

STRATEGY MANIFESTO

TANGIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE
ELECTED GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN – 2024

EVOLVED AT

NCSFP

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
SECURITY & FOREIGN POLICY
OF PAKISTAN

JANUARY 17, 2024

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About the Conference

A National Conference on Security and Foreign Policy – Options for Pakistan was convened on Wednesday, January 17, 2023 in Islamabad by Sanober Institute (SI), in collaboration with The Millennium Universal College (TMUC) and Centre for Law and Security (CLAS).

Over twenty experts and hundreds of students gathered in the campus of TMUC for a candid review of Pakistan's national security and foreign policy.

The primary objective of the Conference was to formulate concrete and doable recommendations for consideration by the government which would assume power following the February 8, 2024 elections.

Another objective of the Conference was to benefit students, researchers and scholars and encourage national debate on key issues of importance to Pakistan with a view to contributing to a brighter future of the country.

The participants of the Conference recognized that the world around us was changing rapidly. The US's strategic competition with China and Russia, wars in Ukraine and Gaza, and rise of unilateralism coupled with xenophobia are seriously undermining the spirit of globalization and multilateralism. The climate change is disrupting the balance of nature. These global dynamics have a profound impact on our region, South Asia, and Pakistan.

The internal dynamics in Pakistan, particularly political instability, weak economy, and resurgence of terrorism, also have serious implications for our national security and foreign policy.

The Conference participants discussed these inter-connected global, regional and national issues, and prepared for the elected government a Strategy Manifesto, which is before you.

This Strategy Manifesto contains doable recommendations that the elected government could focus on in the realm of national security and foreign policy.

Executive Summary & Recommendations



With wars raging in Europe and the Middle East, and the US-China competition intensifying, global geopolitics has profoundly affected our region, South Asia. The US tilt towards India has emboldened the Modi regime to behave as a hegemonic regional power and create a Hindu Rashtra (state) with serious fall-out for Muslims of India. On the western frontier, Afghanistan remains on the verge of becoming, yet again, a safe haven for terrorist entities, especially TTP, a sworn enemy of Pakistan. The border with Iran is also not stable.

Apart from threats at the borders, the non-traditional security threats are also looming large, particularly climate change and polarization of society. The chronic political instability, debilitating economy, and worsening law and order have imperiled the national security of Pakistan. In the economic domain, the excruciating debt burden is taking a heavy toll, and yet the country continues to run high fiscal deficits. The state of Pakistan, therefore, remains subject to strategic coercion across a wide spectrum.

The perilous global and regional geopolitics and fragile internal front pose formidable challenges for the incoming elected government. At the National Conference, subject experts deliberated on these inter-connected issues and formulated doable policy recommendations in some of the key and urgent areas in order to bolster national security and make our foreign policy more effective. Salient recommendations of the Conference are:



National Security (Conventional)

1. Reactivate the Office of National Security Advisor, with effective functioning of National Security Division under National Security Committee, to proactively lead, manage and address matters of national security in an institutional and professional manner on permanent basis.
2. Undertake a holistic "Strategic Security Review" to revamp national security response, and also establish the review process at regular intervals.
3. Reconfigure Military Strategy ensuring an appropriate blend of strategic, conventional and non-conventional capabilities for a more efficient, lethal and rapid response.
4. Develop more effective, lethal (precision-guided), mobile and agile conventional forces with careful evaluation of quality vs quantity and cost effectiveness.
5. Achieve a skillful balance between strategic capability and conventional and non-conventional forces given the prevailing financial constraints, rapidly eroding fiscal space, and perpetually shrinking resources.
6. Improve human resource capability to respond to rapidly changing, highly dynamic, and extremely volatile battlefield conditions and incorporation of high-tech equipment and emerging technologies.
7. Develop maritime prowess to safeguard national interests in emerging global/regional maritime order in the Indian Ocean, and realize economic benefits.
8. Leverage strategic-military collaboration with China unambiguously, and integrate regionally, especially with the Middle East to advance national security interests while managing relations with the West.
9. The deterrence regime premised mainly on nuclear capability may need to take into consideration the implications of emerging technologies and contemporary trends in order to ensure its credibility in the foreseeable future in the vein of "Cross-domain Deterrence".

National Security (Counter Terrorism)

10. **Police Reforms:** Police reforms are long overdue given that the non-traditional threats Pakistan is facing are a direct product of lawlessness, mismanagement, and poor governance. The police force must be depoliticized, reconfigured, reorganized, and reformed on modern lines.
11. **Uniform Governance:** Category B areas should be immediately converted into Category A areas. Categories of special status, like PATA, should be abolished for the sake of uniform governance and application of the law of the land.
12. **Segregation of Intelligence:** Traditional threats being alive, a part of intelligence may continue to focus on them. However, a major part of the intelligence apparatus should put up coordinated effort under empowered NACTA.
13. **External Intelligence Agencies:** In the wake of our repeated roles in global geopolitics of the 20th century, external inimical intelligences have intruded into our system. Their role should be eliminated by increasing coordination amongst country's intelligence agencies.

National Security (Non-Traditional)

14. **Climate Change:** For effective climate adaptation and mitigation, the primary area of focus should be to develop robust indigenous capacities while collaborating with regional/global agencies/states.
15. **Improving Image:** Focus on developing soft power to address the image problem confronting Pakistan. To that end, merge external publicity wing of Information Ministry and relevant sections of Ministry of Culture with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
16. **National Security (Economic Security)**
17. **Budget deficits:** Pakistan must live within its means. That requires considerable belt-tightening, especially on wasteful expenditure of the federal and provincial governments. The bailout plans with IMF and other donor agencies should be focused on self-reliance and development. The private sector needs to be incentivized to ensure job creation with an emphasis on productivity and innovation, in line with the latest technological advancements. The loss-making state-owned enterprises should be privatized through open, transparent and competitive privatization process. The size of government ought to be reduced through reliance on technology.





GDP Growth: Achieve at least 6% growth annually.

18. Inflation: An emergency plan should be formulated to tackle inflation by fiscal and administrative measures. On the fiscal side, the State Bank should make independent decisions and discourage printing of money, which can provide short term relief but creates inflationary pressures and long-term fiscal deficits. Strict action is required against hoarding and smuggling of essential commodities to counter artificial shortages and inflation of prices. Burgeoning inflation has the potential to cause social strife and conflict threatening internal cohesion/fabric.
19. CPEC & SEZs: Pakistan's economic growth is intrinsically linked to urgent and full-scale operationalization of CPEC. To this end, efforts be made to achieve political consensus vis-à-vis development priorities. We should also remove any misgivings through engagement and awareness. We should develop Special Economic Zones as per the second phase of CPEC.
20. CPEC & Gwadar: Considerable work has been done at the Gwadar Port, including an airport and expressway. We should now work out concurrently the financial, legal and diplomatic frameworks, MOUs, and agreements associated with Gwadar and the CPEC. Special attention be paid to basic facilities and jobs for Gwadarites. Let Gwadar be the role model for other Balochistan cities to derive inspiration from. This will also help counter Baloch dissatisfaction.
21. Blue Economy: Development of largely untapped Blue Economy to date can abet national economic growth significantly.
22. Ease of Doing Business: Focus on the ease of doing business. Our local businesses functioning across the globe should also be facilitated with paperwork and guarantees to help the foreign exchequer. SIFC is a good initiative that should continue under the new government.
23. Agriculture Sector Growth: Development of Agriculture sector on scientific lines holds the key not only for economic progress but also to address unemployment.
24. Human Development: Focus on imparting skill-based training to develop human resource capable of meeting the local and overseas demands, especially vis-à-vis emerging technologies. Pakistan's young and tech-enabled human resource can be primed for an organized export to partially alleviate unemployment and accrue foreign remittance.

