

SVI Bi-Monthly Seminar August 2016: Report

India's Strategic Objectives, Capabilities and Future Architecture of the South Asian Security



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Strategic Vision Institute (SVI) organized a Bi-monthly seminar on the topic titled “India’s Strategic Objectives, Capabilities and Future Architecture of the South Asian Security” held on August 17, 2016 at the Islamabad Club. Three speakers: Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal (Associate Professor, IR-QAU), Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema (President/Executive Director, SVI), and Mr. Syed Muhammad Ali (Senior Research Fellow, CISS) were invited along with the Chief Guest Ambassador (R) Khalid Mehmood (Chairman ISSI), to discuss and analytically review India’s strategic doctrine and its objectives as well as the contemporary regional security architecture of South Asia and its future prospects. The seminar was chaired by Mr. Ross Masood Husain (Chairperson SVI).

Mr. Amanullah Khan, Research Associate SVI, recited a few verses from the holy Quran and formally marked the beginning of the event. Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema, President/Executive Director SVI, in his opening remarks thanked and welcomed the speakers and the chairs for affording valuable time out of their busy schedule to speak on a key contemporary subject of international significance. He said that no one is more qualified than these distinguished guests to look professionally into the important issue. While talking about the dynamics of South Asian security he mentioned how it is being affected by recent events in the region and specifically talked at length about the current insurgency in Indian held Kashmir (IHK).



He said that the current struggle in IHK has not been prompted by Pakistan; instead it is an indigenous struggle for the liberation of Kashmir from Indian occupation. He condemned Indian atrocities and stated that India has constantly been using force against peaceful demonstration of unarmed civilians. At the same time he proposed that Pakistan’s policy on Kashmir also needs to be reviewed. Just being happy on watching Pakistani flag in the hands of Kashmiris is not helping the Kashmir cause. Instead Pakistani policy makers should altogether

revisit the basic principle of support to Kashmiris on purely human grounds and determine a resolute diplomatic and moral support for the realization of their rights. He further suggested that Pakistan should continue to use international platforms like UN, more rigorously to raise the issue at the global level. However, rejoicing and appreciation of Pakistani flag being hoisted in the streets of Srinagar would only invite more repression from the Indian forces so this is what

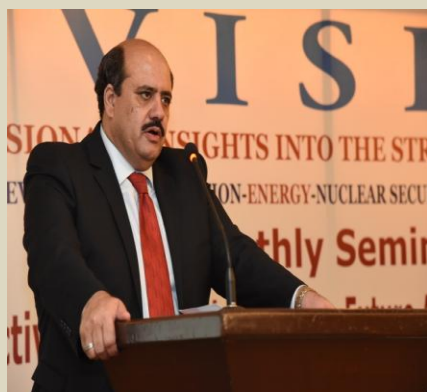
should be avoided. He said that Indian PM Narendra Modi's recent statement on Baluchistan has made things worse for any possibility regarding result-oriented dialogue process between India and Pakistan even though Pakistan is still willing and open for the talks. He endorsed and appreciated Indian former Minister of External Affairs Salman Khurshid's criticism of Indian PM for accusing Pakistan of atrocities in Baluchistan and Kashmir in his Independence Day address. He opined that by giving such a statement India may lose its case on Kashmir and will give more legitimacy to Pakistan's stance on Kashmir because Kashmir is a disputed territory while Baluchistan is not a disputed territory and is rather an internal matter of Pakistan. Dr. Cheema elaborated that Pakistan is still open for talks and has once again offered India to discuss Kashmir dispute. The former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf encouraged Track-II diplomacy however this time the Pakistani leadership is pursuing Track-I diplomacy and has directly invited India for the talks. Another important development in the region is the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which carries long term political, economic and military implications for South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia. CPEC is also a source of great concern for the US and India where both the countries have shown simultaneous reservations against it. After his initial remarks on the topic he invited the Chief Guest Ambassador Khalid Mehmood to deliberate on the subject.

