

Two Day National Conference

FLASHPOINTS OF SOUTH ASIAN SECURITY: A REVIEW OF
POLITICAL AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE IN SOUTH ASIA



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Flashpoints of South Asian Security: A Review of Political and Security Architecture in South Asia

Strategic Vision Institute organized a Conference titled as “Flashpoints of South Asian Security: A Review of Political and Security Architecture in South Asia” held on December 8-9, 2014 at Serena Hotel, Islamabad.

Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema, President SVI, welcomed the distinguished guests and speakers while introducing the format and modalities of the two days scholastic exercise. Dr. Cheema, at the very outset, highlighted the profound structural changes that took place in the politics of South Asia in last three years. He stated that the major players of South Asian region have undergone political leadership changes especially in terms of foreign and security policies. He then stated that the agenda of the conference is to discuss the South Asia’s unstable political dispensation and fragile security architecture that gave rise to worries of violent escalation in the region. The intensification of hostilities along the Line of Control and Working Boundary during the past few months and cancellation of bilateral Foreign Secretaries talks by India were symptoms of the enduring complexity of the Pak-India hostile labyrinth.



In his address as a Chief Guest, Former Foreign Secretary, Shamshad Ahmad said that



peace with India cannot be achieved by compromising on principle positions on Kashmir and other contentious issues. He said that India wanted to keep Pakistan under relentless pressure to force a settlement of Kashmir issue on its own (Indian) terms. He voiced his fear that the government was in a hurry to make peace with India. “Peace that they want will not come by compromising on our principled positions.” Talking about Afghanistan, Mr. Ahmad said that

India cannot be allowed to jeopardize Pakistan’s vital interests in Afghanistan. He feared an India-Pakistan proxy war in post-2014 Afghanistan could have perilous security implications for the region and the rest of the world.

Mr. Ross Masood Hussain chaired the session titled, “Shifting Political Landscape of the Sub-continent”. Mr. Hussain introduced the speakers. The first speaker, Dr. Tughral Yamin spoke on “Electoral Politics in Pakistan and its Implications for the Political Landscape of the Sub-continent”.



Talking about the history of constitution making in Pakistan, Dr. Yamin briefly discussed some salient features of the Objective Resolution of 1949, Constitution of 1956, Constitution of 1962, legal framework order of 1970, and Constitution of 1973. He also highlighted some common observations about the electoral system in Pakistan. While talking about the essential electoral reforms, he recommended that, for free and fair elections, there is a need to ensure an independent & effective election commission.



Dr. Mujeeb Afzal shared his views on “The Resurrection of the BJP and Modi: Impact on Bilateral Politics of the Sub-continent”. He analyzed the political behavior of India, which according to him is facing broadly two discourses for the last thirty years in very intense manner: 1); Indian Nationalism, and 2); Hindu Nationalism. Dr. Afzal said that Modi is a charismatic personality who can mobilize masses and inspire people towards Hindu Ideology. He further said that India is not interested in any tangible relationship with Pakistan and is eyeing at integration of the region without it (Pakistan).



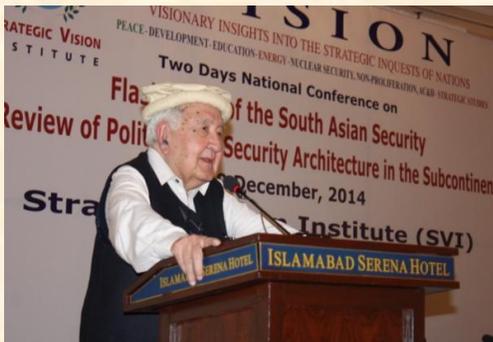
Dr. Hasan Askari Rizvi thereafter shared his views on “Current Political and Security Architecture of the Sub-Continent”. He opined that there are two major aspects of the current political and security architecture in the Sub-continent; Firstly, Physical and military features and issues, and secondly it includes; diplomatic, political and economic dimensions. Highlighting Pakistan’s security architecture, he said, Pakistan can improve its position in the security, political and economic architecture of the Sub-Continent/South Asia by pursuing active diplomacy, expanding its interaction at the global level, putting its political and economic house in order, and addressing extremism and terrorism in a forthright manner. Pakistan needs to improve its positive relevance to the international system by becoming an attractive place for trade, investment, and economic activity. It should be viewed at the international level as a part of the solution of the problem of terrorism, regional instability and incoherence.