Foreign Policy (Strategic Reorientation):

25. The foreign policy should be based on the principle of “friendship for peace, not war”. Pakistan should not engage in fighting others' wars, and shun short-term gains and easy money.
26. The focus of our foreign policy should be on creating a peaceful neighbourhood based on independent and pragmatic foreign policy.
27. Critically, all important foreign policy issues should be discussed in the parliament, which should invite a diverse range of voices and perspectives from within Pakistani society.



US-China competition:

28. Pakistan's strategic partnership with China, which has stood the test of time, is broad-based. However, the centre-piece of the relationship should be the CPEC, which has the potential to transform Pakistan from a security state to an economic state.
29. Pakistan's relations with the US are important but are not likely to reach a high point in the near term, mainly because the US has already chosen India as its strategic partner in South Asia. However, we need to maintain and strengthen existing relations in trade, investments, education, health, agriculture, and IT sectors.
30. Both the US and China have assured that their competition would not veer into conflict. That opens up the possibility of Pakistan maintaining relations with both super powers.

India:

31. In 2024 and beyond, India is likely to continue its policy of no-contact with Pakistan. If the BJP, led by Mr. Modi, gets re-elected, and India opts to open some contacts with Pakistan, we should remain receptive as per our policy of seeking peaceful relations with India. The initial steps could be to: restore high commissioner level diplomatic relations; open trade through Wahga on agreed items; relax visa regime; facilitate religious tourism; and allow people to people contacts.
32. However, if the Modi regime maintains its aggressive posture towards Pakistan, the government need not take any initiative towards India because it would not be reciprocated. Pakistan should then continue to expose the destabilizing role of the Modi-led government for peace and stability in Pakistan and the region.



33. Nevertheless, Pakistan should be receptive to opening a back channel to resolve outstanding issues with India.
34. On Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan should maintain its formal position based on the UNSC resolutions. If India takes an initiative of reviving a variant of four-point formula, Pakistan should be receptive to the idea and work towards evolving a mutually acceptable basis for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute.
35. Meanwhile, Pakistan should integrate GB as a provisional province with a proviso that this integration is subject to the final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir.
36. Pakistan should maintain its offer to host SAARC summit in Islamabad. However, Pakistan should be open to the suggestion to hold all SAARC summits in Kathmandu, the seat of SAARC, including the possibility of a virtual summit.

Afghanistan:

37. We should remain engaged with the Taliban-led Afghanistan, but with clear understanding that Pakistan would not accept TTP being used as Taliban government's leverage against Pakistan. A friendly and cooperative environment is in the interest of both countries.
38. We should treat Afghanistan as a normal, independent, sovereign country, similar to the bilateral relationships we have with other neighbors.
39. Pakistan's political leaders should hold a candid dialogue with Afghan leaders that peaceful coexistence, strong economic relations, and robust counter terrorism cooperation are in the interest of both countries.
40. In line with Pakistan's pivot towards geoeconomics, the focus of our relations with Afghanistan should be on bilateral trade, Afghan transit trade, and connectivity with energy-rich Central Asia and China. This would build peace constituencies in both countries and help restore mutual trust. We need to be patient and pragmatic.
41. Pakistan need not extend formal recognition of the Taliban government unilaterally. This decision may be taken as a part of the ongoing multilateral consultations.



42. Pakistan needs to counter considerable propaganda being waged against it on Afghan soil. To that end, contacts between the media of the two countries should be facilitated.
43. The border should be kept open for bilateral trade. For transit trade, the same duties should be levied on the goods imported for Afghanistan as for Pakistan. This would remove any incentive for dumping transit trade goods in Pakistani market or smuggling back into Pakistan.

Iran:

44. Iran and Pakistan need to create an effective mechanism to coordinate efforts against terrorist groups, so that the border can be made secure and tranquil.
45. Both sides should find some innovative ways to implement the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project.
46. Border markets with Iran should be expanded as an effective way to increase commercial interactions without attracting US sanctions.





Saudi Arabia:

47. Pak-Saudi relations need to be diversified and made robust on quid pro quo basis in line with new realities in the Kingdom, especially economic ties.
48. Pakistan should seriously exploit opportunities unleashed by KSA's transformational Saudi vision 2030.
49. Solicit Saudi investments by offering professionally packaged projects. This would require building inhouse capacity for making feasibility studies for large scale projects.
50. Special Investment Facilitation Council is a useful window to attract foreign investments from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait, and should expand to include more sectors and more sources of investments.

Analysis and Policy Recommendations National Security of Pakistan



Radical transformation of global geostrategic landscape in the 21st century has ushered new and often complex threats and challenges. In particular, the amorphous security environment in the region and internally, coupled with changing security paradigm, warrant a fresh look at the conceptualization of a strategy on national security. Pakistan's strategic culture has traditionally been that of a security state in the face of existential threat from belligerent and massively armed India. However, the issues of traditional security and ever-increasing non-traditional security challenges can be best handled if national security is approached more comprehensively.

The policy framework on national security ought to safeguard and advance clearly defined national interests, which implies looking beyond traditional defense to encompass other equally vital security considerations, including, inter-alia, economic, foreign, environmental, and cyber security. A particular focus is required on efforts to promote human security - a people centric approach - which in turn advances national security at the state level.

A paradigm shift in national security planning has become imperative given the wider spectrum of threats, changing nature of conflicts, technological advancements like generative artificial intelligence and drones, rising influence of violent and non-violent non-state actors, and emergence of soft power, global connectivity and inter-dependance of states.

This segment of the document (national security) focusses on policy choices that can best ensure comprehensive national security. The recommendations essentially cover four key areas: Traditional, Non-traditional, Deterrence and Counter Terrorism.

Conventional Military Security

Control and Coordination: Most nations have a national level control and coordination mechanism for planning and directing responses on security affairs, which are invariably multi-faceted/inter-ministerial. Pakistan, too, has an institutional framework, which, sadly, lacks consistency. It is, therefore, recommended to:

“Reactivate the Office of National Security Advisor, with effective functioning of National Security Division under National Security Committee, to proactively lead, manage and address matters of national security in institutional and professional manner on permanent basis”.

Strategic Security Review: The contemporary security environment requires an integrated and threadbare analysis. The national security architecture, which may have served useful purpose for many decades, now needs to be transformed. Therefore, it is suggested that, as a first step, a representative committee be formed to:

“Undertake a holistic Strategic Security Review to revamp national security response and also establish the review process at regular intervals”



Appraisal- Military Strategy and Systems: Burgeoning Indian military threat, restive western borders, and violent extremist threat have persistently posed monumental security challenges to the state. Consequently, significant efforts and resources have had to be diverted to develop credible response consisting of Armed Forces, Strategic Forces (nuclear and non-nuclear), Para military, National Guards and Reservists. The military strategy has traditionally been defensive-offensive backed by credible deterrence. However, the battle field environment has radically transformed as also the nature of conflict. Therefore, there is a need to:

“Reconfigure Military Strategy and Armed Forces ensuring an appropriate blend of strategic, conventional and non-conventional capabilities for a more efficient, lethal and rapid response”

Some specific moot points include:

“Continuously develop more effective, lethal (precision-destruction oriented), mobile and agile conventional forces with careful evaluation of quality vs quantity and cost effectiveness”;

“Under prevailing financial constraints, rapidly eroding fiscal space, and perpetually shrinking resources, achieve skillful balance between strategic capability, and conventional and non-conventional forces”;

“Taking advantage of strategic deterrence capability, restructure conventional forces to create financial space for acquiring high-tech capabilities”; and

“Improve human resource capability to respond to rapidly changing, highly dynamic, and extremely volatile battlefield conditions and incorporation of high-tech equipment and emerging technologies”.



