



NATIONAL SEMINAR
**EMERGING ALLIANCES IN ASIA
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PAKISTAN**

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Institute for Strategic Studies Research and Analysis (ISSRA)
National Defense University, Islamabad Pakistan

National Seminar
Emerging Alliances in Asia
Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan

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CONTENTS

| | | |
|---|---------|----|
| Introduction | 01 | |
| <hr/> | | |
| Overview | 02 | |
| Findings/Key Takeaways | 02 | |
| Recommendations & Way Forward | 05 | |
| <hr/> | | |
| Inaugural Session | 08 | |
| Welcome Remarks | 09 | |
| Keynote Address by Chief Guest | 11 | |
| <hr/> | | |
| Session I | 16 | |
| Emerging Alliances in Asia | 17 | |
| Asia between Economic Cooperation and Strategic Competition | 18 | |
| Crisis around the Corner: Regional Rivalries between India, Pakistan, Iran-KSA, Palestine | 21 | |
| Changing Geopolitics in South Asia | 25 | |
| <hr/> | | |
| Session II | 28 | |
| Asia: What Next? | 29 | |
| Changing Middle East Ground Realities: Is US Still Interested? | 30 | |
| Pakistan's Geo Economics Importance for Regional Peace | 32 | |
| <hr/> | | |
| Closing Session | 36 | |
| Keynote Address by Chief Guest | 37 | |
| <hr/> | | |
| Annexes | 46 | |
| Concept Note | Annex A | 43 |
| Seminar Program | Annex B | 44 |
| Profiles | Annex C | 45 |
| <hr/> | | |
| Pictures Gallery | 56 | |

Emerging Alliances in Asia Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan

Introduction

The Institute for Strategic Studies and Analysis (ISSRA) NDU organized a one-day national seminar on “Emerging Alliances in Asia: Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan” on 08 July 2021. The Seminar was held in the backdrop of global and regional transformational developments wherein Asia has become the chess-board of global and regional power competition for economic, strategic and political outreach. Old alliances are withering and new ones are beginning to emerge. Major countries that once allied themselves with the US in the Cold War are now part of China's drive for connectivity and investment. Amidst dynamic global and regional power configurations, other countries will have to choose one side or the other. In an interconnected world such decisions may negatively impact their security, political and economic wellbeing. In this great powers competition, Pakistan like other regional countries, must also position itself to secure its national interests and maximum advantage. The seminar was thus geared to discuss and analyze the challenges and opportunities for Pakistan in the complexity of emerging alliances in Asia.

The day-long National Seminar consisted of two thematic as well as opening and closing sessions. Foreign Secretary Ambassador Sohail Mahmood graced the occasion as the Chief Guest at the Inaugural Session while former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Gen. Zubair Mahmood Hayat retd. NI (M) joined the Closing Session as Chief Guest. Dr. Gen. Samrez Salik retd. and Ambassador Riaz Muhammad Khan chaired the two thematic sessions. A number of eminent international relations experts, academicians, practitioners and students from within and outside NDU participated in the Seminar.

The Post Roundtable Report consists of three sections namely, an overview, findings/takeaways and recommendations, a summary of the proceedings, and annexures supporting documents: Concept Paper (Annex A), Programme (Annex B) and Profiles of Chairs and Speakers (Annex C).

Findings/ Key Takeaways

Major Power Contestation

- The contemporary world is defined by major power rivalry and competition. Asia has become the main stage for international power politics.
- National interests in the contemporary world are achieved through balancing, rebalancing, soft balancing and pivoting. Out of all these strategic maneuvers and choices, the strategic sense remains the same that is the great power competition.
- As a result of the current strategic maneuvers and strategic choices, a very different world may emerge.
- The prevalent understanding of alliances and how they impact nation states and societies has come under greater scrutiny because of domains such as cyber and space.
- The emerging tensions in Asia are not ideological and cannot be compared to the US-USSR Cold War era. The Sino-US relations have huge economic interdependence. China is well penetrated in the global structures and the US needs China to resolve a number of global issues.
- There are clear signals of a strategic shift by the US from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Geo-political and geo-strategic environment in Asia in next five to ten years would be shaped by the unfolding of the US Indo-Pacific Strategy.
- More than 90% of the world trade is conducted by sea, major part of which uses the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Almost 25% of maritime trade passes through the Strait of Malacca. Maritime security has thus become significant for the future of states.
- East Asian nations have territorial disputes over various islands in the South China Sea but at the same time enjoy massive economic cooperation with China while having security cooperation with the US.
- The US has categorically mentioned China as a revisionist power and a challenge to America's power. NATO sees China as a competitor. Given the peculiar nature of US-China relations, there is likelihood of a 'Thucydides Trap'.
- China has reiterated its policy to safeguard world peace, global development, and preserve international order (100th anniversary of Communist Party of China) while stressing China's national resolve to never allow any foreign force to bully, oppress or subjugate China.

Impact on South Asia, Pakistan & Kashmir Dispute

- As US forms alliances against China, Pakistan becomes pivotal being partner of and having geographical proximity with China. Pakistan again becomes pivotal, if US has an alliance with India, a country having geographical proximity and historical issues with Pakistan.

- The US-China contestation will bring challenges as well as opportunities for Pakistan in fundamentally two key areas i.e. economy and security.
- China's political, economic, military dynamics are enabling factors for Pakistan. Thus Pakistan by default has moved from a peripheral state to a pivotal state in terms of relevance and strategic space that has created equal opportunities if not greater opportunities.
- The US is strengthening India militarily and economically as India is a preferable option for US to work within the region and in the QUAD. This raises concerns for Pakistan as it disturbs the Indo-Pakistan bilateral equation.
- India has limited capacity especially in Artificial Intelligence (AI), 5th generation warfare and cyber security. It is far behind China.
- The toxic mix of 'Hindutva' and 'Akhand Bharat' ideologies is seriously impacting security of the region.
- The Covid-19 health emergency management in India has damaged its reputation worldwide.
- Categorizing India as a net security provider is contrary to the global norm of equal security for all.
- Illegally occupied Jammu & Kashmir is likely to simmer for the foreseeable future. There likely will be no settlement of the Kashmir issue and Pakistan will have to make hard choices.
- The biggest fear of India is that it will not be able to withstand the combined maneuvers of China and Pakistan in the near future.

Afghanistan

- The US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan will leave behind a protracted conflict. The Afghan Peace process is significant for regional peace and development.
- Regional countries like Iran are playing a proactive role as part of a well calculated security and strategic assessment of the developing situation in Afghanistan.
- Stepping back from the Taliban when they are apparently going to be triumphant in Afghanistan is not a very beneficial stance for future relations and security of Pakistan-Afghan border.
- The tribal people of erstwhile FATA have sacrificed a lot in the War on Terror. If the trouble from Afghanistan's civil war reaches the borders, there can be a possible backfire for Pakistan in the tribal region.

Middle East

- Middle East has seen increased Iran-Arab rivalry in recent times. Pakistan's neutrality has no doubt served the country well but there are many challenges too for Pakistan.
- Iran has used the strength of its system as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the US on JCPOA. On the political front, Iran's footprints are far bigger in West Asia than Turkey and Egypt. Iran is making good use of a pragmatic foreign policy to its benefit.
- Israel has emerged as a leading partner to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Palestine is a lost case as majority of Muslim states have recognized Israel which is now pushing for a single state solution.
- Thus Israel is poised to achieve its objective of being accepted as a legitimate country while at the same time having eliminated any credible prospects of a Palestinian state.

Geo-Economics

- Pakistan's geo-strategic importance is immense. It still seems to be confronted with the choice of allying either with the US or China.
- The policymakers have broadened the concept of national security and made geo-economic an integral part of it.
- Pakistan does not believe in zero-sum game and considers international cooperation essential for development.
- To benefit from geo-economics, one must recognize the complex inter-play of political, economic and security dimensions of national security. Geo-economics should not be viewed in isolation from other strands of national security.