Amb. (Retd) Shamshad Ahmad in his keynote address thanked the President, Chairman and staff of the SVI for arranging such an enlightened gathering. He said that peace in South Asia would remain elusive as long as Kashmir remained under Indian occupation. Amb. Ahmed said that the statement issued on January 6, 2004 after a meeting between Musharraf and Vajpayee included an assurance by the former that "he will not permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used for terrorism in any manner". He said, "Gen Musharraf had in effect given an affidavit that there would be no cross border activity from Pakistani side. This

could be implied as an admission that whatsoever happened in the past was Pakistan's fault." He also highlighted that this statement was not drafted and issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad.

Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Syed M. Owais chaired the third session titled as: "Sub-continent Security Architecture: Intra-Regional Flashpoints". Gen. Owais introduced the speakers. Mr. Shams-Ul-Mulk, former chairman WAPDA spoke about "India-Pakistan Water Dispute as Threat to Regional Stability and Security".



Mr. Shams-Ul-Mulk said that water shortages present the greatest future threat to the viability of Pakistan as a state and a society. Mr. Mulk said that China built 22,000 medium and large dams, India built 4,500 dams, while Pakistan failed to develop consensus over Kalabagh and Diamer-Bhasha dams. He said that Rs.192 billion is the price that the people of Pakistan are paying every year by not building dams. He further added that both the dams would have produced 9,000 megawatts of electricity and people would have electricity at Rs. 1.54 per unit instead of the current Rs. 18.00 per unit.

Defense Analyst Brigadier (Retd.) Samson Simon Sharaf talked about "The Kashmir Tangle: Its impact on Regional Security". Sharaf called for restructuring talks with India whenever the parleys resume, making Kashmir first on the list of issues of concern. He said Kashmir was a social and political issue, but we had been trying to resolve it militarily. While discussing solutions, he recommended that Composite Dialogue should be focused to Kashmir first. While engaging the international community, we should continue the political and moral support to the Kashmir cause, fast track socio-economic development that strengthens Pakistan, and attract trade and socio-economic linkages across the Line of Control. There should be support for a sincere and fresh blood leadership in Kashmir. He further added that through mobilizing international seminars, lectures and social media, we must organize the Kashmiri Diaspora over into effective pressure groups.



Dr. Rizwana Abbasi's paper highlighted: "Enduring India-Pakistan Hostility vs. Prospects of Conflict Resolution: A Comparative Analysis of Historic-Ideological Divergence and Imperatives of Co-existence". She contended that India was trying to sidestep the Kashmir issue by keeping Pakistan engaged with allegations of terrorism. She said that Pakistan perceived India as 'a hegemonic power bent upon breaking Pakistan', and India perceived Pakistan as 'a breakaway part of India and a constant threat to its own fragile communal balance'. Highlighting the role of nuclear weapons in the region, Dr. Abbasi said that nuclear weapons will continue to play a role in the national security policy of these two states as these weapons did maintain fragile peace and prevented outbreak of a conventional or total war.



In his keynote address, Former Defence Secretary, Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Asif Yasin Malik said that India was using newer tactics to gain absolute control over occupied Jammu and Kashmir including planned repatriation of Hindu pundits, abrogation of Article 370 that gave special status to occupied valley and possible trifurcation of the disputed region. Gen. Malik said that Pakistan had, in the past, showed a lot of flexibility for the sake of resolving the dispute, but India, because of its insincerity, rejected every offer and opportunity. He said that India even rejected former President Gen. Pervez Musharraf's four point formula that significantly deviated from the country's official position.



In the second day's proceedings, Mr. Ross Masood Husain, Chairperson SVI, welcomed the participants and briefly reviewed the first day's proceedings. Mr. Husain put light on the concept of today's security, which in his opinion has changed now. He said that a state can't claim its security by only securing its borders but in the new world order, the realm of security does apply to securing the cultures and the ways of life.

Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema, President/Executive Director SVI, chaired the fourth session titled "Sub-continent's Security Architecture: Structural Dynamics and Policy-Intent." Dr. Cheema while introducing the panel highlighted the importance of this timely discussion. Dr. Zulfqar Khan, first speaker of the session, presented his views on "Pakistan's Security Challenges and Response Capability". He highlighted the sitting Modi government's aggressive posture as a greater security challenge to Pakistan. He then emphasized that Pakistan needs to rationalize its foreign policy, and restructure its relations with Afghanistan. According to Dr. Zulfqar, for Pakistan, commonly adhered bandwagon policy would be a poor option in the present scenario. He discussed the importance of efficient command and control system as well as the need to restructure it.

Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal talked about “India's Power Pursuit and its Impact on South Asian Security”. Dr. Jaspal deliberated on two issues; first, what are the determinants on the basis of which we claim that India is pursuing power? And secondly, how we see it destabilize South Asian security? He said that economic growth available for arms forces has created three important favorable conditions for India to peruse its great power status or power. 1) Large funding available to modernize Indian armed forces. 2) Western choice against China. 3) Foreign military hard power. Dr. Jaspal also talked about Indian increased investment in military budget. He concluded his discussion by saying that Indian pursuit of power is generating classic dilemma in South Asia.



Brig. (Retd.) Mahmood Shah shared his views on “Political Change in Afghanistan and Its Impact on South Asian Security Architecture”. He said that for a permanent solution of Afghanistan’s problem, internal harmony between various ethnic groups is a first pre-requisite. He then added that due to Operation Zarb-e-Azb, the center of gravity of terrorism that was pushed into Pakistan has been pushed out. In the overall world scenario, the center of gravity of terrorism has also shifted to the Middle East from South Asia but still South Asia remains very important in world peace. Mr. Mahmood summed up his discussion by saying that political change in Afghanistan, which forms the first building block in the overall situation of South Asia, is a step in the right direction with the hope that various power players are not allowed to play with it in a negative manner for their vested interests.



After the presentation of all three speakers, Q & A session began; participants of the conference actively participated in the session and raised some important questions. In his keynote address Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema said that there is no immediate military threat to



Pakistan from India. He noted that the country possessed enough conventional and strategic capabilities to deal with any challenge. The major challenge, he said, was socio-economic in nature and was very acute. He added that it is more of a question of managing the economy, which

has long been massively mismanaged. Dr. Cheema emphasized that the political leadership needed to act together for dealing with the dilemma country is facing.



Amb. (Retd.) Akram Zaki, chaired fifth session titled “South Asian Security: Extra-Regional Perspectives”. Amb. Zaki introduced the panel of speakers.

Zeenia Sadiq Satti shared her thoughts on “Extra-Regional Inputs in the South Asian Security: The US and West's Role in the Regional Security”. She highlighted the two perspective of South Asian security, one of which is Indian perspective and other is Pakistani perspective. She talked about the importance of the role of the US in the region prevailed after the 9/11 incident. She then said that the increased Western involvement in the region after the 9/11, hit the core value of regionalism, which is sovereignty. She also focused on the declaratory policy as well as the operational policy of the West regarding the South Asia.



Former Ambassador Khalid Khattak spoke on “Extra-Regional Inputs in the South Asian Security: Role of Russia, China and SCO”. He said that present day Russia and the former Soviet



Union maintained strongest ties with India and often found themselves directly opposed to Pakistani policies in the region. However, in the past two years, Russia has sought to improve ties with Pakistan. Russia is making efforts to strengthen its economic ties with the region after years of neglect but its first concern about South Asia is security. Amb. Khattak also analyzed some unique characteristics of SCO as well as the Chinese role in the regional security.

Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Qasim Qureshi predicted about “South Asian Security Beyond 2014”. He divided his discussion into four parts. At First, he talked about the certain peculiar aspects of ongoing power shift in Asia and also highlighted the relevance of South Asia in this process. Secondly, he highlighted the emerging strategic orientation of both India and China, in the backdrop of the US policy of rebalancing in Asia. Thirdly, he identified the key trends being displayed by major powers in their economic and strategic interaction. In the last, he suggested policy options for Pakistan.



Secretary National Security Committee, Amb. Muhammad Sadiq, in his keynote address said that it would be dishonest to say that Daish is not a threat, knowing the contacts between it and Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and the Afghan Taliban”. Mr. Sadiq said, “Daish has not

challenged the security scene here, but sees this region as a potential recruitment ground". He discussed the factors that could help the group in recruiting new fighters. A big hurdle in Daish's way is the controversy over who would be 'Amir-ul-Momineen' – Baghdadi or Taliban Chief Mullah Omar, he said. The latter has not been seen since 2002. He expressed the fear that Pakistan could be in far big trouble if a more brutal and vicious Daish succeeded in replacing the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. He further added that preparation of the National Security Policy is being done in a manner that it provides time to the concerned ministries to seek budgetary allocations in fiscal year 2015-16 for actions they may be asked to take. Mr. Sadiq said that the policy would be a comprehensive document covering both traditional and non-traditional challenges to National Security. It would also include a National Security Doctrine. Besides framing the policy, Mr. Sadiq said, the National Security Division, which serves as the Secretariat to the National Security Committee, was also working on reforms for the Federally Administered Tribal Areas; de-radicalization and counter-radicalization strategies; and plans for de-criminalizing the border with Afghanistan.



In his concluding remarks, Dr Zafar Iqbal Cheema offered special thanks to the Chief Guest, distinguish speakers and participants on behalf of the Strategic Vision Institute.

