



ISLAMABAD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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PRESS RELEASE

One-Day Media Workshop on “Foreign Policy and Diplomacy” 18 January 2018

- Pakistan complies 100% with UN SC Resolution 1267 (1999). The propaganda and misrepresentation of actual facts should be staunchly corrected and clarified by the Government supported by the media.
- The Armed Forces Special Power Act (1990) is the most draconian of all legislations being enforced in the Jammu and Kashmir region. While the legislation has been widely discussed in India over the past few years, Amnesty International and other human rights organisations have repeatedly sought its repeal. However, the Indian Armed Forces are not willing to work in IOK without this oppressive Act.
- Kashmiris have an inalienable right to freedom regardless of India-Pakistan relations and any



foreign policy mistakes that have been made in the past.

- Diplomatic *faux pas* can damage foreign policy issues in the long term. Negotiations should not be conducted in the public domain and need to occur behind closed doors.
- Pakistan is in the right on the issue of consular access to Kulbhushan Jadhav under the 2008 Agreement on Consular Access signed by India and Pakistan. In the treaty, both states agreed that the right of consular access should be subject to discretion in situations where the arrest was made on political or security grounds (Article 6).

These points were highlighted by **Ambassador (R) Abdul Basit** at the One-Day Media Workshop titled “Foreign Policy and Diplomacy” organized by the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) here in Islamabad, today, which was attended by a large number of journalists working with leading news and print channels.

Participants were informed about Pakistan’s broad foreign policy objectives; organisation of its Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA); diplomatic and consular missions abroad; Vienna diplomatic and consular conventions; as well as relevant nuclear and defence-related nomenclature and agreements.



Ambassador (R) Abdul Basit, in his opening remarks, said that it goes without saying that in the fast globalizing world, media is playing a hugely important role in advancing foreign policy objectives. It is, therefore, important that journalists dealing with foreign and strategic policy issues understand and have clarity about facts important for Pakistan. Sharing the workshop objectives, he said that this first of its kind workshop had been initiated for journalists and media personnel working on defence and foreign policy issues. He said that implementation part of every policy, including foreign policy is very important, and pointed out that given the country's size and resources, MoFA was faced with financial and human resource constraints, but even within its limited resources, the Government, with the help of the country's robust media can work towards creating a vibrant and dynamic image of Pakistan.

Ambassador (R) Tajammul Altaf in his presentation highlighted the historical background of the MoFA, its organisational structure and functioning. He said that MoFA is the first line of defence of Pakistan and plays a pivotal role in the conduct of foreign policy and diplomatic relations by safeguarding the fundamental and national country's interests. Established at Mohatta Palace, Karachi with only 40 officers/officials, it is now known as the Foreign Service of Pakistan and has 2911 diplomats and officers. 'This is still a very small number when compared with that of other neighboring countries', he argued.

Ambassador Altaf explained that MoFA's main functions include articulation of effective foreign policy; promotion of Pakistan's interests abroad; maintaining diplomatic relations with other countries; declaration of war and the making of peace, although now this is taken care of at different levels; negotiations for settlement of issues (especially the most important issue of the Kashmir dispute) amongst others.

In the final part of his presentation, he discussed the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, and the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations. VCODR (1961) defines the privileges and immunities of a diplomatic mission and its personnel that enable them to perform their functions satisfactorily without pressures, fear, coercion, intimidation or harassment by the host country. He explained that privileges and immunities are reciprocal between the states and under these Conventions, diplomats are not allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of the host country nor allow official premises of a diplomatic mission for any improper activities. At this point, the differences in case of Raymond Davis and Kulbhushan Jadhav were also highlighted. Ambassador Altaf stressed that 'privileges and immunities are granted to diplomats for ensuring smooth functioning of their duties. These are not meant

to be abused or undertake undesirable activities. The host nation at any time and for any reason can declare a particular member of the diplomatic staff to be *persona non grata*.’



Assistant Research Officer of IPRI *Ms Gulshan Bibi* gave exhaustive presentations on widely used terminologies, legislation, laws and agreements. Regarding the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, she shared the differences between Line of Control (LoC), Working Boundary, International Border, Line of Actual Control (LAC) and ICP Border Crossings. She shared the various UNSC Resolutions and Commitments about the dispute. The participants were told that the 24 December 1952 UN SC Res 98 is very critical as it outlines the specific number of forces to remain on each side of the ceasefire line at the end of the period of demilitarisation, ‘this number to be between 3,000 and 6,000 armed forces remaining on the Pakistan side of the ceasefire line and between 12,000 and 18,000 armed forces remaining on the India side of the cease-line.’ The speaker also pointed out that apart from the various ‘Black Laws’ being enforced

in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the Armed Forces Special Power Act (1990) was the most dangerous of all since it provides the basis to the Indian military to suppress legitimate political activity.

The journalists were informed that it is a misconception that any ceasefire ‘agreement’ exists between India and Pakistan. ‘The 26 November 2003 ceasefire is not a formal agreement, it is simply an understanding on both sides.’ It was also pointed out that the Joint Anti-Terrorism Mechanism (2006) between India and Pakistan no longer exists since India did not agree to Pakistan’s offer to invoke it following the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Discussing the Afghanistan–Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA 2010) which lapsed in 2015, she shared that Pakistan allows Afghan exports to India through Wagah, but this remains a bone of contention. Ambassador Basit also pointed out that in the future pressure may come from China for Pakistan to open up its border for regional connectivity as part of CPEC.

Ms Gulshan also briefly highlighted various regional organizations such as Shanghai Corporation Organization (SCO), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), their achievements, objectives and implications. She argued that Pakistan with a consumer market of over 200 million people, vast business potential and a rapidly developing infrastructure, offers the SCO enormous opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation, and as a full member, Pakistan can work with SCO to counter terrorism threat in the region; and work towards better relations with India.

Given their frequent usage, the speaker also clarified and shared the definitions of various nuclear and defence-related terminologies. In this regard, No First Use Nuclear Doctrine, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), the proposed Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) were also discussed.

In the informal Q/A session, journalists shared that they found the workshop to be highly informative and hoped that similar events would be planned in the future. It was also stressed that more behind the scenes diplomacy is needed in USA, especially given President Trump’s recent remarks and policies about the region. ‘The MoFA needs to create a strong and dedicated public policy division since public diplomacy is 24/7 job’, it was concluded. ■