Paramountcy of Maritime Milieu: One of the defining features of international strategic outlook is the shift in global center of gravity from the West to East in Indo-Pacific maritime arena. Furthermore, Indian Ocean is propounded to be a theatre where US-China competition interlocks with Indo-China rivalry. The emergence of Indo-US strategic collaboration, nuclearization of Indian Ocean, and massive Indian naval build up are factors that are perilous. Pakistan, being an important littoral state, has vital economic, security and politico-diplomatic interests, especially in respect of the sea component of CPEC and Blue Economy. The need is, therefore, to have an overarching strategy to:

“Develop maritime prowess to safeguard national interests in emerging global/regional maritime order in the Indian Ocean, and realize economic benefits”.

Military collaboration with China: India, and the region in general, has entered into a de-facto military alliance with the US, through a host of agreements, such as the QUAD, LEMOA, COMCASA, and BECA, while also maintaining traditional collaboration with Russia. Pakistan, too, needs to proactively engage with China and regional states to formalize politico-security accords. To that end:

“Leverage strategic-military collaboration with China unambiguously, and integrate regionally, especially with the Middle East to advance national security interests while managing relations with the West”.

Deterrence Regime: Pakistan's security is predicated on credible strategic nuclear deterrence, which has served Pakistan's security interests well, ensuring no major war to date. However, technological advancements, conceptual evolution, and efficacy of modern instruments of powers are impacting potency of nuclear deterrence. Pakistan is consistently being subjected to strategic coercion in multiple domains, including economic, informational, cyber, and diplomatic. It is, therefore, recommended that:

"The deterrence regime premised mainly on nuclear capability may need to take into consideration the implications of emerging technologies and contemporary trends in order to ensure its credibility in the foreseeable future, particularly in the vein of cross-domain deterrence".

Non-Traditional Threats

Counter Terrorism: National security faces a mix of traditional and non-traditional threats. The nuclearization of South Asia as well as the availability of modern means of warfare have redefined this mix. Nuclear deterrence has curtailed the space for traditional threats while non-traditional threats have filled the available space. In the wake of 9/11, Pakistan's freedom of action to respond to non-traditional threats from India has also been curtailed. Conversely, the Global War on Terror (GWOT) enhanced India's freedom of action while straining Pakistan's capabilities through three-front scenarios: eastern border, western borders, and internal front. It can be inferred that non-traditional threats being faced in the last two decades are likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

The above notwithstanding, the military and intelligence responses have continued to be dominated by dictates of the traditional threats. As a result, the national exchequer stands heavily burdened, which in turn has impeded efforts to develop adequate responses to non-traditional threats. The non-traditional threats warrant greater emphasis on the collection, collation, and coordination of intelligence. Some specific recommendations include:

"Police Reforms: Police reforms are long overdue given that the non-traditional threats Pakistan is facing are a direct product of lawlessness, mismanagement, and poor governance. The police force must be depoliticized, reconfigured, reorganized, and reformed on modern lines".

"Uniform Governance: Category B areas should be immediately converted into Category A areas. Categories of special status, like PATA, should be abolished for the sake of uniform governance and application of the law of the land".

"Smaller Administrative Units: As opposed to large unmanageable provinces, smaller administrative units should be created as these can be better managed, and governed and will be favourable for national integrity".

"Segregation of Intelligence: Traditional threats being alive, a part of intelligence may continue to focus on them. However, a major part of the intelligence apparatus should put up coordinated effort under empowered NACTA".

"Border Control: Secure borders are sine-qua-non for better security. Measures to improve border security should be enhanced".

"External Intelligence Agencies: In the wake of our repeated roles in global geopolitics of the 20th century, external inimical intelligences have intruded into our system. Their role should be eliminated".

"Peaceful Neighbourhood: Relations with neighbouring countries need to be improved based on independent and pragmatic foreign policy".

Foreign Policy of Pakistan



Strategic Reorientation:

Pakistan has remained aligned with the West for most of its lifetime. All of its systems - political, military, judicial, economic, and management - are based on the systems of the West. The power is now shifting from the West to the East. China is emerging as a challenger to the US hegemony. Alignment with the West has thrust upon us the role of fighting and ensuing destruction. Strategic realignment may be overdue based on the following key points:

- i. US is waning and China is waxing power.
- ii. The US is distant, and China is a neighbouring power.
- iii. The US has used Pakistan as a client while China stood with Pakistan.
- iv. Alignment with China can transit Pakistan from a security to an economic state.

Responses – Internal:

- Connectivity and Integration for Peace and Stability: Based on the analogy given in the book, Pentagon's New Map, written by Thomas P. M. Barnett, connectivity and integration of areas is sine-qua-non for peace and stability. The areas that are non-integrated face greater conflict.
- Discard British Postulates: Balochistan, in particular, was managed by the British based on two key postulates, 'keep them alienated and rule through appeasement of Sardars'. These are impractical postulates which impede connectivity and integration.
- Development based on the state of Deprivation. The distribution of assets and resources isn't equitable and fair amongst various regions of Pakistan. This generates a feeling of deprivation and alienation.

Responses – External:

- 21st Century Geopolitics: The policy choices that Pakistan made in the 20th Century geopolitics, led to the country's suffering and sacrifices in terms of finances, blood, infrastructure, and image. *"Pakistan should grudgingly shun any role of fighting others' wars. The foreign policy should be based on the principle of "we can be friends for peace and not war".*
- Easy Money. T.V. Paul in his book, 'The Warrior State', has said, "while the Middle East suffers from resource-curse, Pakistan suffers from the strategic-curse". He qualifies that the Middle East lacks the motivation to work hard due to the abundance of natural resources, on the other hand Pakistan lacks the motivation to work hard, as it gets easy money due to its strategic location. *"Pakistan should shun short-term gains and easy money for long-term gains and hard-earned money".*
- Look East. Based on ground realities, the whole of the world is realigning. Pakistan and China have been the most trusted friends. *"Pakistan must realign its strategic directions towards East, in particular China, which may be an arduous and colossal job but of critical importance".*
- Growth and Development. Pakistan in particular, and the region in general, has been devastated by prolonged conflict. The CPEC is termed as the Marshall Plan for South Asia – a least integrated region, the most impoverished, and the most conflict-prone. *"Pakistan must take full benefit of the CPEC, which has the potential to transform Pakistan from a security state to an economic state". The CPEC will not only benefit China and Pakistan but the entire region of South Asia.*
- *"Support Chinese-centric South Asia (integration) vs India-centric South Asia (conflict)".*
- The pivot to China is not a zero sum for Pakistan's important economic and commercial relations with the US and Europe, which must be maintained.





Responses - Foreign Policy Formulation Process

- Inclusive and open discourse: There is a growing need for structural reforms in Pakistan aimed at strengthening parliamentary oversight of critical issues such as foreign policy, national security, the economy, and climate change. There is also a need for an inclusive discourse on key foreign policy issues. The importance of a strong and independent parliament cannot be over-emphasized. *"Pakistan needs an inclusive and open discourse on critical issues of foreign policy in the parliament, which should involve a diverse range of voices and perspectives within Pakistani society".*
- Adoption of a pragmatic approach: We should pursue a pragmatic and realistic approach to foreign policy, predicated on the national interests of Pakistan. *"A pragmatic and realistic approach to foreign policy be pursued, one that takes into account both opportunities and challenges".*

Responses - Non-Traditional

- Pakistan's image is worse than its reality. *"Focus on developing soft power to address the image issue confronting Pakistan. To that end, merge external publicity wing of Information Ministry and relevant sections of Ministry of Culture with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs".*
- Implementation of climate change policies and frameworks by the federal government should be prioritized. *"For effective climate adaptation and mitigation, the primary area of focus should be to develop robust indigenous capacities while collaborating with regional/global agencies/states".*

Countering threats to Economic Security of Pakistan

Economic Security has emerged as an important strategic priority for the government of Pakistan given its impact on national security. There is a need for assessment of potential risks to national security that may emerge as a result of economic crunch. In the past four decades, the gross domestic product on average has been on a decline. In real terms, competitiveness has also gone down, debt to GDP ratio has increased, and per capita income has decreased.

One notable fault line of Pakistan's economy is its current account deficit and over-reliance on debt. Pakistan has been declared as a "debt-stressed country" by United Nations. Another fault line is the high fiscal deficits which in turn impact inflation. Macroeconomics tells us that Pakistan is likely to stay in IMF program for more than 3 years, and it is not something that should be celebrated. Countries come up with a home-grown program and prefer partnership or transactional deals, which Pakistan policy makers could not come up with.

The issues of fiscal and current account deficits, rising debt burden, unwelcoming business environment, and many other related issues require a fundamental shift in how Pakistan's economy is managed.

The Conference devoted one panel comprising leading experts to discuss the broad array of inter-related subjects within the overall ambit of economic security of Pakistan. The subject experts how Pakistan could boost regional trade; optimize benefits of CPEC by building SEZs; operationalize Gwadar; enhance the role of the private sector in country's development; and make Pakistan a regional hub of economic connectivity. It was further argued that Pakistan must also imbibe modern technologies to keep pace with the fast-changing world.

Some experts felt that Pakistan should aim at an average of 7-8% of economic growth in next few years to be able to provide economic security for its people. Given that 40% of population is young, we can achieve this high growth rate only if the youth are given dignified opportunities. It was further suggested that we should not go for bailout plans because these are only temporary relief and buy us limited space for economic viability while undermining our progressive thinking.



One development practitioner opined that Pakistan's policy making network should meet four benchmarks: If a policy is not in favor of our youth, it should be discarded. Secondly, all investment is not good, if there is no creation of jobs or technology transfer and dollar influx, this is not a good investment. Thirdly, we should focus on productivity and innovation. Fourthly, government policies should not lead to shrinkage of private sector.

The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is a strategic cooperative partnership project between Pakistan and China, was also discussed extensively. The CPEC has added around hundreds of kilometers of roads, thousands of megawatts of energy, and created jobs for Pakistani nationals. So far, investment under CPEC injected in Pakistan stands at \$25.4 billion. China-Pakistan bilateral trade also reached \$37.3 billion, up from \$28.2 billion in 2022, and around \$9 billion back in 2013. Meanwhile, during the present fiscal year, Pakistan's exports to China increased by 40 per cent. Experts were unanimous in recognizing the significance of Special Economic Zones for the industrialization process of Pakistan.

Amid misperceptions about CPEC and special economic zones, it was deemed crucial to understand that both are long-term projects, requiring a strategic and forward-looking approach to maximize the benefits of these initiatives. Some experts stressed the need for a link between our educational policy and industry.

To unlock the full potential of CPEC, Pakistan has the opportunity to emerge as an economic hub through a strategic approach that involves industry relocation and the renovation of our policy framework. Crucially, this framework should be moulded to be investment-friendly, creating an environment that attracts and retains investments. The CPEC has the potential to connect the subregions of Central, West and South Asia.

Stabilizing the economy should be the top priority of the government. To that end, the following recommendations are made:



- 1 **Budget deficits:** "Pakistan must live within its means. That requires considerable belt-tightening, especially on wasteful expenditure of the federal and provincial governments. The bailout plans with IMF and other donor agencies should be focused on self-reliance and development. The private sector needs to be incentivized to ensure job creation with an emphasis on productivity and innovation, in line with the latest technological advancements. The loss-making state-owned enterprises should be privatized through open, transparent and competitive privatization process".
- 2 **Inflation:** "An emergency plan should be formulated to tackle inflation by fiscal and administrative measures. On the fiscal side, the State Bank should make independent decisions and discourage printing of money, which can provide short term relief but creates inflationary pressures and long-term fiscal deficits. Strict action is required against hoarding and smuggling of essential commodities to counter artificial shortages and inflation of prices".
- 3 **CPEC & SEZs:** "Ensure that CPEC is kept away from politicization and misconceptions by enlightening the youth regarding its potential for Pakistan's economy. Equitable and fair distribution of CPEC projects: Needy regions of Pakistan should get better distribution of CPEC projects. The second phase of CPEC should be accorded higher priority, especially SEZs and the operationalization of the Gwadar port. Make the first SEZ a success story and then replicate it. Also not ignore the role of Blue Economy in expediting economic development".
- 4 **Ease of Doing Business:** "Focus on ease of doing business. Our local businesses functioning across the globe should also be facilitated with paperwork and guarantees to help the foreign exchequer. SIFC is a good initiative that should continue under the new government".
- 5 **Human Security:** "Focus on imparting vocational training and IT skills to our human resource, which meet local demands and manpower exports. Emerging technologies are re-designing the way the world would conduct its business. Pakistan must use its young, tech-savvy human resource to develop local technology base".
- 6 **NFC Awards:** "NFC awards are given based on population and not based on need. Better formulas should be worked out based on the needs of a particular region. All areas should be brought at par before allocation of resources is based on population".



TIMELINE: INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

Relations with India:

South Asia remains a conflict-prone, tension-ridden, and least integrated region of the world. India and Pakistan have failed to evolve peaceful coexistence. One major reason for instability in South Asia is the persistent mistrust between the two countries. Attempts have been made in the past to build mutual confidence, but never enough to establish a normal, good-neighborly relationship. The absence of an uninterrupted dialogue, the unresolved Kashmir dispute, and failure to deal with the menace of terrorism cooperatively have kept South Asia destabilized. Presently, Prime Minister Modi is seeking to create a Hindu Rashtra in India. India's foreign policy seems to aim at marginalizing and isolating Pakistan. These efforts hamper prospects of peace and make South Asia a high-risk destabilized region.

In September 2016, India announced that its forces had crossed LoC to strike targets in Pakistan. It appeared that India was trying to create a 'new normal' in bilateral relations, whereby it could strike targets inside Pakistan at will. A few years later, in February 2019, India carried out a surgical strike in Balakot, claiming to target a militant training camp. Although the strike only hit some trees in the jungle, such a reckless action of one nuclear state against another created a precarious situation in South Asia. All other nuclear weapon states make serious efforts to avoid any direct military confrontation with each other and depend on diplomacy to manage conflict escalation.

The US has intensified its competition with China, and to that end, it has made alliances with India, Australia, Japan and others to contain China's rise. However, the US and China have so far refrained from any direct military confrontation. Even in the Russia-Ukraine war, the US has avoided sending its own troops in the war.