Ambassador Khalid Mehmood extended thanks to Dr. Cheema, for inviting him as a Chief Guest. Talking about the South Asian security environment, he mentioned that Pakistan and India had global aspiration since independence. India adopted the path more proactively keeping in view its large size, huge population and history. It not only wanted to become a regional power but a hegemonic power to dominate and to have its sphere of influence. This led India to acquire military, economic and cultural strength. It started its nuclear program that forced Pakistan to adopt the same path. Presently, India talks of Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) and refuses talks with Pakistan. It is using its economic power to ultimately enhance its military power. It has become an arrogant power, seeking full membership into UN Security Council (UNSC) and Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). In this quest it finds Pakistan as the only hurdle. He further stated that the developments



in Afghanistan, Middle East and Pakistan-China relations have also impacted the regional security in South Asia. Regarding dialogue process between India and Pakistan, he said that the two countries have different approaches to it. Pakistan on its part wants to keep Kashmir at the top of dialogue agenda as it is the core issue between the two neighboring states. While, India on the other hand says that first there is a need to create conducive environment. The developments on the talks have been stalled because India wants to talk on issues of its interests while excluding the most important issue of Kashmir. This is the reason why composite dialogue so far has not yet been successful.

Ambassador (R) Mehmood said that India is utilizing its military, economic and diplomatic strengths against Pakistan, and Pakistan has to devise its strategy accordingly in order to counter Indian designs. Pakistan believes that peace is mandatory for economic development and therefore it is focused on curbing militancy at home by military operations. Pakistan also believes in having cordial relations with all its neighbors and considers that stability in Afghanistan has direct impact on Pakistan's stability. He further mentioned that South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has also not been productive because of Indo-Pak strained relations. Indian brutality in Kashmir is continuing but the international community, UN, and human rights organizations are not playing active role to put an end to the Indian atrocities there. He stressed that India should stop violating human rights in Kashmir and should abide by the commitment it gave to the UN, to the international community and the people of Kashmir. He concluded by expressing hope that India would behave positively to the recent offer from Pakistan to resume dialogue process. He reiterated that India should start genuine talks in good faith with Pakistan.



The first speaker Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal talked on 'Great Power's Alignment in the Region and Future Implications'. He began his speech by defining the concept of Great power and Major power. He explained that Great powers are those who have supremacy within the region due to their hard power capabilities, especially military capability to pursue political objectives within a region. Major powers on the other hand

have the capability to influence the behavior of other states. He shed light on the trends in the 21st century and said that the international politics is like cyclical theory, in which actors change but activities remain the same. He said that the global politics is in a state of flux and a new geopolitical landscape is emerging. There was competition between China and the US before 9/11, which turned into cooperation after 9/11 on the issue of terrorism. Now there seems to be appearing tension between them again. He said that we see US as the sole superpower but some scholars from the US do not think so and instead take the US as a preeminent power which is focused on expanding its dominance in Europe and South East Asia. He said that the US and India have strategic partnership but that cannot be called military alliance. At the same time, the US has maintained partnership with Pakistan. He elaborated on the point that Pakistan's alliance with the US in 1950s by becoming members of SEATO and CENTO was for its survival. However, Indian partnership is not for its survival. He said that Russia today is still a superpower, its invasion of Georgia in 2008, annexation of Crimea in 2014, and present day role in Syria qualify its force projection capabilities as a great power. About the politics in the Asia Pacific region, he said that China has shown its gradual assertiveness in the last one and half year. Recently on June 4, 2016, American National Defence Secretary, Ashton Carter, said at the Asian security summit in Singapore, that the US is building bilateral, trilateral and multilateral arrangements for regional security. This shows that the US policy of containing China is now more visible. A Chinese representative on June 5 this year said that the region is very much interdependent and there is no insecurity, however, the Cold War mentality is hurting regional security. In connection to that the US would encourage India to build its naval forces within the Indian Ocean. Another important aspect is China-Pakistan economic cooperation. For Pakistan, it is an economic venture while international community is looking at this cooperation differently. For China, the corridor carries importance not just as an alternate route to divert its trade from Strait of Malacca to Gawadar but also has a strategic advantage for itself. Similarly the defence cooperation between Iran and India and the deal with India for constructing Chabahar sea port is another development having implications for the regional security architecture. Yet another development is that Turkey, a frontline NATO country, has shown inclination towards Russia. Dr. Jaspal maintained that directly or indirectly these developments will have implications on the regional security. Finally, he talked about three implications; First, the Security Dilemma will be amplified in the region. Secondly, this security dilemma will

inevitably lead to the trend of an arms race, and thirdly, the strategic partnership with the sole power is causing complexity in the mindset of leadership. The encouraging attitude of the US towards India has given the Indian leadership a superiority complex. There are people within Indian political circle who think that ABM system is workable. This kind of thinking could lead to miscalculation on Indian side and could bring a nuclear war to the region.

