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Press Coverage

Two-Day Conference

Emerging Security Order in Asia Pacific and its Impact on South Asia



A two-day International Conference titled “Emerging Security Order in Asia Pacific and its Impact on South Asia” began in Islamabad today. The conference was organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) in collaboration with Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), Islamabad Office. Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed was the chief guest of the inaugural session. The first and second sessions of the conference were chaired by Mr. Inamul Haque, Former Minister and Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Maj. Gen. Noel I. Khokhar Director General, Institute for Strategic Studies Research and Analysis (ISSRA) respectively. The eminent speakers Shamshad Ahmed, Mr. Takaaki Asano, Mr Bunn Nagara, Dr. Dietrich Reetz, Dr. Sawaran Singh and Dr. David R. Johns addressed various aspects of emerging security order in Asia Pacific and its implications for the South Asian region.

Ambassador Sohail Amin, President IPRI, in his welcome address, stated that Asia-Pacific had undergone serious changes in the Post Cold War era, making Asia the powerhouse of global politics. The shift of world powers from Atlantic to Asia Pacific marked the geostrategic importance of the region.

Chinese Maritime silk road converged only in one country i.e. Pakistan. Pakistan was the central point of One Belt One Road initiative, said Senator Mushahid Hussain, Chairman, Senate Committee on Defence & Defence Production and Parliamentary Committee on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in two-day conference held at Marriott Hotel, Islamabad.

CPEC, a 15 year project, would be a destiny changer for the region, he further added. Although, India's aggressive policy towards its smaller neighbours had created some destabilizing factors in the region.

One manifestation of new great game approach was new Indian leadership's approach to bully small neighbours. There was marked increase in the violation of LOC.

He held that some elements had been accentuated in the last decade by these three mistakes: one, war on terror in Iraq, which had boomeranged in the form of ISIS; two, India-US nuclear deal, in which principals were put in the backburner; three, the support to non-state actors against Bashar ul Assad's regime.

Ambassador (R) Shamshad Ahmed Former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan while addressing at the conference, stressed that Washington, not New York was the center of attention for developments in global arena.

There was no consensus on major security issues or their resolution, he observed. "Palestine is tired and has given up, Iraq is still burning, Kashmir is disillusioned, Iran is on the parole, Syria is in the line of fire, and this process of instability has shifted to Africa", he lamented. The cold war was over but the players were there, he said. Their discriminatory and short sighted

policies for short gains were undermining the peace of not only our region, but world at large. “What the world needs is not induction of new sophisticated weapons, but joint economic projects” he said. He was optimistic that China was emerging as the only ray of hope for the Asia-Pacific region as China was interested in stabilizing rather than destabilizing the existing world order.

China’s answer to US’ Asia pivot was a one road one belt vision, he said. It involved connectivity of masses, land, trade, most significantly of mindsets which had not been practiced before by any state. It was a bridge of unprecedented nature and magnitude. At an estimated cost of \$150 billion, CPEC project was destined to connect multiple regions. One belt, one road would be the better answer to US’ Asia Pivot policy.

Mr. Takaaki Asano, Research Fellow, Tokyo Foundation, Japan, told the audience that Japanese Government was systematically trying to streamline Japanese security policy in South Asian Security Order.

Mr. Bunn Nagara, Senior Fellow, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia related that the South China Sea was now generally regarded as the main potential flashpoint for conflict in South-East Asia. This was partly because the other potential flashpoints in East-Asia of the Malacca straits, the Taiwan Straits and the Korean Peninsula seemed to become more manageable over the past decade.

Chairperson of the second session, Maj. Gen. Noel I. Khokhar Director General, Institute for Strategic Studies Research and Analysis (ISSRA) stated that the US was geared towards safeguarding its position as superpower and on the other hand China’s String of Pearls Policy, CEPC and its growing influence in the region posed a threat to US status quo.

Mr Ameen Izzadeen, Deputy Editor Sunday Times, Sri Lanka, was of the view that China had awakened and gradually asserting itself in the South China Sea. He further said the US was not

pursuing a Cold War but it had to counter China which may undermine its influence in South Asia.

