



Revisiting Kashmir

Scholars fault step by step approach; stress pressing human rights issue

There was no hope of solution of the Kashmir issue any time soon given the fixated mindsets that prevail in India and Pakistan as such the need of the hour was to abandon time frames without abandoning Pakistan's principled position. They said Pakistan need to pursue the step by step approach with caution and whatever the Musharraf initiative had achieved should not be made a new starting point in the composite talks. India's sore point was its human rights violations which Pakistan must press with advantage at world forums in its support for the Kashmiris' right of self determination. Musharraf's soft border approach could help in softening rigid attitudes and create a conducive climate in the subcontinent which Pakistan badly needed for revival of its economy. They said India-Pakistan rapprochement was the need of the hour given the global and regional trends.

The conference organised by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) was addressed by Dr. Tahir Amin of Quaid-i-Azam University, Dr. Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Deen National Defence University and Dr. Khalid Rahman (Institute of Policy Studies). It was chaired by Ambassador[®] Khalid Mahmood. IPRI president, Ambassador[®] Sohail Amin said that despite their diametrically opposed stances India and Pakistan had to find a way out to remove this obstacle in the progress of the subcontinent.

Dr. Tahir Amin said that the step by step approach without comprehensive framework would not produce any fruitful results. He emphasized by saying that Kashmir dispute was not about territory but from India's position a clash between one nation and two-nation theories.

Dr. Peraviz Iqbal Cheema of NDU said that India had mastered the evasion technique to wriggle out from situations unfavourable to it. He suggested an interim arrangement to facilitate a possible solution.

Dr. Khalid Rehman explained the positions of major political parties of India on Kashmir and quoted surveys of public opinion. He quoted "India Poll 2013" according to which 87 % people of India wanted improvement in India-Pakistan relations for which they stressed courageous leadership on both sides. In their survey, 76 % agreed that India should take the initiative which according to him could be seen as a positive thing for composite dialogue.

Chief guest of the Conference Amb (R) Khalid Mehmoood said that problem of influencing the rigid and tricky Indian attitude could be tackled by highlighting violation of basic human rights in Kashmir at all

platforms. He also said that giving up principled position was not a good solution. Also there was no easy solution to Kashmir issue, he said.

Conference was attended by scholars, intellectuals, researchers, former ambassadors and diplomats.