The second speaker; Dr.Zafar Iqbal Cheema, President / Executive Director SVI, talked about ‘India’s Strategic Doctrine and Objectives’ and said that he was not speaking as President of the SVI but as a scholar and expert on the nuclear, strategic and foreign policy issues. He pointed out that the origin of Indian strategic doctrine lies in the legacy of the British forward defence policy. The British projected their military power on all sides of the Indian sub-continent extending it into the Indian Ocean and



on the West to Afghanistan. After the partition of the sub-continent, the border between Pakistan and India has been a bone of contention. India tries to keep the legacy of British forward defence policy while Pakistan expresses resistance to it, which resulted in three wars between the two countries. Hence till date there is a strong power struggle going on in the region. India is trying to exercise a kind of predominance as a hegemonic state in South Asia. There were different political reasons for the wars but behind them was the motive of power projection on the Indian side. India inherited this great power ambition from Britain. Nehru claimed on an occasion that India is made for this and is destined to be a great power. He had not visualized India as a great power at the regional level but at the global level. This ambitious nature of India is also evident from some events such as India’s forced annexation of Hyderabad, Jalandhar, Kashmir, and the attempt to undermine Sri Lankan sovereignty in 1980s where India signed an agreement with Sri Lankan government to curb the ongoing insurgency and sent 60 thousand troops to help Sri Lanka. There was provision in the agreement that without India’s permission other countries’ military ships will not dock at Sri Lankan ports. In 1988, India had a problem with Nepal, just as the current Modi government. India is trying to exercise its influence on Nepal undermining Nepal’s sovereignty. This is the basic genesis of India’s defence doctrine. Similarly, India’s nuclear option was developed right from the time of independence. Nehru was the political

architecture of India's nuclear weapons option. This option was created within the framework of India's civilian nuclear program wherein India's nuclear reactors were built for making nuclear weapons. Nehru in 1950s said that India missed an industrial revolution but it is not going to miss the nuclear revolution. And that nuclear revolution is not confined to only peaceful uses of nuclear technology but includes development of nuclear and strategic power. India's strategic doctrine is reflection of its keenness to acquire military superiority and that includes India's acquisition of nuclear weapons by all available means. All of this surely has direct implications for Pakistan. Even though India claims that Pakistan is not its concern, however, the reality is that 90 percent of its conventional forces are deployed near Pakistani border. One other aspect of India's strategic doctrine lies in understanding of India's cultural strategic behavior. There is dichotomy between India's policies, a declaratory policy and an operational policy. A famous Indian, Ashok Kapoor says that military use of nuclear technology is not opposite to that of peaceful use of the technology. Indian peaceful nuclear program is part of its nuclear weapon program. India successfully made the world believe that 1974 nuclear test was peaceful nuclear explosion (PNE) and worked to build a supporting narrative too. India's no first use policy is also ambiguous. The 1998 draft nuclear doctrine of India talks of credible minimum deterrence and no first use of nuclear weapons. However, this draft nuclear doctrine was not operationalized. The only part operationalized was in January 2003. Both the provisions of no first use and minimum credible deterrence were withdrawn in the operationalized parts of the draft nuclear doctrine. The operationalized part says that if India is attacked by chemical, biological or radiological weapons, it reserves the right to retaliate with nuclear weapons. Secondly it says that if Indian forces are attacked not only in India but anywhere in the world, India would retaliate with nuclear weapons. So it creates the possibility that Indian forces could be deployed in other parts outside India. India also says that if Pakistan uses Tactical Nuclear Weapons, then it would retaliate massively through nuclear weapons. The development of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBM), Surya (yet to be tested), with range of 8000-12000 kilometers that could hit US clearly hints at India's aspirations of acquiring the capabilities of a great power. Indian naval projection capabilities, nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers are indications of Indian supremacy in the Indian Ocean where the US is helping India in the projection of its military power. An article by Stephen Cohen in the book about India, *Arming without Aiming*, explains that India is developing strategic power without exactly having a

potential adversary in mind. In sum, India's strategic power projection aims to achieve the status of a global power, for that it is looking for a permanent membership at UNSC to have veto power so that it could increase its sphere of influence around the world.

