

Post-Conference Report

**One Day International Conference on
Afghanistan Crisis: What Lies Ahead?**

Organized by

**Pakistan House
Islamabad-Copenhagen-London**

Reviewed by

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Table of Contents

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Program Layout | 3 |
| Speaker Profiles | 4 |
| Keynote Addresses | 9 |
| Noteworthy Snippets | 25 |
| Conference Report | 27 |
| Question/Answer Session | 47 |
| Analysis & Recommendations | 52 |
| Photo Gallery | 55 |

Introduction

On 19th March 2018, **Pakistan House** organised a one day international conference in Islamabad on the subject of "*Afghanistan Crisis: What Lies Ahead?*". Ms Sana Maqbool, News Anchor at PTV World, was the Master of the Ceremony.

The event witnessed the participation of ambassadors, eminent speakers, academics and policy practitioners from Pakistan and abroad, as well as attendance from all walks of life including diplomats, civil-military personnel, policy makers, government officials, university students, and other dignitaries.

General Ehsan ul Haq (Retd.), HI (M), NI (M), former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, was the Chief Guest on the occasion. **H.E. Jean-Francois Cautain**, Ambassador, Delegation to the European Union to Pakistan, **Lt Gen Asif Yasin Malik, HI (M) (Retd)**, former Defence Secretary, and **Dr Abdul Baqi Amin, Director General, Centre for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS), Kabul** were the Keynote Speakers.

Rana Athar Javed, Director General Pakistan House while highlighting the aims of the conference, emphasised that the reconciliation and negotiation would become the only way forward as the loss of lives and property in Afghanistan has marred the socioeconomic progress especially pronouncing a bleak future for Afghan youth. The US and its allies need to provide with a comprehensive support system which ensures a regional stability approach – including China, Russia, and Iran in the future peace processes. On principles, Pakistan does not object on India's role in helping Afghanistan's development sector, but Afghanistan must address Pakistan's genuine concerns about India's support to foreign militants especially TTP and Da'aesh. The Pak-Afghan cooperation in neutralizing foreign militant networks inside Afghanistan is vital for any future cooperation. He argued that the issue of border management should be resolved through implementing mutually agreed immigration regulations. He provided details of Pakistan House's initiatives to promote awareness of key world affairs through organising international conferences, providing policy assessments to the top civil-military leadership, and publishing internationally-accredited journals on strategic studies.

The honourable Chief Guest, keynote speakers, and other dignitaries and audience members lauded the efforts of Pakistan House in gathering such a galaxy of eminent speakers who presented incisive analysis in an independent and candid manner.

This report presents statements of the chief guest, keynote speakers, and provides with a comprehensive summary of key remarks delivered during the conference as well as an analysis and policy recommendations for the state institutions.

PROGRAMME LAYOUT

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| Opening Session | |
| Keynote Speaker-1: Lt Gen Asif Yasin Malik HI (M) (Retd.) Former Defence Secretary | |
| Keynote Speaker-2: Dr. Abdul Baqi Amin |  |
| Director General, Centre for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS), Kabul | |
| Keynote Speaker-3: H.E. Jean-Francois Cautain |  |
| Ambassador, Delegation to the European Union to Pakistan | |

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| Session-I EU, NATO & ISAF: Future of Political Stability Chair: Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain (Retd.), former Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan | |
| Trust Deficit, Reconciliation and Stability: Next Decade of Pak-Afghan Relations | Mr Rahimullah Yousafzai Resident Editor, The News International, Peshawar and Correspondent BBC World Service |
| Afghanistan: Challenges and Opportunities under new US policy |  |
| Indian presence in Afghanistan: Militancy and Danger to Peace in South Asia | Maj. Robert Gallimore (Retd.) Defence Analyst |
| | Brig Ishaq Ahmed (Retd.) Director, International Security, SASSI |