Recommendations and Way Forward

Global Trends

- To pursue its national objectives in the larger framework of promoting global peace and cooperation requires Pakistan to keep a close watch on global trends and emerging security challenges and capitalize on the opportunities.
- A new set of toolkits in the fundamental domains of diplomacy, lawfare and intelligence is required to capitalize the potential opportunities.
- Pakistan would need to operate in the Great Game proactively to maximize its advantage, the first step being the policy shift from geo-politics to geo-economics.
- In an environment of multiple interdependencies, hedging with big powers is being exercised by states. Pakistan should work on the choices available to it within the paradigm of its national interests.
- Pakistan should develop much more clarity about US-China rivalry. Pakistan wants improved relations with both China and America but not at the cost of zero-sum game in the region.
- The Indo-Pacific construct also demands Pakistan to review its maritime policy and security.
- Pakistan needs to initiate a favorable policy regarding US, Russia, China, Iran and KSA and balance foreign policy relations with countries of the region and beyond without offending anyone.
- The multilayered cooperation with the Gulf countries is in Pakistan's interest. It should adopt a proactive foreign policy towards the Middle East but maintain a balance in relations between states in the Middle East on the principle of non-interference in international conflicts.
- KSA-Iran relations have their own set of challenges and Pakistan should not be moderating between the two. Positive neutrality and awareness for state security should embed in its relations with Iran.
- Further strengthen partnerships with West Asian countries (Turkey).
- The Central Asian Countries and Russia can be engaged through Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and South East Asia through Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Non Traditional Security Challenges

- Pakistan needs to change its narrative with special focus on the country's security situation, elimination of non-state actors and dissemination of peace.
- Emerging threats like Climate Change pose an existential threat to Pakistan. The non-

traditional security threats need to be addressed on a priority.

- Policy makers should study success stories of other countries so that their models can be replicated.

Kashmir Dispute

- Indian Illegally occupied Jammu & Kashmir is likely to simmer for the foreseeable future. Pakistan should focus on human rights violations and lawfare endeavors to convince the world of India's illegal actions in Occupied Kashmir.
- Arguments and narratives should be created to counter the negativity emanating from India. Given the deep mistrust between the two, it would not be easy to change the mindsets on both sides.

Afghanistan

- The Taliban are on the verge of taking over the whole of Afghanistan. Disregarding their increasing influence in Afghanistan would be a mistake.
- It is important for Pakistan to develop a new comprehensive policy while taking both its civil and military administrations into confidence.
- To manage a new wave of Afghan refugees, Pakistan should complete the border fence and enhance concrete efforts for border management, both at civil and armed forces levels.
- Pakistan should follow the 'Iranian model' for handling the Afghan refugees in an entirely different manner.
- Pakistan should take the opportunity to train highly skilled and talented Afghan refugees.
- If Pakistan succeeds in insulating its Western front, India will have fewer opportunities to intervene via western borders in Pakistan and the country can play its role in bringing peace to Afghanistan.

Geo-Economics

- Pakistan's assets such as its geographical location, population and being a nuclear power provide more opportunities to Pakistan. It is time that negative perception/narrative about Pakistan is changed and for this to occur, a change in thinking is required.
- There is a complex inter-play of political, economic and security dimensions national security. Geo-economics is one component and should not be viewed in isolation from other strands of national security.
- Most importantly, Pakistan has to build its economic muscle to face challenges.

- For any economic progress to be made, Pakistan needs to first put its own house in order.
- The country's trade and investment regimes should be made operational in order to engage with other countries economically.
- Economic engagements cannot be based of generalizations. Targets for advancing economic and commercial relations should be well planned and targeted underpinned by research.
- Pakistan must strengthen its procedures of investment specifically in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and encourage one window operations for ease of accessibility.
- Pakistan can use its location to become a trade hub by acting as a bridge of connectivity between regions. We should start seeing our location as a blessing not a liability.
- To realize the potential benefits of Gwadar, Pakistan should develop a comprehensive approach/strategy for economic security within and broaden its horizon for regional integration, geo-economics and sustainable development worldwide.



INAUGURAL SESSION



SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

INAUGURAL SESSION

Welcome remarks by Lt Gen Muhammad Saeed HI (M),
President NDU



Lt General Muhammad Saeed HI (M), President NDU in his welcome remarks highlighted that NDU focuses on the security situation in the region and at the international level in conferences, seminars, roundtables and during the regular national security courses offered at SSP, ISSRA and FCS. The NDU provides a forum to debate on issues of real significance for the country

He stated that the geo-political and geo-strategic environment in Asia in the

next five to ten years would be shaped by the unfolding of the US Indo-Pacific Strategy. The strategic community of China and the US are handling the grand symmetries of their respective nations. They would resort to every possible option to differentiate and yet stay away from war. However, as military theorists say the best way to avoid war is the will to demonstrate war. War is an option in statecraft and when the will is demonstrated along with the resolve to talk about that

option, it is the best way to avoid war. Alongside this intent, continuous development of military capabilities convinces the opponent not to go for the option of war.

According to China's projections, by 2035 it will have medium tech Army and by 2050 high tech Army compatible to the US. However, the timeline is being read differently by the US strategic community in whose assessment the pace at which China's military is evolving and the investment outlined for next 5-10 years, China would become perhaps a compatible military by 2030. This assessment has led the US to fast track their Indo-Pacific Strategy. This strategy stands on three pillars i.e. Preparedness, Partnership and Networking. Preparedness in the domain of increasing military capability and threat to demonstrate war, whereas partnership unfolds the enabling environment for states.

For the US strategists, India is a preferable option to work within the region and in the QUAD. This is the reason behind the US strengthening India militarily and economically. However, this raises concerns for Pakistan as it disturbs the Indo-Pakistan

bilateral equation. As the global US-China contestation manifests, it will bring challenges as well as opportunities. There is a fear that Pakistan may face another set of challenges unless we chalk out our options with farsightedness. At NDU, discussions at various seminars show three distinct opinions in Pakistan regarding the alliance with China. The first popular opinion is that Pakistan should get into an alliance without wasting further time. The second opinion is that Pakistan should plan a gradual shift in its policy during the next 15 to 20 years to avoid negative consequences of a sudden shift. The majority opinion is that Pakistan should follow the policy of wait and see and let this alliance gain more clarity. It is also a majority opinion that Pakistan should maintain a balance in its relations with countries in the region and beyond. NDU is holding today's seminar to discuss and analyse the emerging alliances in Asia and implications, challenges and opportunities for Pakistan. We appreciate the candid discourse and hope to benefit from the analysis, recommendations and policy options by the speakers and worthy participants

Keynote address by Chief Guest, Foreign Secretary Mr. Sohail Mahmood

There is no doubt Pakistan today stands at a crucial juncture as the dynamics of the South Asian and West Asian regions have changed drastically. The contemporary world is defined by major power rivalry and great power competition. There are clear signals of a strategic shift by the US from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Fifty years ago, Pakistan quietly hosted a guest and took that guest to China. Pakistan assisted the Sino-US rapprochement that shifted the dynamics of the world politics and had a decisive impact on the East-West relations at the time of the Cold War. Even 50 years later the condition is the same in terms of great power competition. Throughout history, Pakistan has played a constructive role during political transformations. Since its independence Pakistan has pursued its national objectives in the larger framework of promoting global peace, cooperation and amity among the nations. This requires keeping a close eye on the global trends and emerging security challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities.

From the withdrawal of the US



forces from Afghanistan to assigning high attention to its Indo-Pacific Strategy, the world is observing the setting of the main stage in the international politics. The US has categorically mentioned China as a revisionist power and a challenge to America's power. The Biden administration's Interim National Security Strategic guideline has underscored the need for alliances in order to present a common front. The US is clearly allying with India besides Australia, Japan and Republic of Korea to hold countries like China accountable. The US has deepened partnerships with India, Singapore and other regional countries to achieve its objectives. China's increasing clout, its Belt



and Road Initiative and growing strategic and military capabilities are being watched closely by the US.

The Brussels NATO Summit Communiqué (14 June 2021) recognized China as a key challenge. It stated that China's global influence and international policies represent challenges that need to be addressed. China's response to these statements from the western countries has been sharp and assertive but not confrontational. At the end of July, speaking at the 100th anniversary of Communist Party of China President Xi Jinping said "China has always worked to safeguard world peace, contribute to global development, and preserve international order". President

Xi talked about a shared community and a shared future but also articulated China's national resolve, "We have never bullied, oppressed or subjugated the people of any other country, and we never will. By the same token, we will never allow any foreign force to bully, oppress or subjugate us. Anyone who would attempt to do so will find themselves on a collision course with a great wall of steel forged by over 1.4 billion Chinese people". China has made it clear that it does not envisage domination, exceptionalism, unilateralism or disregard to international order. In this backdrop, where NATO sees China as a competitor and given the peculiar nature of US-China relations, there is likelihood of a 'Thucydides Trap'.