Dr David R. Jones, Visiting Faculty, School of Politics & International Relations (SPIR), Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad held that India's soft power is badly being affected in the US due to its extreme policies and its aggressive attitude towards minorities during Modi Government. 'The US is very desperate to get India on its side to contain China', he reiterated. Further he pointed out that the Indo-US nuclear deal was more symbolic and lacked substance.

'Indo-Pacific is an extension of Asia-Pacific to make India integral to new architecture', opined Dr. Swaran Singh, Prof & Chair, Center for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi. He emphasized 'not a single country can solve regional and sub-regional issues on its own, no matter how powerful it is.'

Dr Rizwan Nasser, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations COMSATS, Islamabad, said that China's rising influence and US' declining influence were the new dimensions of emerging security order in Asia Pacific.



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“Pakistan seeks to establish long-term and sustainable relations with regional as well as global players”, stated Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to PM on Foreign Affairs at a conference in Islamabad. He condemned India’s loud opposition to CPEC saying that it was ill-advised.

A two-day International Conference titled “Emerging Security Order in Asia Pacific and its Impact on South Asia” organized by Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), Islamabad office, concluded in Islamabad today. His Excellency, Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the chief guest of the concluding session. The third and fourth sessions of the conference were chaired by Ambassador (R) Fauzia Nasreen, Member IPRI Board of Governors and Head, Center for Policy Studies, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad and Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi, Executive Director, Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS), Islamabad respectively. The eminent speakers were Mr. Javed Jabbar, Dr. Fazal-ur-Rahman, Dr. Liu Zongyi, Mr. Majid Ali Noonari, Dr. Sinderpal Singh, Mr. Zhao Lijiane, Ms. Margaret Adamson, and Mr. Kristof Duwaerts.

The speakers were unanimous in their assertion that Asia Pacific region is in world’s focus for its rapidly growing geopolitical significance, fast economic development, and its strategic position on the sea lines of communication (SLOCs), hence it required regional connectivity.

While discussing ASEAN and Geopolitics of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA)

Dr. Fazal-ur-Rahman, Executive Director, Pakistan Council on China, Islamabad, said that TPPA was as much about geopolitics as it was about trade. It was the economic backbone of Obama's pivot to Asia Policy. ASEAN maintained regional strategic balance with major powers. Now ASEAN faced some challenges as the big powers were increasingly becoming members and their influence was eventually growing in the region.

“Chinese government wants to build Asian Community of Common Destiny and One Belt, One Road while the US tends to flex its military muscle in South China Sea”, said Dr. Liu Zongyi, from Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS), Shanghai, China. He stressed that CPEC would be a potential game changer as it was set to transform Pakistan's economic geography, consolidate the unity of the country, change the economic and security situation in Pakistan by reducing energy shortages. “It's important to integrate India's and US' interest in CPEC, which needs Pakistan and China's efforts”, he contended.

SAARC needed to be revitalized by holding regular frequent dialogue, operationalizing SAFTA, greater use of global and regional value chains and joint economic ventures, said Mr. Javed Jabbar, the Former Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting.

India under Modi's leadership had accepted its role as a linchpin of US Strategy in Asia Pacific, said Mr Majid Ali Noonari, of Area Study Centre, Far East & Southeast Asia, University of Sindh, Jamshoro, Pakistan. He held that Chinese growth and its rising influence in the region had been the main factors behind the US Asia Pivot policy; hence India became the center of US policies to contain China in the region.

Dr. Sinderpal Singh, of Institute of South Asian Studies, National University Singapore, discussed that peace and stability in India was crucial for stability of the South Asian region.

Mr. Zhao Lijian, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the People's Republic of China, Islamabad, held that Asia had come to crucial state, where it needed to innovate common

security which could ensure the security of other countries as well building a cooperative security order.

Asia Pacific is the only way forward said Ms. Margaret Adamson, High Commissioner, High Commission of Australia, Islamabad. She opined that CPEC was going to be a building block in the architecture of this region.

The conference concluded on the positive note that all parties wished for prosperity and stability in the region which could only be guaranteed with peace and sensitizing to the mutual interests and win-win solutions. For Pakistan, there was a need of strategic orientation and exploring ways in which Pakistan might become an asset for China, India, Afghanistan, Iran etc; not just rhetorically but in substantive terms.