The region of South Asia on the other hand is so different from the rest of the nuclear world. Ever since India and Pakistan became overtly nuclear in 1998, both countries have intermittently engaged in conventional confrontations, including the 1999 clash in Kargil and the ten-month long military standoff in 2002. To their credit, both countries have, on occasions, used behind the scene diplomacy to cool off tensions and avert all-out war.

India and Pakistan would need to realize that there can be no winners in a nuclear environment. Confrontations bear high costs and no benefits. If diplomacy is given an uninterrupted chance, South Asia, like other regions of the world, could also achieve stability and prosperity.

Prime Minister Modi is gearing up for his third term, which would start if his party wins the May 2024 Lok Sabha elections. In his two terms, he has attempted to change India from its secular, pluralistic orientation to Hindutva drive Hindu nationalist state. This has created alarm in minorities, especially Muslims and Christians. Externally, Modi is using the US tilt towards India to expand India's global and regional profile by acting as a net security provider in South Asia. This has run his government into problems with many of India's neighbors, particularly Pakistan and China.



After elections in Pakistan and India this year in February and May respectively, can the two countries normalize bilateral relations and contribute towards economic integration of South Asia? This was the question that preoccupied discussions in one session of the Conference. The participating experts recommended the following recommendations:

"In 2024 and beyond, India is likely to continue its policy of no-contact with Pakistan. If the BJP, led by Mr. Modi, gets re-elected, and India opts to open some contacts with Pakistan, we should remain receptive as per our policy of seeking peaceful relations with India. The initial steps could be to:

- a. restore high commissioner level diplomatic relations;
- b. open trade through Wahga on agreed items;
- c. relax visa regime;
- d. facilitate religious tourism; and
- e. allow people to people contacts".

"If Mr. Modi maintains his aggressive posture towards Pakistan, accusing Pakistan of cross border terrorism while committing state terrorism against Pakistan. In that case, Pakistan government need not take any initiative towards India because it would not be reciprocated. Pakistan should do whatever it to expose the true face of the Indian government".

"On Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan should maintain its formal position based on UNSC resolutions. Pakistan should also integrate GB and AJK as provisional provinces with a proviso that this integration is subject to final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir".

"Pakistan should be receptive to opening a back channel to resolve outstanding issues with India. If India takes an initiative of reviving a variant of four-point formula, Pakistan should be receptive to the idea and work towards evolving a mutually acceptable basis for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute".

"Pakistan should maintain its offer to host SAARC summit in Islamabad. However, Pakistan should be open to the suggestion to hold all SAARC summits in Kathmandu, the seat of SAARC, including the possibility of a virtual summit".



Relations with Afghanistan:

Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan remain uneasy. Both countries have inherited a complicated history. Since 1947, every Afghan government has refused to accept the Durand Line as the border despite the fact that Pakistan had not negotiated the Durand Line and only inherited it from British India which had adopted it by consensus of the then Afghan governments as the international border. In later years, Pashtunistan issue was raised by some Afghan rulers even though it made no sense because Pashtuns on Pakistani side of the border were larger in numbers than in Afghanistan.

The last four decades witnessed first the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and then American occupation of Afghanistan in 2001. On both occasions, millions of Afghans were displaced and were hosted by Pakistan and Iran. The so-called 'Afghan jihad' left serious consequences for both the Afghan and Pakistani societies. It is ironical that even though millions of Afghans have lived in Pakistan for decades, a majority of Afghans are bitter about Pakistan. This requires serious introspection as to why our ties with the next-door neighbor are not cordial.

Since August 2021, Kabul is being ruled by the Taliban. However, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan has yet to achieve formal recognition of the world, mainly because of its inability to meet the expectations of the international community on women rights, inclusivity of political governance, and counter terrorism. The most disconcerting aspect of the Taliban rule is the space they have provided to the TTP to mount attacks on Pakistan.

Both countries view the relationship through a very narrow security lens. There is no bilateral framework that could be referred to whenever there are tensions between the two neighbours. Iran and Afghanistan have a framework and so do India and Afghanistan.

Trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan is an important feature of the bilateral relationship. Afghanistan, being a landlocked country, also depends on Pakistani ports to import goods it needs. The transit trade has, however, hurt Pakistan's trade and industry because the imported goods are often dumped inside Pakistan. Quite often due to security concerns, the border is closed for trade. Many analysts feel that closing the border is not a good option because it creates more problems than it solves. The recent decision to deport refugees is being linked to Afghan government not stopping the TTP attacks on Pakistan using Afghan soil. However, some experts are of the view that this step has damaged the limited pool of goodwill for Pakistan in Afghanistan. There are suggestions to depoliticise bilateral trade as well as transit trade because economic interdependence reduces chances of clashes.

It is important to provide clarity on what the two countries expect from each other. A good starting point would be to find common ground given many commonalities. The situation in Afghanistan is not likely to change soon, so Pakistan needs to give Afghanistan space to settle.



Following policy lines are recommended:

"We should remain engaged with the Taliban-led Afghanistan, but with clear understanding that Pakistan would not accept TTP being used as the Taliban government's leverage against Pakistan. A friendly and cooperative environment is in the interest of both countries".

"We should treat Afghanistan as a normal, independent, sovereign country, similar to the bilateral relationships we have with other neighbors".

"Pakistan's political leaders should hold a candid dialogue with Afghan leaders that peaceful coexistence, strong economic relations, and robust counter terrorism cooperation are in the interest of both countries".

"In line with Pakistan's pivot towards geoeconomics, the focus of our relations with Afghanistan should be on bilateral trade, Afghan transit trade, and connectivity with energy-rich Central Asia and China. This would build peace constituencies in both countries and help build mutual trust. We need to be patient and pragmatic".

"Pakistan need not extend formal recognition of the Taliban government unilaterally. This decision may be taken as a part of the ongoing regional consultations".

"Pakistan needs to counter considerable propaganda being waged against Pakistan on Afghan soil. To that end, contacts between the media of the two countries should be facilitated".

"The border should be kept open for bilateral trade. For transit trade, the same duties should be levied on goods imported for Afghanistan as for Pakistan to remove any incentive for dumping in Pakistani market or smuggling back into Pakistan. The duties should be imposed at the entry point".



Relations with Iran:

Iran is a vast country, rich in natural resources, particularly oil, gas, and non-fuel mineral resources. The people of Iran are bonded with the people of Pakistan by history, culture and language. Iran was the first country to recognize Pakistan, and hosted the first embassy of Pakistan. Both countries enjoy cordial relations and there is no major dispute between the two countries. Despite this goodwill, tangible bilateral cooperation has remained limited. One major reason is the US sanctions imposed on Iran. Three issues – energy, border, and trade – are of vital importance.

Pakistan was keen to obtain natural gas from Iran. The Iran Pakistan gas pipeline agreement (IP) was signed in 2012, but could not be executed because of the US and UN sanctions. Iran has often cautioned Pakistan that it could face penalties for not implementing the IP agreement. Pakistan has cited the US sanctions as the force majeure which is beyond Pakistan's control. Since gas is not a

sanctioned commodity in US sanctions, both countries should work together to see if legally the US sanctions can be circumvented and the project be implemented.

Border security has emerged as a major issue for both countries. Some militant groups routinely commit cross border terrorism, such as Jaish al-Adl and Baloch Liberation Front. India has also used Iranian soil to commit terrorism in Pakistan, as was manifested by the case of Kulbashan Jadev. Both countries need to enhance their coordination on cross border issues.