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| Session-II Non-State Actors & Threat to International Stability Chief Guest & Chair: General Ehsan-ul-Haq (Retd.), HI (M), NI (M), former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee | |
| National Reconciliation and Political Stability |  |
| Internal Political Dynamics & Economic Progress: Implications for a Stable Afghanistan | Pir Sayed Ishaq Gailani Founder and Chairman of the National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan |
| Da'aesh: Recruitment, Finances and Threat to International Stability | Mr Rana Athar Javed DG Pakistan House |
| | Dr. Khuram Iqbal Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, National Defence University, Islamabad |

Speakers Profile

General Ehsan ul Haq (Retd.), HI (M), NI (M), former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee



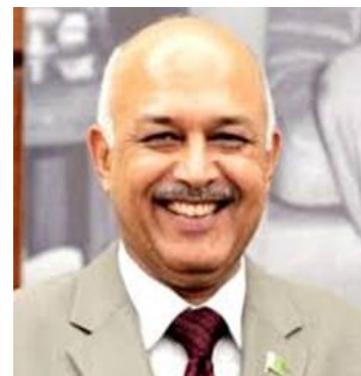
General (Retired) Ehsan Ul Haq was commissioned in Pakistan Army in October 1969. He is a graduate of Pakistan Army Command and Staff College Quetta, and got his masters in War Studies from the National Defence University, Islamabad. He has also attended a number of courses abroad including an Executive Management course with US Army.

General Ehsan Ul Haq has held various command, instructional and staff appointments. On promotion to the rank of Lieutenant General, he was appointed as Commander of an elite Corps, responsible for defence of the Pakistan – Afghanistan border and security in the Tribal areas (FATA). In the wake of the momentous events of 9/11 and intervention in Afghanistan, General Ehsan was appointed as the Director General Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). He was elevated to the rank of 4 stars General in October 2004, appointed as Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Pakistan and retired in October 2007.

He is a frequent speaker in international forums, reputed think tanks and Universities on geopolitical, defence and security issues. In recognition of his estimable services, he has been conferred the award of Hilal Imtiaz (Military), Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military), Chevalier de la Legion d' Honneur from the French Government as well as is the recipient of the King Abdul Aziz Medal of Excellence from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Lt. Gen Asif Yasin Malik (Retd.) HI (M), Former Secretary of Defense

Lieutenant General (Retd.) Asif Yasin Malik served as the Secretary of Defense from July 2012 to July 2014. He served as a Director General in Inter-Services Intelligence and Director General of Joint Intelligence and Information Operations in The Joint Staff Headquarters. He commanded two Anti-Tank battalions, an Infantry brigade and a Strike Infantry Division apart from being on the faculty of Command and Staff College. He was the Brigade Major(S-3) of an infantry brigade, GSO-1 Operations and Chief of Staff of a Strike Corps.



He was bestowed the privilege of gracing the NDU's Alumni Hall of Fame in 2013, the first Pakistani to have this honour. While at the NDU Washington DC, he was the Class

President of the International Fellows. He is a graduate of Pakistan Army Command and Staff College. He has done his Masters from National Defense University Islamabad and also holds a Master's degree in Strategic Resource Management from National Defense University, Washington, DC.

Dr. Abdul Baqi Amin, Director General, Centre for Strategic and Regional Studies (CSRS), Kabul



Dr. Abdul Baqi Amin is the Director General of the Center of Strategic & Regions Studies (CSRS), Kabul. CSRS conducts research on important national issues in the country. Dr Baqi holds a Ph.D. in Islamic Jurisdiction and currently serves as the Chairman of Law and Jurisprudence Department at Salaam University.

H.E. Jean-Francois Cautain, Ambassador, Delegation to the European Union to Pakistan

Jean-François Cautain has extensive work experience in the field of European Union external relations. His main areas of expertise include: international cooperation and assistance to developing countries, political analysis and dialogue, post-conflict situations and civil society. Jean-François Cautain has been serving within European Union institutions since 2001, when, following his substantial work experience in Afghanistan in the development cooperation field with aid agencies, he was appointed Head of Operations of the European Commission Delegation to Afghanistan.