The current situation cannot be analyzed in the context of US-USSR relations during the Cold War as there are clear differences. The emerging tensions in Asia are not ideological. The US-China relations have huge economic interdependence. China is well penetrated in the global structures. The US needs China to resolve a number of global issues such as climate change, global health, Iran etc. Strategic Arms competition was an important arena of the US-USSR relations while it is not a point of discussion in Sino-US relations. The East Asian nations are largest economic partners of China while having security cooperation with the US. They have their respective histories with China attendant with disputes, tensions and issues.

On the other hand, Pakistan's framework of relations with China is different. China's political, economic and military dynamics are enabling factors for Pakistan. It has welcomed China's growing role in the community of nations. To have built a deep trust and strategic partnership with China is an achievement of Pakistan's foreign policy. In the larger Asian context, Pakistan does not see any alliance or

partnership against China helpful for Asia's security. For Pakistan both the countries (US and China) have contributed to its socio-economic progress and defence preparedness. However, the emerging alliances in Asia have posed challenges to Pakistan in fundamentally two key areas i.e. economy and security. The CPEC, an economic project indispensable for Pakistan's economic growth, is being viewed as a strategic move of China by the US and the West to undercut America's global influence. The West is also suspicious of China's capabilities in technology, 4G, 5G and Artificial Intelligence. Trade restrictions and sanctions on China in any aspect can affect the flow of technology in the developing countries including Pakistan.

In the security domain, despite our best efforts the emerging trends are casting negative shadows on South Asian security. Pakistan faces threats from an increasingly aggressive India, along with threat to the strategic stability of South Asia with nuclearization of the Indian Ocean Region. Indeed, the toxic mix of two ideologies i.e. 'Hindutva' and 'Akhand Bharat' are seriously impacting the security of the

region. Categorizing India as a net security provider is contrary to the global norms of equal security for all nations. The great powers are, therefore, expected to revisit their policy of net security provider.

The Western nations are deeply concerned about the enhanced maritime capabilities of China. More than 90% of the world trade is conducted by sea, major part of which uses the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Almost 25% of maritime trade passes through the Strait of Malacca as 2000 ships transport goods between Indian Ocean and South China Sea through this Strait. Maritime security has thus become significant for the future of states. The Indo-Pacific con-

struct also demands Pakistan to review its maritime policy and security.

Asia is witnessing shifts in other areas as well with the US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan and leaving protracted conflict behind. The Afghan Peace process is significant for regional peace and development. It is evident from the past that Pakistan has always supported an Afghan owned and Afghan led peace process and believes that it is the only way to achieve an inclusive and stable Afghanistan.

Besides Afghanistan, Middle East has witnessed increased Iran-Arab rivalry in recent times. Since 9/11, Gulf countries are concerned about terrorism while the US has repeatedly used



coercive means against Iran. The change in the Gulf and Arab countries' policy towards Israel has also initiated a foreign policy debate in Pakistan. Iran, being a neighbor, is a geographical reality. Pakistan has good relations with the Gulf countries. The multilayered cooperation with the Gulf countries is in Pakistan's interest. Therefore, we need to have a proactive foreign policy towards the Middle East, maintain a balance in its relations between states and adopt the policy of non-interference in international conflicts. We are building partnerships with countries in West Asia, for instance, Turkey. Pakistan

needs to strengthen them further. Moreover, the Central Asian countries and Russia can be engaged through Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and South East Asia through Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Our main focus has shifted from geo-politics to geo-economics but we need to operate in the Great Game proactively. Pakistan does not believe in a zero-sum game and does not believe in allying against anybody and considers international cooperation essential for development.



SESSION I

Emerging Alliances in Asia



SESSION I Emerging Alliances in Asia

Opening Remarks by Chair Maj. Gen. Samrez Salik, HI (M) (ret'd)

The world is in a transition; there is change underway in global politics; a shift of power is being seen from the West to East. It would not be wrong to say that the present century is the Asian Century. Prag Khanna's book "The Future is Asian" talks of the 'Asianization' of world politics as the world's 60% population resides in Asia, most landmass of the world is in Asia and lots of emerging economies are in Asia. Thus, Asianization of Asia is actually the Asianization of the world. Asia with its sub-regions is experiencing a solid wave of growth led by younger societies with its nationalist leaders putting aside territorial disputes in favor of integration and infrastructure investments. That is going to be the platform for the next generation of digital innovation. Within Asia, the Indian Ocean is pivotal as American Naval Strategist Alfred Mahan said in the 18th century that whosoever controls the Indian Ocean would control the world. As per Robert D Kaplan, the future of 21st century would be decided in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as it is surrounded by economically emerging



countries. In the same vein, the British Naval Strategist Sir Mackinder, talked of IOR's immense importance for global dominance and power. Pakistan is placed at the global pivot as described by its founding father during an interview with the Times magazine in 1948 that is reinforced by a renowned political analyst Andrew Korybko in the present times when he terms Pakistan as the '21st Century Pivot State'. Pakistan's geo-strategic importance is acknowledged by the world, only the country itself is oblivious to its own potential.

Asia Between Economic Cooperation and Strategic Competition Dr. Afsah Qazi

Relevant trends gaining pace in Asia need to be spelled out vis-à-vis the evolving economic cooperation and strategic competition. How would they look like, how might they unfold in future and what side Pakistan is going to take? Continent Asia is comprised of many sub-regions i.e. East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia and West Asia. It is said Asia is rich in people, cultures, and resources but also rich in troubles. To answer the question if Asia is inherently troublesome, one needs to understand the Asian fabric. Asia has multiple civilizational states with centuries' old legacies. Turkey, France, China, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have rich civilizational standing that does reflect upon how these states perceive themselves. Second, many Asian states are the workshops of the world and have started modernizing to transfer cheap labor to skilled ones. Third, Asian resources are facing shortages due to its population bulge and finding new resources is a challenge. Fourth, heterogeneous developmental gaps in Asia are affecting its development profiles. For



instance, Kazakhstan is a developed country but not the other Central Asian republics and the same holds true for East & North East Asia which also underlines underdevelopment. Fifth, interaction of Non-Asians with Asians. The Chinese consider themselves a Middle Kingdom, being situated in the middle of the world while remaining insulated from the rest of the world. Later, invading forces caused fear amongst Asians, especially the Chinese who remained reluctant to open up to the outsiders. All these factors count for huge development gaps in Asia.

Geo-strategically, many states are land-locked having immutable dependencies, thus cooperation is pivotal for

survival. They have experience with anarchy and hierarchy so it can be said that Asia's future is not like Europe's past. Furthermore, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the Asian continent is on the go to highlight powerful Asian norms and values flashing unity in diversity. In the same way, Asian economic profile grants a huge geo-economic and geo-strategic significance to the region. Both the realms are inseparable, although states do practice bifurcated approach in conducting affairs and at times opt for a hedging behavior among other foreign policy postures depending on their own interests and requirements.

Initially, the rise of China was not considered a challenge to existing economic order which saw development in some Asian regions while leaving others under developed. In 2007, the US financial crisis further accentuated uneven development patterns in Asia. Then China came in to cash on this crisis and ensured its peaceful rise by promising a shared destiny of prosperity and growth for all. In the strategic domain the US remained dominant vis-à-vis its military and security might. In the economic domain

US is no longer the sole super power. China has gradually replaced the US as the provider of economic development in Asia. Alongside, a resurging Russia is exerting its brand of economic coercion and cultivation. This scenario led to China's emergence as economy provider while the US became the security provider to Asia. This can be branded as the major geopolitical and geo-economic trend in Asia.

The theoretical logic of the balance of power signifies allying with other states to balance the power equilibrium; either ally with the state of power or ally against the state of power. Then, there is the balance of interests signifying that rising powers entertain coveted interests and tend to ally with new partners. Next, there is the balance through soft and hard alliances. Soft alliance is interests-based and hard alliance is about military balance. Bandwagoning with great powers and hedging between them are the prevailing trends in Asia.