Bilateral trade is limited mainly because of the absence of payment mechanisms and regular banking channels owing to the US economic sanctions. Both countries need to work towards curbing smuggling and opening up border markets.

The recent rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia brokered by China, and growing economic relations between Iran and China can also facilitate Pakistan's economic and commercial relations with Iran. Cooperation should be increased between the Gwadar port and Chahbahar port, which are complementary and can become the channel for possible extension of CPEC to Iran.

Of late, relations between the two countries experienced turbulence. Iran launched an attack in the Balochistan province of Pakistan on January 16, 2024, ostensibly to target a hideout of Jaishal-Adl. Pakistan responded by targeting a Baloch militant hideout in Saravan, Iran. The two countries swiftly activated their diplomacy and normalized relations. However, the issue of border security requires a more durable solution.

"Iran and Pakistan need to create an effective mechanism to coordinate efforts against terrorist groups, so that a secure border could foster confidence".

"Both sides should find some innovative way to implement the gas pipeline project".

"Border markets with Iran should be expanded".



Relations with Saudi Arabia:

Maintaining strong ties with the Muslim world has always been an integral element of Pakistan's foreign policy. The leadership and people of Pakistan have special affinities for the world of Islam. Pakistan has strongly supported Muslim nations in their liberation struggles, stood with Palestinians for their right to self-determination, and opposed external interventions during the so-called 'Arab Spring' that had hit the Middle East in 2011. Pakistan has also maintained a close engagement with the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).



The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia enjoys the most pivotal place in the Muslim world, thanks to being home to the two holiest shrines of Islam. Saudi Arabia has embarked on Vision 2030 to reinvent its relevance to the world. Saudi Arabia and the UAE are also seeking to open up their strategic, political and economic options. China and Russia are gaining inroads into these economies. Iran and Saudi Arabia are taking steps to

normalize bilateral relations. The Kingdom, the UAE, Qatar, and other countries in the Gulf have embarked on diversifying their economic and political priorities. That opens up doors for Saudi and UAE investments in Pakistan.

Israel's war on Gaza since 7 October 2023 has brought unprecedented death and destruction for Palestinians. The Arab-Israeli normalization process, which was picking up momentum in the past few years since the Abraham Accord of 2020, has halted, for now. Saudi Arabia has announced clearly that it would not recognize Israel until a Palestinian state is established with pre-1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital. Pakistan has also not recognized Israel. After the Gaza genocide by Israel, there is little likelihood of any government in Pakistan recognizing Israel.



"Pak-Saudi relations need to be diversified and made robust on quid pro quo basis in line with new realities in the Kingdom, especially economic ties".

"Pakistan should seriously exploit opportunities unleashed by KSA's transformational Saudi vision 2030".

"Solicit Saudi investments by offering professionally packaged attractive projects. This would require building inhouse capacity for making feasibility studies for large scale projects".

"Special Investment Facilitation Council is a useful window to attract foreign investments from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait, and should expand to include more sectors and more sources of investments".



Program

National Conference on Security and Foreign Policy - Policy Options for Pakistan

17 January 2023

1030 – 1100 hrs	Opening session. Venue: TMUC auditorium, H-11, Islamabad.
1100 – 1200 hrs	Concurrent sessions: PD 1 (auditorium); PD 2: conference room, 4th floor.
1100 – 1200 hrs	Tea Break
1230 – 1330 hrs	Concurrent sessions: PD 4 (auditorium); PD 3: conference room, 4th floor.
1330 – 1400 hrs	Closing session. Venue: TMUC auditorium
1400 – 1500 hrs	Lunch

Brief Introduction – NCSFP



**Ambassador
Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry**
Chairman Sanobar Institute

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry has served as a member of the Foreign Service of Pakistan for 37 years, rising to the rank of the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan for over three years from December 2013 to March 2017. Mr. Chaudhry's last diplomatic assignment was as Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States of America. He also served as Ambassador of Pakistan to the Netherlands, Foreign Office Spokesman, and deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the United Nations in New York. As Director General for relations with South Asia, he remained closely associated with India-Pakistan peace process. After his retirement from the Foreign Service, Ambassador Chaudhry served as the Director General of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad for over four years. He has authored two books and numerous research articles. His recent book is a memoir 'Diplomatic Footprints' that discusses the intricacies of foreign policy making in Pakistan.



Dr. Faisal Mushtaq (TI)
Chairman Advisory Board, CLAS

Chaudhry Faisal Mushtaq – Tamgha-i-Imtiaz, is a Former Education Minister and a Former Minister for Human Rights, Population & Social Welfare, Minorities and Baitulmal in the Interim Government of Punjab, and is recognized as the 500 most influential Muslims of the world for three consecutive years by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Center, Jordan, he is a leading national academician, education reformer and a social entrepreneur. He is the Founder & Chairman of Roots Millennium Education Group and is also the founder and CEO of a non-profit, community development organization 'Change in Education Foundation' working in support of 'government and public sector education' across education districts in Pakistan, thus scaling Pakistan's commitment to 'Sustainable Development Goals' SDGs 2030, today he has successfully reformed more than 200 government schools across various districts, provinces and rural communities in Pakistan. Faisal Mushtaq is the pioneer and idea sponsor for introducing Chinese language teaching across Pakistan, an initiative he took much before CPEC; back in 2009, where today he serves as the 'Chair of Hanban Confucius Classroom Pakistan'. President of China H.E. Xi Jinping on his last visit to Pakistan met him and recognized his services.

Introduction of Moderators



**Vice Admiral
Khan Hasham Bin Saddique
SI(M) HI(M) (Retd)**

Managing Director, Bahria Foundation

Spanning nearly four decades, Vice Admiral (Retired) Khan Hasham Bin Saddique HI(M) served on several key command and staff appointments during his career in Pakistan Navy. He belongs to the Surface Warfare Arm of Navy and has commanded ships, Squadrons, and the Pakistan Navy Fleet. He also has the distinction of commanding the Combined Task Force 150 at HQ NAVCENT Bahrain, comprising naval units of more than 30 countries, deployed for combating terrorism at sea and ensuring maritime security of North Indian Ocean. During his tenures at Naval Headquarters, he has been the Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff of Operations, Projects and Administration. In 2017, he retired as the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, the second highest post in Pakistan Navy. The Admiral has also commanded the Pakistan Naval Academy and Pakistan Navy War College; and served as Commandant of National Defence College at National Defence University, Islamabad. In recognition of his meritorious services, Government of Pakistan has awarded him Sitara e Imtiaz (Military) and Hilal e Imtiaz (Military). He is also the recipient of coveted Sword of Honour at his graduation.



Mr. Rehman Azhar
Executive Director, CLAS

Mr. Rehman Azhar currently holds the post of Executive Director at the Centre for Law and National Security. He also serves as an anchor, news producer and special correspondent at Express News Television, and has over 10 years of experience in dealing with foreign policy and national security concerns of Pakistan. He conducts a prime-time current affairs show "Center Stage with Rehman Azhar". The show highlights the political happenings taking place in Islamabad and those that impact the policy makers there. Each episode focuses on the newsworthy topic and features discussion with the news-makers and analysts.



Dr. Qamar Cheema

Executive Director Sanober Institute

Dr. Qamar Cheema is working as Executive Director at Sanober Institute. Previously he has been a faculty member for 14 years from 2010 to 2023 at the Department of International Relations in the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad. He Has been a visiting faculty member at the School of Politics and International Relations at Quaid e Azam University, Islamabad, International Islamic University, National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and SZABIST Islamabad. He regularly appears on national and international media Including DW, Aljazeera, India Today, CNN News 18, Times Radio UK, CBC Canada, and other TV stations as Strategic and Political Analyst, and writes articles for newspapers.



