



# ISLAMABAD POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

5<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:ipripak@ipripak.org); Website: [www.ipripak.org](http://www.ipripak.org)

## PRESS RELEASE

### Guest Lecture

## Pakistan-US Relations

14 December 2018

***The United States needs to establish its counterterrorism policy keeping in view the local sensitivities of other nations.***



Mr Harrison Akins, Research Fellow at the University of Tennessee's Howard H. Baker, Jr., Center for Public Policy, Knoxville, USA, who has recently coined a new term 'Terrorism Trap', visited IPRI today. He discussed how US' counterterrorism policies had increased anti-Americanism in many Muslim countries. He suggested that the US needs to distinguish between international and domestic terrorism: 'If you look at the trajectory of two kinds of terrorism, there are very different outcomes. Number of international terrorist attacks each year remains relatively small. However, if we look at domestic terrorism, we see a different story,' he informed. Domestic terrorist attacks had increased substantially after 2001, especially after 2004. Unfortunately, Pakistan is one of those states where there has been dramatic increase in domestic terrorist attacks, he added.



‘Regrettably, the US too often establishes its counterterrorism policy based upon its own interests and tries to find one-size-fits-all approach, which is not sensitive to local, political, social, cultural and historical contexts,’ he admitted. Hence, what it pursues in Pakistan is similar to what it pursues in Algeria, Yemen, Kenya, even though all these states are vastly different, and it is difficult to imagine a single strategy working in all these different societies and contexts.

He briefly discussed the main foundations of US’ counterterrorism policy. Firstly, the US views the problem through military approach. For instance, after the Bush administration took over, it adopted a military approach after 9/11. It was less about bringing the criminals to justice, and more about making a statement – pursuing the latter became very important for the US. Secondly, the US has a broad conception of who the ‘enemy’ really is. There was a shift in US’ counterterrorism policy in 2004. When the cost of its unilateral action became too high, it opted for a more preventive approach. This change in policy explains the increase in domestic terrorism leading to the ‘Terrorism Trap’, he explained.



Later in the Q/A session, responding to a question on warming Indo-US ties, Mr Akins said that the Republican Party and Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) have several commonalities, for example, both have serious reservations about Islam; and both have strong business ties. Also, Indian diaspora have strong influence given their huge lobbies in the US. While Pakistan is mired in security issues, Indo-US business ties are growing. Although, India is a bigger economy,





Pakistan remains a key stakeholder in South Asia, he opined. Mr Akins recommended that the US needs to move beyond its narrow focus on security, and engage with Pakistan as a sovereign nation:

*The US needs to establish and enhance business and people-to-people exchanges; and scholarship programmes. Both sides need to focus on what is common and need to identify areas of cooperation to rebuild trust. from this position of trust, both countries can work on serious issues...As long as we continue to pound pressure on security interests, it will not help. The US should not work on a one-track mind-set.*

Earlier, Acting President, IPRI, Brig (R) Mohammad Mehboob Qadir said that Pakistan and the US need to work towards repairing their frayed relations, which at present are neither in the interest of the US , nor in the interest of Pakistan.