In the context of Pakistan's foreign policy options, the country is confronted with the choice of allying either with the US or China amongst many others. Countries in Asia are being



taken on board by China's BRI and majority have become part of this grand infrastructure project that would lead to emergence of Asian culture at a faster pace but one has to look out if the project succeeds or not. In this environment hedging between big powers is being exercised by states as the world of today is all about multiple interdependencies. Pakistan should work on these aspects

of choices available to it within the paradigm of its national interests. Above all, the catch phrase here is that Asia is blessed with resources as well as troubles. South Asia within Asia is the most troubled, least integrated and most conflict prone-region but has become the center of attention of global politics.

Crisis around the Corner: Regional Rivalries (India-Pakistan, Iran-Saudi Arabia, Palestine) Ambassador (retd) Asif Durrani

No doubt, Asia has tremendous opportunities and resources but is also ripe with lots of trouble. One must take note of the fact why South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, where 90% of Asian population resides, has remained restive and troubled while rest of Asia is quite peaceful. It is because of economics, wars for resources and great power ambition to exercise hegemony for control of the region and thus a focal point of global politics. In this context, US-India strategic partnership and Saudi-Iran problem impacts Pakistan, Iran being the next door neighbour to Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) being a source of remittances from approximately 2.7 million Pakistani diaspora. The Middle East has seen a crisis situation after the Abraham Accords and the paradigm has shifted which is also going to impact Pakistan. There is a lot of talk about Pakistan's neutrality and no doubt, it has served the country well, but there are many challenges too, for Pakistan.

India-Pakistan relations have seen a sharp decline with the onset of Prime



Minister Modi's regime. The question of war is not ruled out but given the fact that both states are nuclear powers, the two have avoided an all-out war situation. Of course, conventional / limited war or escalation of hostilities cannot be ruled out on a limited scale. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) is the most important component of US-India partnership and does contribute to Indian aggressive posture in South Asia. Pakistan looks at the current South Asian developments with its own perspective. One may recall the provocative actions by Mr. Modi on 05 August 2020 that should serve as a warning to Pakistan. Pakistan's stance vis-a-vis self-determination of Kashmir

and plebiscite under UN Security Council resolutions has been damaged. Pakistan cannot afford to forgo Kashmir as the founding father the Quaid-e-Azam declared Kashmir as the jugular vein of Pakistan. Also, the Kashmir dispute has forced Pakistan to allocate large chunk of its resources to defence requirements. So far, Pakistan's foreign policy has remained India centric because of India's aggressive and hostile conduct and posture especially on the Kashmir dispute.

New prospects for peace in Afghanistan offer some glimmer of hope for Pakistan as a stable Afghanistan will let peace prevail on its western borders. The Taliban has proven that they are adept at guerilla warfare while the Afghan Unity Government's conduct in running the affairs of the state is questionable. The US has chosen to leave the country. So, if Pakistan succeeds in insulating its western front, India will have fewer opportunities to intervene via western borders. This would help Pakistan to play its positive role in bringing peace to Afghanistan.

With regard to the QUAD and Indian participation, Pakistan needs to

look at the Indian polity and its foreign policy. The Indian foreign policy has predominantly practiced non-alignment but after joining the QUAD, India is apprehensive of this partnership's security role/component. The Indian External Affairs Minister Jayshankar has recently been reported saying the QUAD is not a military alliance and the purpose for India to join the QUAD is to create strategic and economic balance in the region. The Indians cannot shoot at their own feet by naming the group a military alliance. Furthermore, India has limited capacity especially in Artificial Intelligence (AI), 5th generation warfare and cyber security. They are far behind in these domains and can hardly match Chinese prowess. Furthermore, Covid-19 health emergency management in India has damaged its reputation worldwide.

Coming to the Middle East, the first observation is that Iran-KSA rivalry is a threat to the Gulf monarchies. The Arab Spring is much talked about but most of the discourse centers on Iran's capability to withstand and survive the Arab Spring which owes its credit to Iran's strong internal system. The country has one party system, is run by the clergy



and conducts regular elections. This is irrespective of the gold-dollar barrel imbalance in Iran's energy sector exacerbated by its rusted energy infrastructure. The Iranians have used the strength of their system as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the US. They are trying to get America to a point where it lifts secondary sanctions against Iran. These sanctions prohibit personalities and entities from doing business with Iran. Thus the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has given hope to Iran for economic revival after the punishing US sanctions are lifted. On the political front, Iran's footprints are far bigger in

West Asia than that of Turkey and Egypt. The country looks at the Strait of Hormuz as a choke point it can control and is successful in creating a Shia passage through Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. In Palestine, the Iranians play their cards via Hamas. Thus, a kind of political stage has been set inside and outside of Iran and thereby the country is making good use of its mix of systems with pragmatic foreign policy to its benefits.

Israel has emerged as leading partner to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). It has won the battle without firing a single bullet. Palestine is a lost cause for the Palestinians as majority of Muslim

states have recognized Israel. And Israel is now pushing for a single state solution. During the recent spat between Israeli forces and the Palestinians, for which a ceasefire was announced in February 2021, the world witnessed a mute media response to the crisis.

Coming to some quick geopolitical pointers, Pakistan needs to be ready for a situation where Indian Illegally held Jammu & Kashmir is likely to simmer. Pakistan needs to focus on human rights violations and lawfare endeavors vis-a-vis IIOJ&K and the Palestine. Most importantly, Pakistan has to build its

economic muscle to face challenges. KSA-Iran relations have their own set of challenges and Pakistan should not be moderating between the two. Positive neutrality and awareness for states' security should embed its relations with Iran and convey that Pakistan is not against Iranian interests. No need to offend Iran to disturb security on third border of the country. Pakistan needs to initiate a favourable policy regarding US, Russia, China, Iran and KSA and balance foreign policy relations with countries of the region and beyond without offending anyone.



Changing Geopolitics in South Asia (Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan) Ambassador (retd) Ayaz Wazir

The importance of Afghanistan can be understood by the fact that the changing geo-political scenario in the region and beyond depends upon how the security situation unfolds in Afghanistan. Pakistan has not prepared itself for facing the consequences in Afghanistan's spillover effect in terms of security. In the past, Pakistan's policies failed in bringing peace in Afghanistan as it allied with the US during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Pakistan did not serve its own national interests, rather catered for the US interests. Overall in a nutshell, Pakistan has failed to take benefit of its participation as a 'front-line ally' of the US in the Afghan war. It can be speculated that if the Taliban in the near future, become successful in taking Kabul by force, then the trouble would start for Pakistan and the region as a whole.

The tribal people of erstwhile FATA have sacrificed a lot in the War on Terror and will not forget these sacrifices. If the security situation deteriorates in the region and the trouble from Afghanistan's civil war reaches the borders, there can be a possible backfire for Pakistan in the tribal region.



Regional countries like Iran are playing a proactive role as part of a well calculated security and strategic assessment of the developing situation in Afghanistan. Iran has been making efforts to enhance relations and cooperation with the Taliban. It is following a pragmatic foreign policy and as a result has been able to gain a significant edge over Pakistan in the present scenario. It is nearly a definite and known fact that the Taliban are now on the verge of taking over the whole country. Disregarding their aggressively increasing influence in Afghanistan, Pakistan has taken a step back from this whole situation at this crucial moment which can be detrimental to us in the times to come. Meanwhile countries like Iran

have started moving forward with the Taliban. Stepping back from the Taliban when they are apparently going to be triumphant in Afghanistan is not a very beneficial stance for future relations and security of Pakistan-Afghan border. Regional countries including India are reaching out and holding dialogues and creating contacts with them foreseeing their political future in Afghanistan. So there is a need for a policy revisit at Pakistan's end for better bilateral relations with Afghanistan and security dynamics for the future to come.

Interactive Discussion

The questions mainly revolved on the situation in Afghanistan and its spillover effect on Pakistan. It was pointed out that the US might have projected it is leaving Afghanistan but it plans to remain engaged with Afghanistan and its security. The US had two objectives in Afghanistan; first, they wanted to remove the Taliban government and secondly, they wanted to dismantle Al- Qaeda, which they claim they have fulfilled. US will maintain its presence in Afghanistan by keeping it in chaos as Ashraf Ghani has been assured by President Biden during his recent visit to Washington. The US needs to have the Afghanistan pot

boiling so they can justify their continued presence. Their main objective is to contain China, prevent or delay CPEC and keep the region from realizing its economic potential. It is being speculated that US might reactivate ISIS if the Taliban do not fulfill their motives. Moreover, to contain China, US may also create trouble in the Xinjiang province.