Dr. Sarina Shirazi

HOD Social Sciences and Business Management

Dr. Sarina Shirazi is the Head of Department Business Management and Social Sciences at TMUC Pakistan. She is the nationwide Academic Head for University of London, University of Hertfordshire and University for the Creative Arts programs at seven Campuses across Pakistan. She has a PhD in Management Sciences with focus on Regional Trade Agreements of EU, ASEAN and SAARC. She is a Fulbright Alumna (2011-13) and graduated from North Carolina State University NC, USA with a Masters in Economic - Management. She has spent the initial eleven years of her career in Defense Marketing and Trade and has managed contracts for eminent defense suppliers like Lockheed Martin, Bombardier, Pratt & Whitney etc. She has a decade long experience in academia and enjoys teaching Economics, Statistical Inference and Research Methodology. In addition she is also an active member of the Fulbright Alumni Association and the Quaidian Alumni Association.

Introduction of **Panelists**

National Security of Pakistan

PANEL DISCUSSION 01



**Maj. Gen
Dr. Muhammad Samrez Salik
HI(M) (Retd)**

Former Director General ISSRA

Major General (R) Muhammad Samrez Salik, HI(M) was commissioned in Pakistan Army in March 1985. The General is a graduate of Command and Staff College and National Defence University Islamabad. He is Masters in Warfare, Defence and Strategic Studies. During his 33 years of service, he has served on number of Command, Staff and Instructional appointments which includes Pakistan Military Academy Kakul, United Nation Military Observer, Assistant Private Secretary to Chief of Army Staff and Directing Staff at Armed Forces War College. The General commanded a Division in Quetta and served as Vice Chief of General Staff at General Headquarters Rawalpindi. He is presently serving as Director General Institute of Strategic Studies Research & Analysis, National Defence University Islamabad. He is also pursuing a PhD with National Defence University Islamabad.



Mr. Ali Tauqeer Sheikh
Climate Change Expert

Ali Tauqeer Sheikh is a climate change specialist, focusing on low-carbon and resilient development, international climate finance, and just transition for an equitable world. He has engaged in the design, development and delivery of several regional, national, and sub-national level projects, programs, and portfolios. Deeply committed to transformational change, he has managed diverse multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral teams comprised of climate scientists, policy planners, think-tanks, and activist groups.



Dr. Adil Sultan

Dean Faculty of Aerospace and
Strategic Studies, Air University Islamabad

Dr. Adil Sultan is the Dean of Faculty of Aerospace and Strategic Studies (FASS) and Acting Chair of Department of Strategic Studies (DSS).. Before joining the Air University in October 2020, he was a Director at the Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) and a Visiting Research Fellow at Centre for Science and Security Studies (CSSS), King's College London from 2017 to 2019. He had also been a Visiting Fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) London in 2015 and a Visiting Fellow at the Henry L Stimson Centre Washington D.C. in 2006. Dr Sultan has served Pakistan Air Force (PAF) for 31 years and at the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) for over 14 years, where he dealt with arms control and nonproliferation related issues. During his tenure at the SPD Dr Sultan served as Director Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs (ACDA) and Director Research and Analysis at the Policy, Doctrine and Strategy (PDS) branch of the SPD. Dr Sultan had been part of Pakistan's delegation in several bilateral negotiations with countries including US, UK, China, Russia, India, South Korea, Japan, Australia, etc. He had represented Pakistan at the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) meetings and remained part of the Implementation and Assessment Group (IAG) for developing various guideline documents on nuclear security related issues from 2007 to 2016. He was also a member of Pakistan's core team for the Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) process initiated by President Obama from 2009 to 2016 and was part of the official delegation in 2016 led by the Prime Minister in 2016.



**Maj Gen.
Dr. Shahid Ahmad Hashmat
HI(M), (Retd)**

Senior Advisor, Centre for Pakistan Cultural Communication,
Tsingua University, Beijing, China

Maj Gen. Dr. Shahid Ahmad Hashmat HI(M), (Retd) is the Senior Advisor, Centre for Pakistan Cultural Communication, Tsingua University, Beijing China. He is also a visiting Professor at the Hebei Normal University, Shijiazhuang, China. He is also a senior visiting research fellow at the Kashgar University, Kashgar, China.

South Asia's Geopolitics

PANEL DISCUSSION 02



**Ambassador
Dr. Raza Muhammad**

President, Islamabad Policy Research Institute

Ambassador Dr. Major General Raza Muhammad (Retd) has held various prestigious command and staff assignments. He also served as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Defence Production. After retirement, he was appointed Ambassador of Pakistan to Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles, and Comoros. He has been Executive Director Services in the Army welfare Trust and Advisor to President National Defence University Islamabad (NDU). He is now President IPRI.



**Ambassador
Nadeem Riyaz**

President, Institute of Regional Studies

Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz is the current President of the Institute of Regional Studies. He is a former diplomat who worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan for nearly 35 years. Born in 1960, Ambassador Riyaz joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1985 retiring this year. He holds a Master's Degree in International Relations from Columbia University, New York, USA with regional specialization in South Asia. He also holds a Master's degree in political science from Government college, Lahore. During the course of his long career with the Foreign office, he has held many key positions at headquarters including Director Europe, Director Administration, Director Foreign Service Academy and Additional Foreign Secretary for Europe. His positing abroad include, Second Secretary High Commission of Pakistan, Pretoria, South Africa and Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Pakistan Paris, France. He has served as Pakistan's Ambassador to Italy from October 2015 to February 2020. He was concurrently accredited to Slovenia, Albania and San Marino. He has also served as Ambassador to Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Latvia from 2009 to 2013. Ambassador Riyaz was Permanent Delegate to FAO, WFP and IFAD. He was also served on the standing Committee of IDLO, Rome. He also represented Pakistan as Deputy Alternate Permanent delegate to UNESCO.



Dr. Muhammad Mujeeb Afzal

Assistant Professor, School of Politics
and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad

Dr. Muhammad Mujeeb Afzal is the Assistant Professor at the School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid i Azam University Islamabad.

Pakistan & its **Western Frontiers**

PANEL DISCUSSION 03



Mr. Iftikhar Firdous

Founder and Editor, The Khorasan Diary

The author Iftikhar Firdous is a senior correspondent for The Express Tribune partner of the International New York Times in Pakistan based in Peshawar with a special focus on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Fata, Gilgit Baltistan and Afghanistan.



**Ambassador
Syed Abrar Hussain**

Former Ambassador to Afghanistan, Kuwait, and Nepal

Ambassador (r) Syed Abrar Hussain is a senior diplomat, author, and Pakistan's former special secretary, ministry of foreign affairs. In a period spanning over thirty-five years, he served in Kuwait (1987-1989), Jeddah (1993-1995), Prague (1995-1997), Kandahar (1999-2001), Beirut (2001-2002) and Brunei (2005-2006) in various capacities. He remained Pakistan's ambassador to Nepal (2008-2011), Kuwait (2013-2014), and Afghanistan, where he first served as a Counsel General in Kandahar during the Taliban regime (1999-2001). Thirteen years later, he was appointed as an ambassador of Pakistan in Kabul in 2014. He finally retired as a Special Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2018.