The third speaker Mr. Syed Muhammad Ali, Senior Research Fellow at CISS, talked about "The Contemporary Regional Security Architecture: Prospects and Future Possibilities". He



began with extending thanks to the SVI and Dr. Cheema for inviting him. He argued that regional security architecture should not be looked from traditional perspective. Security of what and security from whom, is important to know. He mentioned five aspects/dimensions of security architecture as political, diplomatic, economic, military and cultural being important areas to look into in order to develop the

basic conceptual framework. While talking about the political dimension he explained that the political aspect of a state interest is the most important one because decisions of political leadership are detrimental as far as policies of a state are concerned. Political interests of a state, in other words, preside over other interests, i.e., military, economic and cultural interests. Political elites set the goals, and take decisions as to what policy to pursue towards other states with available resources. Moving on to the diplomatic dimension, he explained that in diplomatic aspect, a state decides how to deal with the world, how a state behaves and how it interacts with the rest of the world. What options and instruments of power it chooses to employ for maintaining relationship with the outside world. Who it identifies as an impediment to its national interests and who it identifies as a potential ally. Similarly the economic dimension is how much economic wealth a country accumulates and more importantly for what purposes it uses them. He gave the example of US and China stating that the US spends five times more than China on defence. He raised a pertinent question as to whether it is because America faces threats to its survival more than China, or it is politically more ambitious at the systemic level. He then suggested that the latter seems closer to the reality as survival is the preeminent goal of the US. Same is the behavior of India in South Asia; its military buildup is proving an impediment in regional cooperation. India is using its economic power to become a military

might instead of working for regional integration. However he suggested that the Indian strategic partnership with the US is not going to be productive if it aims to become a great power at the cost of having enmity with regional states. Mr. Muhammad Ali deconstructed military dimension of the regional security architecture into four domains namely: Nuclear, Conventional, Sub-conventional, and Cyber. In terms of nuclear and conventional domains, Pakistan's credible nuclear deterrence has prevented India to exploit its conventional advantage over Pakistan. The nuclear factor of Pakistan has worked positively as a sustainable and a cost effective factor of stability in the region. Moving on to the cultural dimension he opined that in this context a state has to preserve its identity and value system. This is quite a difficult task in the age of globalization and hence is a challenge for Pakistan as well. He maintained that the regional security architecture is undergoing transformation, and faces challenges. The overarching political objective of India is to see the region as its sphere of influence, no matter at what cost. Pakistan, despite limited resources has the potential to deny India the ability to prevent the maintenance of balance of power in the region. Pakistan wants balance of power in the region and seeks to have friendly relations with India, at equal level, with respect and in a mutually beneficial manner. He pointed out that India is violating laws / resolutions of the same international organizations to which it has applied for full membership, i.e., UNSC and NSG. For Pakistan he suggested that there is a need for political and economic stability. In this regard developmental projects like CPEC should be completed on time, and good civil-military relations in the country are fundamental for overall stability in the country. Moreover, diverse foreign policy options would help in meeting foreign challenges to the country.

The seminar was followed by a very interactive and thought provoking Question and Answer session and open debate between the speakers and audiences. Mr. Sham uz Zaman posed a question to Mr. Muhammad Ali, asking the role of ideology in state security architecture? Replying to the question Mr. Muhammad Ali said that ideology is important but there are different paradigms to look at such as what kind of political system a country wants, also in the socio-cultural context, religion, history and culture, collectively determine the character and identity of a state and influences its domestic and foreign policies.

Mr. Syed Muhammad Ayub Shah, asked Dr. Jaspal to elaborate on why India is called a big power and if it is justified to call it one? Dr. Jaspal replied that there is no doubt that India is a power as is evident from its huge population, large size, and its great economic and military potential. It has the capability to influence the behavior of other state. He gave the example that India is abusing human rights in Kashmir despite UNSC resolutions on Kashmir, but nobody is openly criticizing its brutal policy. This is just because of its power capabilities.

Mr. Dost Muhammad asked about the reality and myths behind the second strike capability of India. Dr. Cheema responded to the question by saying that nuclear weapons is not a number game, it's a psychological and political game to deter an enemy from attacking. Minimum credible deterrence is the capability that keeps enemy away from attacking.

Mr. Muhammad Saddam from National Defence University asked about the role of Non State Actors (NSAs) in great power politics. Mr. Muhammad Ali addressed the question briefly by saying that NSAs are an important reality that cannot be ignored as they provide the states with an opportunity as well as with certain challenges in the global power politics.

At the end, Mr. Ross Masood Husain and Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema, extended thanks to the Chief Guest, worthy speakers, and the audience for their valuable time and presence.

Press Coverage

The proceeding of in-house seminar discussion was covered in following leading newspapers.

The links are mentioned below:

DAWN:

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1278513>

Daily Times:

<http://dailytimes.com.pk/islamabad/19-Aug-16/proactive-support-for-kashmir-freedom-struggle-stressed>

Pakistan Observer:

<http://pakobserver.net/proactive-support-for-kashmiri-freedom-struggle-needed-svi/>

Al-Bab Institute of Strategic Studies:

<http://www.jassimtaqui.com/2016/08/india-seeks-to-be-global-power.html>