On a query about regional countries extending contacts with the Taliban, it was urged that Pakistan should have established people to people contacts utilizing the tribal people of Pakistan and the Taliban under the umbrella of diplomacy. Immediately a team needs to be sent to the Taliban having local composition who knows the customs and the conduct of dialogue, negotiation and diplomacy. Pakistan is taking a back step citing its neutrality while regional countries like Iran are talking to Taliban and Indian Foreign Minister was in Tehran during the Taliban visit. Pakistan has an asset in the tribal people who should be utilized to handle this complex security situation. Moreover, it is solely the responsibility of the Federal Government to protect the borders and the tribal people as the tribal belt has been merged officially with the

Federation. The tribal people feel insecure in the possible future insecurity emerging from the spillover effects from the Afghan side.

Pakistan must strike a balance between the two super powers, US and China, keeping its own national interests in mind in order to achieve its economic and strategic policy in the light of the policy shift from geo strategic to geo-economics. The government should concentrate on the policy and take clear and strategic decisions to maximize Pakistan's value for China and the US.

Wrap up by the Chair

The Chair highlighted that as a result of the BRI project, the biggest economic alliance is emerging comprising of 130

countries registered on their portal. Pakistan and China have been working together since 20 years to cooperate for CPEC. Still there is a question mark on Pakistan's preparedness to handle such a mega project. The new alliances like the one mentioned as the 'Golden Ring of Security' comprising Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey have potential for greater cooperation among these countries. As far as Kashmir is concerned, it is said that the biggest fear of India is that it will not be able to withstand the combined maneuvers of China and Pakistan in the near future. The 3% NFC award proposed for erstwhile FATA should be released for development.



SESSION II

Asia: What Next?



SESSION II Asia: What Next?

Opening Remarks by the Chair Ambassador (retd) Riaz Muhammad Khan

Pakistan faces numerous domestic challenges. Therefore, it is important that these challenges are addressed before the country focuses on the international stage. Regionally, the central phenomenon shaping Asia is the rise of China and this has brought a balance to international trade, broken the monopoly of the West and influenced geo-economics. China, therefore, has a significant role to play in the following developments:

- The Understanding between Russia and China for the development of Central Asian Republics through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) especially when the SCO provides a framework for China's BRI and is an effort by China to integrate its economy with the Eurasian landmass. However, this understanding will not lead to an alliance like that of a Cold War.
- The massive engagement of the Chinese with the Asia-Pacific bordering countries. They have territorial disputes over various islands in the South China Sea but at the same time enjoy massive economic cooperation with China. Therefore, even though



they are rivals, they have been allied with China economically.

- China and other East Asian countries have a responsibility to provide cutting edge technology to combat unconventional threats to global security such as combatting water scarcity, climate change and emerging diseases.
- In the South Asian region, India has opted for a very aggressive posture with special focus on Kashmir. The abrogation of Article 35-A has sabotaged chances of a possible dialogue in the foreseeable future. Therefore, there likely will be no settlement of the Kashmir issue and Pakistan will have to make hard choices.

Changing Middle East Ground Realities: Is US Interested? Prof. Dr. Amna Mahmood

Keeping in view the existing doctrines, it seems the US is not ready to give up the role of an international policeman. Having a realist mentality, Washington forms a policy and then imposes it on the world for at least 20 years to achieve its vested interests.

The Middle East's interaction with the US began in the mid-1900s. At the core, the perception is rife that US-Middle East relations are based on oil politics especially when an oil embargo was imposed in the 90s. However, this thinking needs to be changed as US now produces 40% of the total oil it consumes and has oil-trade relations with 90 countries. The US has successfully eliminated the threat of another oil embargo. Hence, it is the balance of power and not the Middle Eastern oil which is the motivator in relations between the US and the Middle East. In the 70s, US introduced the policy of Participation, Inclusion, Transparency and Accountability (PITA) in order to manage the Palestinian conflict at low level. Conflict resolution is one of the portrayed facets of Washington's foreign policy in order to achieve its



foreign policy objectives.

When it comes to the Syrian crisis, nothing has changed except for the fact that Russia has resurged and China, which was earlier an economic partner, has now become a strategic partner. This change has forced the US to strive for balance of power in the Middle East as it has become vital for its survival. It needs to be noted here that the ground realities there are still the same and the balance of threat will become higher once the JCPOA agreement is signed.

Israel's security has always played a decisive role in the US foreign policy. Therefore, this has been another motivator for Washington in the Middle East

especially when Israel is seeking a one-state solution. The Abraham accords have given an added leverage to Israel in its quest to divide the region, take advantage of the enmity between Saudi Arabia and Iran, and forge economic and political ties with the Gulf and Arab countries. Thus Israel is poised to achieve its objective of being accepted as a legitimate country while at the same time having eliminated any credible prospects of a Palestinian state. The US has extended unambiguous support to Israel in this project.

The balance of power in the Middle East is not only between the major powers but also between the emerging and developing nations. This will be in full swing between regional countries like Saudi Arabia and Iran. America's 70% of

the total weapon trade is directed towards the Middle East and out of this, 24% is exported to Saudi Arabia. War and instability in the Middle East are beneficial for the US economy. Iran is still an influential country and its rivalry with Saudi Arabia has been planted by the superpower to serve its vested interests. Therefore, one can say that both countries have become pawns on the chess board of great power rivalry in the Middle East.

The US carrot and stick policy in the Middle East will continue as countering China's ingress and influence in the region is important to maintain its hegemony. Therefore, in the foreseeable future, the region will remain a battleground for geo-economics and geo-political competition.



Pakistan's Geo Economic Importance for Regional Peace Amb (retd) Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhary

The term geo-economics is relatively new and research is being done on its significance for Pakistan. For better understanding, it can be divided into several questions:

- What is geo-economics?
- What does it mean in Pakistan's context?
- Why is it important for Pakistan?
- How can Pakistan benefit from other economies?

Broadly speaking, geo-economics is utilizing the resources available for economic growth while viewing these resources through the political and spatial prism. The term was first used in the post-cold war context as it was assumed that the emerging competition would be based in the economic realm. This hypothesis proved to be partly right only as the world continues to function in the strategic realm with militarization still taking place in the major economies. Therefore, one can argue that affairs between the states cannot be solely dealt in the military or the economic context but it has to be a hybrid of both.

Pakistan for the longest time has



faced economic challenges, a negative international image and domestic problems. It is time that the perception of Pakistan is changed and for this to occur, a change in thinking is required. This is the reason that the policymakers have broadened the concept of national security and made geo-economics its integral part. There is no one way on how Pakistan can benefit from geo-economics. There exists a complex interplay of political, economic and security dimensions and these cannot be viewed separately. Therefore, geo-economics should not be viewed in isolation from other strands of national security.

Pakistan lies in a difficult neighborhood and many of its problems stem

from that. Due to this reason, its location is often termed as a strategic curse rather than a blessing. Pakistan can use its location to become a trade hub by acting as a bridge of connectivity between regions. If benefits are to be gained, a shift in our thinking is required. We should start seeing our location as a blessing not a liability. The situation in the country's surroundings is tough and challenging. Even in these challenges are opportunities e.g. in the past, during conflict, trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan reached \$3.5 billion. This shows that even conflict provides economic opportunities to countries.

For any economic progress to be made, Pakistan needs to first put its own house in order. The country's trade and investment regimes have to be made operational in order to engage with other countries economically. It needs to be remembered that economic engagement cannot be made on the basis of generalizations and for this research needs to be done so that commercial and economic relations are well planned and targeted.

Emerging threats like climate change pose an existential threat to Pakistan. Therefore, non-traditional

security threats need to be addressed on priority. Pakistan's policy makers should also study the success stories of other countries so that their models can be replicated. We also need to change our narrative with special focus on the country's security situation, elimination of non-state actors and dissemination of peace.

Interactive Discussion

The participants were keen on exploring various issues of significance, for instance the prospects of Gwadar/CPEC, bridging gaps for commerce, economic security or geo-economics all around the world and its implications for India and for Pakistan. The issue of Afghan refugee influx in post America withdrawal from Afghanistan as well as Pakistan's strategy to counteract it, were also discussed.