Following challenging years in Afghanistan, Jean-François Cautain was appointed Head of Political, Press and Information Section of the European Commission Delegation to Thailand, from 2005 to 2009. He was in charge of the policy dialogue with the Government of Thailand and with different stakeholders in Myanmar.

He also brought his support and guidance to the regionalized delegations of Cambodia and Laos in the area of policy analysis. After the ratification of the EU Lisbon Treaty in 2010 and 2011, Jean-François Cautain actively contributed to the establishment of the new European External Action Service where he was appointed as Team Leader in the Policy Coordination Division in Brussels. His team provided guidance to EEAS staff (including the newly established EU delegations) on EU external representation, internal coordination and political issues.

In November 2011, he was appointed as the first resident European Union Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia. In October 2014, he became the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. He left Cambodia in summer 2015 after being appointed as Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

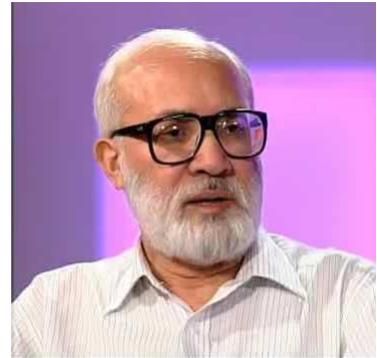
Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain (Retd.), former Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan



Syed Abrar Hussain was born and educated in Peshawar. He joined civil services in 1982 and retired as Special Secretary MoFA recently. He served in various positions at MoFA and Pakistan Embassies abroad. He was Ambassador to Nepal (2008-2011), Kuwait (2013-14) and Afghanistan (2014-2017). He is Author of two books on Urdu poetry and Urdu prosody.

Mr Rahimullah Yousafzai, Resident Editor, The News International, Peshawar and Correspondent BBC World Service

Mr. Rahimullah Yusufzai is a Pakistani journalist, best known for having interviewed Osama bin Laden, and Afghan Taliban leader Mullah Omar. He is a war correspondent. Yusufzai was among the first journalists to report on the Taliban and visited Kandahar, Afghanistan in 1995. He is one of the few bona fide experts on Afghanistan, having reported on the country since the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan by the former Soviet Union. He is the current editor of the Jang Group's - The News International at the Peshawar Bureau and is an op-ed writer for the monthly Newslines. He also served as Time's Pakistan correspondent. Rahimullah is also a correspondent of BBC's Pashto and Urdu services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Maj. Robert Gallimore (Retd.), Defence Analyst

Robert Gallimore is a History teacher and author with particular expertise in Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Robert served 17 years as an officer in the Welsh Guards where he specialized in operating with indigenous forces; with the majority of his service spent in Iraq, Afghanistan and Sierra Leone. Robert has been decorated three times for valour and outstanding service and was also awarded a Presidential Citation from Barak Obama – an exceptional and extremely rare honour.



Having served two tours of Afghanistan under the United States Marines Corps he is an acknowledged authority on relations with the United States. He also has a particular passion for Pakistan and West Africa. He is fluent in Dari.

Robert holds a BA from the London School of Economics in International Relations and History and postgraduate degrees from Oxford University in History and King's College London in War Studies. Robert is an authoritative communicator and presenter who is an experienced and popular after-dinner speaker and has recently has his first

book published.

Brig Ishaq Ahmed (Retd.), Director, International Security, SASSI

Brig Ishaq Ahmed is the Director, International Security in South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI). He did BSc war studies from command and staff college, Quetta. He remained instructor in intelligence school, for four years after having attained distinction in courses. He worked as counsellor for three years in a diplomatic mission. As counsellor, he worked in the fields of bilateral relations, visa handling, trade and commerce. He was awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz Military form Pakistan Army. Currently he is the board member of Pakistan House.



Pir Sayed Ishaq Gailani, Founder and Chairman of the National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan



