite hosting more than 2 million Afghan refugees for decades, the animosity that stems from Afghanistan is palpable. Peace in South Asia can only be realized through peace in Afghanistan. =DNA

<http://www.dnanews.com.pk/pakistan-not-try-play-sponsors-custodians-taliban-expert/>