On the potential benefits of Gwadar, it was opined that Pakistan should develop a comprehensive approach/strategy for economic security within and broaden its horizon for regional integration, geo-economics and sustainable development worldwide. Adhering to the Quaid e Azam's

saying “peace within and peace without”, Pakistan must deal with political problems and strategic issues in an environment of arbitration, peace, and stability in its neighborhood.

Immense efforts have been made to distort Pakistan’s image throughout the world as being a security-driven state, due to external security threats from its neighborhood. Pakistan’s on-going and steadfast economic progress vis-a-vis Gwadar has raised concerns specifically for India in the region. In spite of serious problems, Pakistan has been looking for common grounds to cooperate with India. It is therefore, considered necessary to build arguments and relevance should be created, to counter the

negativity emanating from India. Given the deep mistrust between the two, it would not be easy to change the mindsets on both sides.

Keeping in view the relevance of geo-economics, New Delhi did not compromise its trade with China even during tensions on the disputed borders, and Russia did not give up on its economic relations with United States. In addition, though US-Pakistan relations were analyzed as 'securitized', the corporate Americans remain interested in Pakistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan has already set grounds by welcoming all to participate in Gwadar for collective pursuit of sustainable development. Within these constraints, Pakistan



should come up with more opportunities in the region and beyond.

On likely influx of Afghan refugees, it was observed that in the backdrop of post American withdrawal, the Taliban would make more territorial gains. Amid the new security situation, an influx of refugees into Pakistan seems inevitable but Pakistan cannot afford it. Islamabad has been facing the dilemma of handling Afghan refugees since 1979. However, certain important measures could be carried out as part of Pakistan's strategy i.e. enhance concrete efforts for border management, both at civil and armed forces levels. Secondly, Pakistan should follow the "Iranian model" for handling the Afghan refugees in an entirely different manner. Pakistan should take the opportunity to train highly skilled and talented Afghan refugees. It is important for Pakistan to develop a new comprehensive policy while taking both its civil and military administrations into confidence. A political solution in Afghanistan would be more favorable than conflict amid emerging security threats in the region.

Wrap Up by the Chair

The Asian century has been evolving

in a very dynamic way in which China's growing economic power is considered pivotal. Thus, China- Pakistan relations have also assumed fundamental importance. Pakistan should enjoy full advantage of the relationship in the context of CPEC and it must be further strengthened. CPEC will become more revitalized with the settlement of Afghanistan, as security and stability in Afghanistan is one of the linchpins of CPEC. Pakistan must strengthen its procedures of investment specifically in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and encourage one window operations for ease of accessibility. Moreover, Pakistan should be much clearer about US-China rivalry. Pakistan wants improved relations with both China and America but, not at the cost of a zero-sum game in the region. In the regional setting, India is also viewed as a big problem. Pakistan must convince India to resolve the Kashmir dispute through dialogue. Both should together develop a possible framework for dialogue while agreeing to prioritize foremost the Kashmiris' benefits. Despite challenges and constraints, Pakistan should work towards economic development and progress to maximize its geo-economic potential in the region and beyond.

CLOSING SESSION

Keynote Address



From left to Right : Prof. Dr. Amna Mahmood, Dr. Afsah Qazi, Ambassador (retd) Asif Durrani, Ambassador Ayaz Wazir, Ambassador (retd) Fauzia M. Sana, Lt Gen Muhammad Saeed HI (M), Gen Zubair Mahmood Hayat NI (M) (retd), Ambassador (retd) Riaz Muhammad Khan, Ambassador (retd) Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhary, Maj Gen Ehsan Mehmood Khan HI, (M), Maj Gen Raza Muhammad HI (M) (retd), Brig Muhammad Bilal Anwar Khan

CLOSING SESSION Keynote Address

Keynote Address by Gen. Zubair Mahmood Hayat (retd)



The Chief Guest commended the significance of the subject under discussion in the contemporary international environment. The global balance of power is at stake and great power competition is at play. The regional picture of the story will not be clear without the global picture as the Asian picture emerges in the context of the global picture. In the context of current arrangements, Pakistan by default has moved from the peripheral state to a pivotal state. At the heart of the argument is the notion of relevance and strategic space.

Talking about alliances brings the

question, against who are these alliances? If it is China, then Pakistan is pivotal, being the iron brother and having geographical proximity with China. Next question is, US has to alliance with whom? With India, a country having geographical proximity and historical issues with Pakistan? In these two paradigms in the power equation of the three i.e. the US, China and India, Pakistan becomes relevant to India and China. The relevance brings challenges for Pakistan. Earlier Pakistan was viewed through the Afghan prism or Indian behaviourism. The prism has now changed. The prism now is Beijing that is more notional, therefore, that is the challenge.

In a famous quote Napoleon Bonaparte said after his defeat at Waterloo caused by the third alliance, “Let China sleep, when she wakes up, she will shake the world”. So the notion of alliances was relevant even 200 years ago in 1815 when Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo. Britain at that time was a great power and had opened Opium Trade with China. This frame-



work has influenced the West's thought towards China, the Chinese civilization and China's power. In the same context, recall that during his recent visit to UK, the Indian Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Mukund Naravane, presented a book "Stealth War: How China took over while America's elite slept" to the British Chief of the Defence Staff, General Sir Nick Carter. The choice of the book is really meaningful. The fact that the world is heading towards Asia is not new. In 2008 Henry Kissinger said during the IISS annual meeting in Geneva, "The center of gravity of the world power has shifted decisively towards Asia".

While discussing the opportunities

we go back to the basic argument made earlier that Pakistan has moved from peripheral to a pivotal position that has created equal opportunities if not greater opportunities. In the contestation of alliances, BRI precedes B3W at least 20 years, the Maritime Silk Route (MSR) precedes the Blue Dots or the Indo-Pacific strategy (IPS) by thousands of years, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) precedes the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD). NATO remains the only alliance and the rest all are add-ons. So whether it is QUAD, SCO or other multilateral frameworks, the real alliance is only NATO as it is a strategic alliance. Other alliances are making strategic maneuvers and strategic

choices. The terms coalition, alignments, partnerships and adjustments are interchangeably used with the alliances as they serve the same politico-military objectives. National interests in the contemporary world are achieved through balancing or rebalancing or soft balancing and pivoting. The alternate to soft balancing is hard balancing. As the current world is not suitable for hard balancing, it is kept as a choice of last resort. Out of all these strategic maneuvers and strategic choices, the strategic sense remains the same that is the Great power competition. Therefore, the logic behind strategic choices is either the maintenance of or infestation of the global order. As a result of current strategic maneuvers and strategic choices we are going to see a very different world as our understanding of alliances and how they impact the nation states and societies come under greater scrutiny because of domains such as cyber and space.

The facts like second largest Muslim nation, 5th most popular nation, 4th largest English speaking nation, 4th most intelligent nation, nuclear power, holds rare earth metals and location at the cross roads of the civilization of the

world, provide more opportunities to Pakistan. In this new paradigm, through strategic maneuvers, alliances, coalitions and alignments the West is trying to engage India in the region. The Indian professed (not practiced) strategy is the notion of strategic autonomy. Therefore, there is a disconnect between the notion of strategic autonomy and the coalitions India is making. Secondly, there is a political disconnect in India as it propagates democracy but practices fascism. Hence, India is in a grey zone because of changing nature of the Indian state from a secular to a 'Hindu Rashtra'. This makes India weak in the equation of alliances thus opening opportunities for Pakistan. Considering these facts, Pakistan needs a new set of tool kits to capitalize the potential opportunities. The contemporary world is marked by the games of self-interests. Therefore, Pakistan needs to safeguard its interests through a variety of strategic maneuvers. The fundamental domains to work on in this context include diplomacy, lawfare and intelligence.

To conclude there are six fundamental questions to be answered: Can the "Thucydides Trap" be avoided? It is

premature to answer this question in 2021. Will the things get bad? The answer is Yes. Will things get wild? The answer is Yes. Will things get even wilder? The answer again is Yes. Can Pakistan wish away the developing environment and act as if nothing has happened and try and practice the fallacy of strategic autonomy? The answer is No. Does

Pakistan possess the strategic choices to beat the challenges of tomorrow? The answer is Yes. Can Pakistan be relevant to the equation? The answer is again Yes. Therefore, the bottom line for Pakistan is when the going gets tough, the tough get going.