Mr. Muhammad Amir Rana

Director, Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies

Muhammad Amir Rana is a security and political analyst and the director of Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), an independent Islamabad-based think tank. He has worked extensively on issues related to counter-terrorism, counter-extremism, and internal and regional security and politics. He was a founder member of PIPS when it was launched in January 2006 and had previously worked as a journalist with various Urdu and English daily newspapers from 1996 until 2004. His first fiction work, a collection of short stories, *Adhoori mohabateen aur puri kahaniyaan* (Incomplete Love and Complete Stories) was published in 2002. *Saaye* (Shadows), published in Dec 2016, is Rana's first novel. The publication of *Saaye* confirms that Rana has kept his inner creativity alive and didn't let his numerous engagements get the better of him. He has also been affiliated with the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies, Singapore as a visiting fellow. He has also given lectures at several universities and security institutes in Pakistan and abroad. Amir has published widely in national and international journals, professional publications and magazines. He writes regularly for Dawn, Pakistan's leading English newspaper. He has also been invited to appear as an expert on the electronic media, including CNN, BBC World, Al Jazeera English, France 24, CCTV9, Voice of America, Al-Arabia and other Pakistani and international news channels. Amir is also the editor of Pakistan Annual Security Report, English research journal 'Conflict and Peace Studies' and Urdu monthly magazine "Tajziat". He also heads Narratives, a publishing house.



Ms. Amina Khan

Director, Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East,
and Africa, Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad

Amina Khan is Director of the Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI), Islamabad, where she oversees research and advocacy-related work on all facets of CAMEA. Prior to this, she served as a Research Fellow and a Senior Research Fellow at the ISSI, focusing on Afghanistan and FATA. Over a period of more than 15 years, she has published extensively on Afghanistan, and has presented her research at multiple national and international forums. She is also the author of three edited books, *The Covid Challenge and its Impact on the Middle East and Africa* (2021) and *The Evolving Situation in Afghanistan: International and Regional Perspectives* (2022), *Pakistan's Strategic Frontiers* (2023).

Economic Security of Pakistan

PANEL DISCUSSION 04



Mr. Haroon Sharif

Former Minister of State and Senior
Economic Advisor

Mr. Haroon Sharif served as the Minister of State and Chairman of Pakistan's Board of Investment in 2018-19. He was Pakistan's Lead Representative for Industrial Cooperation in the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He championed various reforms for improving Ease of Doing Business, Specialized Economic Zones and facilitating foreign direct investment from China, the Arabian Gulf and East Asia. Pakistan's ranking on Ease of Doing Business Index improved by 28 places under his leadership. He has been recognized among top 100 leaders in Pakistan in 2019. He is a member of several high-level task forces including Prime Minister's Task Force on Economic Diplomacy. He is currently engaged as a Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, Senior Fellow at Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, and as Senior Advisor to UNDP.



Ambassador Naghmana Hashmi

Former Ambassador to Afghanistan, Kuwait, and Nepal

Amb. Naghmana Hashmi is a retired diplomat with over 37 years of distinguished service in the Foreign Service of Pakistan. During her career, she held key positions, including Ambassador to China, the European Union, Ireland. She also served as Deputy Head of Mission to China and Denmark. With expertise in various areas, she held significant roles at the Foreign Office, including Additional Foreign Secretary for America's and Director General Policy Planning. In addition to her diplomatic career, she is actively engaged as Vice Chair of the Council on Global Policy and a member of the Board of Directors of First Women Bank. She serves as an advisor to the China Study Center at ISSI and Kestral International. Furthermore, she is a prolific writer, contributing regularly to esteemed magazines and newspapers. As an accomplished author, she has published several books, including "Magnificent Pakistan" and "Pakistan-China-All Weather Friendship."



Dr. Talat Shabbir

Director, China-Pakistan Study Centre,
Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad

Dr Talat Shabbir is Director China Pakistan study Centre at Institute of strategic studies. He holds PhD in International Relations from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. He has M Phil in International Relations from University of Karachi, Masters in International Relations from University of Balochistan and Masters in Political Science from University of Punjab. His research areas are South Asia, Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC and Pakistan-China relations. Dr Talat has been a visiting scholar at Sigur Centre for Asian Studies, George Washington University, USA. He has been on the faculty of Institute of Strategic Studies Research and Analysis (ISSRA), National Defence University (NDU) where he was responsible to conduct national security workshop and national media workshop. He regularly contributes to newspapers on domestic, regional and global politics and hosts an academic programme Belt and Road Economic Future (BRIEF) on a Digital Broadcast Television (DBTV) to address issues related to Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).



Engr. Khalid Bashir

CEO, Zirva (Pvt) Ltd

He is an engineering graduate in Mechanical Engineering from The University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore in the year 1978. One year on-job training with Mitsubishi Group company in Japan. Engr. Khalid has a vast experience in engineering, implementation, application and management.

Currently working as: Chief Executive Officer, Zirva (Pvt.) Limited, an engineering and contracting company, Director, Kasmy Pack (Pvt) Limited, a packaging industry, Director, Sanobar Institute, a rising Think Tank of renowned and eminent opinion makers.

Conclusion

Three organizations joined hands to convene a National Conference on National Security and Foreign Policy with a view to discussing and formulating concrete and doable recommendations for the incoming elected government of Pakistan.

The Conference was hosted jointly in Islamabad by Sanobar Institute (SI), The Millennium Universal College (TMUC) and Centre for Law and Security (CLAS).

More than twenty experts, academics and former practitioners came together for in-depth discussions on four inter-connected themes: National Security of Pakistan; South Asia's Geopolitics; Pakistan and its Western Frontiers; and Economic Security of Pakistan.

A large number of scholars, researchers, students and think tank community attended panel discussions and welcomed the national debate on issues of critical importance for a brighter future of the country.

The Conference took place in the context of a fast-changing world, which in turn is affecting our region, South Asia. In these times of great change, there are challenges but also opportunities for Pakistan. The Conference focus on identifying ways to address key issues confronting Pakistan's national security, foreign policy, and economic security. The objective of this joint endeavor by three organizations in the private sector was to provide useful guidance for the new government that would assume power after the elections of 8th February 2024.

The Conference also sought to spur all thinking minds of the country to pool their expertise to enable the elected government to address the mighty challenges of national security and foreign policy confronting our nation.

The policy advice generated at the Conference has been put together as a Strategy Manifesto for use by the key policy makers of the country.







With wars raging in Europe and the Middle East, and the US-China competition intensifying, new multi-alignments shaping up, India marching on the path of Hindu nationalism, and fears of terrorism resurging in Afghanistan, the global and regional geopolitics has profoundly affected our region, South Asia, with serious implications for Pakistan. On the domestic plane, political instability, weak economy and worsening law and order have imperiled the national security of Pakistan. Apart from threats at the borders, the non-traditional security threats are also looming large, particularly climate change.

The perilous global and regional geopolitics and uncertain trajectory of country's political economy pose a mighty challenge for the newly elected government. To discuss these complex dynamics and map out a way-forward, Sanober Institute (SI), in collaboration with The Millennium Universal College (TMUC) and Centre for Law and Security (CLAS) convened a National Conference on Security and Foreign Policy of Pakistan. The Conference brought together experts to discuss four inter-connected themes: National Security of Pakistan; South Asia's Geopolitics; Pakistan and its Western Frontiers; and Economic Security of Pakistan.

The outcome of the National Conference is the Strategy Manifesto, which contains doable policy recommendations on national security and foreign policy for possible use by the newly elected government in Pakistan.



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