ANNEXES

CONCEPT NOTE

The Asian continent has emerged as the most important and dynamic region in the world due to its huge population, large size, natural resources and economic potential. Thus, Asia has become the chessboard of global and regional power competition for economic, strategic and political outreach. At the global level, China's response to the US "Asia Pivot" is its masterstroke "Belt & Road Initiative" while Putin's Russia, an ally of China, is asserting to regain its stature as a world power. Virtually all Asian countries now count China as their foremost trading partner. The US has reacted by re-energising the QUAD. In a document on Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, released in March 2021, the UK has decided to place greater emphasis on the Indo Pacific. Major countries that once allied themselves with the US in the Cold War are now part of China's drive for connectivity and investment. At the regional level, Indian illegal actions in occupied Kashmir have injected high level of friction between India and Pakistan. Peace in Afghanistan remains elusive as regional and global powers vie for influence while domestic actors refuse to accommodate each other. The Middle East has become more divided after the Abraham Accords as Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies perceive Iran and not Israel as the enemy. Israel is emboldened in its drive to force expulsion of Palestinians from East Jerusalem. Major Arab countries are silent spectators to Israel's bombardment of Gaza while the US supports Israel.

For Pakistan, regional economic connectivity through CPEC is the main stake. China is a strategic and robust friend. While relations with the US are on the mend, Pakistan hopes to strengthen its multifaceted strategic ties with US on the one hand and continue to deepen its strategic partnership with China on the other. With Russia, bilateral cooperation is expanding while India has placed itself firmly in the US camp against China.

Amidst these dynamic global and regional power configurations, other countries will have to choose one side or the other. In an interconnected world such decisions may negatively impact their security, political and economic wellbeing. Like other regional countries, Pakistan must also place itself to secure maximum advantage. In this context, the Seminar aimed to discuss and analyse the challenges and opportunities for Pakistan in the complexity of emerging alliances in Asia.

PROGRAMME

| Inaugural Session | |
|---|--|
| 0900-0930 | Registration |
| 0930-0935 | Recitation |
| 0935-0945 | Welcome Remarks by President NDU, Lt Gen Muhammad Saeed, HI (M) |
| 0945-1000 | Keynote Address by Chief Guest, Foreign Secretary Mr. Sohail Mahmood |
| 1000-1005 | Presentation of Mementoes |
| 1005-1010 | Group Photo |
| 1010-1030 | Tea Break (ISSRA Lounge) |
| Session I: Emerging Alliances in Asia Chair: Major General Samrez Salik (Retd) | |
| 1030-1035 | Opening Remarks by the Chair |
| 1035-1050 | Asia between Economic Cooperation and Strategic Competition Speaker: Dr Afsah Qazi (NDU) |
| 1050-1105 | Crisis Around the Corner: Regional Rivalries between India-Pakistan, Iran-Saudi Arabia, Palestine Speaker: Ambassador (Retd) Asif Durrani |
| 1105-1120 | Changing Geopolitics in South Asia (Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan) Speaker: Ambassador (Retd) Ayaz Wazir |
| 1120-1200 | Interactive Session |
| 1200-1205 | Wrap Up by the Chair |
| 1205-1210 | Presentation of Mementoes |
| Session II: Asia: What Next? Chair: Ambassador Riaz Muhammad Khan | |
| 1210-1215 | Opening Remarks by the Chair |
| 1215-1230 | Changing Middle East Ground Realities: Is US Still Interested? Speaker: Dr Prof. Amna Mahmood |
| 1230-1245 | Pakistan's Geo Economic Importance for Regional Peace Speaker: Amb (Retd) Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhary |
| 1245-1320 | Interactive Session |
| 1320-1325 | Wrap Up by the Chair |
| Closing Session | |
| 1330-1345 | Keynote Address by the Chief Guest, Gen Zubair Mahmood Hayat (Retd), NI (M) Former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee |
| 1345-1355 | Vote of Thanks by President NDU Lt Gen Muhammad Saeed, HI (M) |
| 1355-1400 | Presentation of Mementoes and Group Photo |
| 1400-1430 | Lunch |

PROFILE OF SPEAKERS AT THE NATIONAL SEMINAR



**Lieutenant General Muhammad Saeed,
HI (M), President NDU**

President NDU, Lt Gen Muhammad Saeed, Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military) was commissioned on 13 April 1987 in an Infantry Regiment. The General is graduate of National Defence University, Islamabad and Command & Staff College, Quetta. He holds the Master's Degree in Science & War Studies from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. His varied command, staff and instructional experience includes Brigade Major of an Independent Infantry Brigade, Commanding Officer of Infantry Regiment, Brigade Commander of Infantry Brigade, General Officer Commanding of an Infantry Division, Director General Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) and Director General (Analysis), Directorate General ISI. He also served as Deputy Assistant Military Secretary, Staff Officer to Military Secretary in Military Secretary Branch (GHQ) and Private Secretary to Chief of the Army Staff. On the instructional side, he has been on the faculty of School of Infantry and Tactics, Pakistan Military Academy, Command & Staff College and National Defence University. The General Officer assumed the appointment of President National Defence University on 28 November 2019.



Major General Ehsan Mehmood Khan, HI (M), DG ISSRA

Maj Gen Ehsan Mehmood Khan, HI (M) is currently the Director General, Institute for Strategic Studies Research and Analysis (ISSRA) at NDU Islamabad since May 2021. He was commissioned in the Pakistan Army in April 1989 in the Punjab Regiment. He is a graduate of Command and Staff College Quetta, National Defence University Islamabad, National Defence Advanced Center Madrid, Spain and National Defence University, Washington DC, USA. He has varied experience of command, staff and instruction. He served in a Northern Light infantry (NLI) Battalion as instructor in Pakistan Military Academy Kakul, Brigade Major of a deployed Infantry Brigade, commanded a Light Anti-Tank Battalion of Punjab Regiment, served as General Staff Officer Grad-1 & Deputy Director in Military Operations Directorate at General Headquarters, Director Analysis and Plan in ISPR, Commander of a Deployed Infantry Brigade in FCNA, Directing Staff with National Security and War Course in NDU Islamabad, Commander Force Command Northern Areas (Gilgit-Baltistan) and Director General National Guards in General Headquarters. He has authored two books, a number of research papers in scholarly journals and several other articles. The General holds a Master's degree in Strategic Security Studies from NDU Washington D.C, M. Phil in Security Studies and PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies from NDU Islamabad. His areas of study include National Security, Military Strategy, Human Security, Hybrid Warfare and Peace and Conflict Studies.



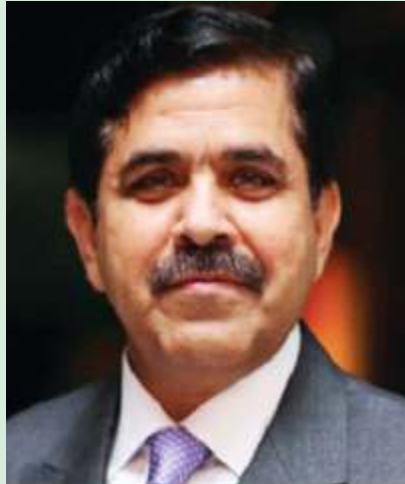
Mr. Sohail Mahmood

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood is a career Foreign Service officer with diplomatic experience spanning over 3 decades that includes various assignments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as Pakistan's missions abroad in both bilateral and multilateral arenas. Prior to his appointment as Foreign Secretary, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood served as Pakistan's High Commissioner to India from August 2017 to April 2019. Earlier, he was Pakistan's Ambassador to Turkey (with concurrent accreditation to Macedonia and Kosovo) from 2015 to 2017, and Pakistan's Ambassador to Thailand & Permanent Representative to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Bangkok, from 2009 to 2013. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood joined the Foreign Service of Pakistan in 1985. At the Headquarters, he worked as Desk Officer for the South Asia region from 1987 to 1988 and again from 1990 to 1991. He later worked as Director (Iran and Turkey) from 1995-1998; Director General (Americas) from 2005-2008; Director General, Foreign Secretary's Office (FSO) in 2009; and Additional Secretary (Afghanistan/West Asia) from 2013-2015. His diplomatic assignments abroad also included working at Pakistan Missions in Ankara, Washington as well as New York, including as Political Coordinator for Pakistan's delegation to UN Security Council in 2003-2004. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood holds a Master's degree in International Affairs (M.I.A.) from the Columbia University, New York, and a Masters in History from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.



General Zubair Mahmood Hayat NI (M) (retd)

Commissioned in 1976, General Zubair Mahmood Hayat, (Retd) NI (M) had a decorated military career that spans over 4 decades. He is a graduate of Fort Still Oklahoma (USA), Command and Staff College Camberley (UK) and National Defence University, Islamabad. He has two Masters Degrees in War Studies and Military Science. He is also a recipient of 'Humanities Gold Medal', 'Master Gunner Award' and 'Master War Fighter Award'. He has delivered lectures on 'Peace, Security and Defence' in foreign military institutions and think tanks across 6 continents of the globe. During his service, the General commanded an Infantry Division and Corps. His key staff appointments included Army & Air Advisor United Kingdom, Chief of Staff of a Strike Corps, Private Secretary to Chief of Army Staff, Director General Staff Duties at General Headquarters, Director General Strategic Plans Division (responsible for Pakistan's Nuclear Programme) and Chief of General Staff, Pakistan Army. In November 2016, the General took over as the 16th Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. In November 2019, he hung his uniform after 43 years of military services.



**Major General
Dr. Muhammad Samrez Salik, HI (M) (retd)**

Major General Muhammad Samrez Salik, (Retd) HI (M) was commissioned in 10 Medium Regiment Artillery in March 1985. The General is a graduate of Command and Staff College, Quetta and National Defence University, Islamabad. He is Masters in Warfare, Defence and Strategic Studies and has done M. Phil in Public Policy and Strategic Security Management and PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies from NDU Islamabad. During his 33 years of meritorious service, the General has served on various Command, Staff and Instructional appointments which includes instructor at Pakistan Military Academy Kakul, Brigade Major of Infantry Brigade, United Nation Military Observer, Staff Officer at Military Secretary Branch, Assistant Private Secretary to Chief of Army Staff, General Staff Officer Grade-1 at Military Operation Directorate, Directing Staff at Armed Forces War College and Chief of Staff of a Corps. The General commanded his parent Artillery Regiment, Artillery Brigade, Infantry Brigade, Infantry Division & his previous appointment was Vice Chief of General Staff at General Headquarters Rawalpindi. The General remained Director General Institute for Strategic Studies, Research & Analysis, National Defence University from 2017 to 2018.



Ambassador (retd) Riaz Muhammad Khan

Ambassador Riaz Muhammad Khan was the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan from February 2005 to April 2008. He served as Pakistan's Ambassador to China (2002-05), European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg (1995-98) and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (1992-95). He worked as Additional Secretary for International Organizations and Arms Control (1998-2002), Director General for Afghanistan and Soviet Affairs (1986-88, 1990-92), as Desk officer China (1973-79) and served in Pakistan Embassy in Beijing (1970-73). The Ambassador Joined Pakistan Foreign Service 1969. He led the Pakistan side for the Pakistan-India Composite Dialogue (2005-08), Pakistan-US Strategic Dialogue (2006-08), and Special Envoy for backchannel diplomacy with India (2009-13). He participated in all the rounds of the Geneva Talks on Afghanistan (1982-88). Possessing a substantially diverse overall expertise, the Ambassador has authored a plethora of well renowned books including, "Afghanistan and Pakistan: Conflict, Extremism and Resistance to Modernity" published by John Hopkins and Woodrow Wilson Press (2011) and by Oxford University Press, "Untying the Afghan Knot: negotiating Soviet withdrawal" published by Duke University Press in 1991, co-authored "Yellow Sand Hills: a study of Chinese Communes" published in 1975, and a coffee table book, "Pakistan: Glimpses of Vistas, History and Culture" published in 2012, just to name a few.



Dr. Afsah Qazi

Dr Afsah Qazi is a graduate of the University of Punjab and the Quaid-e-Azam University. After completing her M. Phil in International Relations from the Quaid-e-Azam University, she went on to accomplish her PhD in International Relations from the Jilin University, Chang Chun, China. She has previously worked as Assistant Research Professor and Research Associate at the Centre for International Strategic Studies Islamabad. She is currently working as Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations, National Defense University. Her areas of expertise and interest include Arms Control, Disarmament and Nuclear Non-proliferation, East Asian International Relations, Soft power and public diplomacy, Strategic stability in South Asia and International terrorism. With her vast area of expertise, she has also authored several research papers including “China's Soft Power Problem”, “UN Arms Trade Treaty: An Analysis” and “Game Changers are for Good Players: A Reality check on CPEC”.



Ambassador (retd) Asif Durrani

Ambassador Asif Ali Khan Durrani is a career diplomat. He has served as Ambassador of Pakistan to the United Arab Emirates 2014-2016, and Ambassador to Iran in 2016. He holds a Master's degree in Chemistry from the University of Balochistan and a Master's degree in International Relations and Diplomacy from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Ambassador Asif Durrani joined the Pakistan Foreign Service in 1986. He has held various diplomatic assignments in Pakistan missions abroad including Second Secretary in New Delhi, First Secretary in Tehran, Counselor in New York, Minister/Deputy Head of Mission in Kabul and Deputy High Commissioner in London. He also served at the Headquarters as Director United Nations and Disarmament and Director General UN besides Additional Secretary Foreign Affairs at the President's Secretariat from Feb.2012-Aug.2013 before taking on the 99th National Management College (NMC) Course in August, 2013 and embarking on his Ambassadorial assignments. Ambassador Asif Ali Durrani is a prolific writer and regularly participates in discussions on current International issues on various TV channels. He was also a Journalist from 1980-86 (The Muslim, AFP).



Ambassador Ayaz Wazir

Ambassador Ayaz Wazir is a native of Wana who joined the Foreign Service of Pakistan in 1975 and served with the Pakistan missions at Vienna, Maputo, Dubai, Riyadh, Mazar-e-Sharif, London, Manchester and Doha. As Director General (Afghanistan), he was a member of the Pakistan Mission engaged in shuttle diplomacy between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance for peaceful negotiations between them. He also represented Pakistan in the Pakistan-Iran Joint Mission for Afghanistan. Ambassador Ayaz was also a member of the OIC Committee on Afghanistan. He attended the meeting of the Steering committee of the Northern Alliance and Taliban in 1997, held in Islamabad. He is a member of first Pak- Afghan Loya Jirga. He writes frequently for "The News" on FATA and Afghanistan. He is a guest speaker at National Management College (Pakistan Administrative Staff College) Lahore, National Defence University Islamabad, Foreign Service Academy Islamabad, the Institute of Management Peshawar, the Kashmir Institute of Management, Muzaffarabad and the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.




Dr. Professor Amna Mehmood

Dr. Professor Amna Mehmood is currently the Dean of Faculty of Social Sciences at the International Islamic University, Islamabad. She graduated from the Government College Lahore with a Masters in Political Science. After completing her M. Phil in American Studies from the Quaid-e-Azam University, she went on to accomplish her PhD from the University of Punjab and her Post-Doctoral from University of North Carolina Wilmington, USA. With a wide range of expertise, the Professor has authored many published and under publication books including the Emerging Interdependence between China and the US-Trade & Technology Transfers; Government, State & Society in South Asia (under publication) and External Relations of Pakistan (under publication). The Professor maintains an active membership in the American Political Science Association, Council of Social Sciences Pakistan, Canadian Political Science Association and the Society of Asian Civilization, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad.



Ambassdor (retd) Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhary

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhary is Director General, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad. He served as a member of the Foreign Service of Pakistan for 37 years. His last assignment was as Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States of America (March 2017 – May 2018). Apart from his representational responsibilities, Mr Chaudhry lectured at leading US universities and think tanks and reached out to Pakistani Diaspora all across the country to strengthen relations between Pakistan and the US. Earlier he served as Foreign Secretary of Pakistan (December 2013 to March 2017) and participated actively in high level foreign policy discussions from December 2013 to March 2017. Prior to this, he served as Ambassador of Pakistan to the Netherlands, Pakistan's Foreign Office Spokesperson, Additional Foreign Secretary for UN and Disarmament Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in New York, Chef de Cabinet to the Secretary General of ECO in Tehran and Director General for relations with South Asian countries in MOFA. Ambassador Chaudhary holds a Master's in International Relations from Tufts University, Massachusetts, and a First Class First Bachelor of Science from Punjab University, Lahore. He has authored a book “Pakistan mirrored to Dutch eyes” published by Sangemeel publications.



PICTURE GALLERY







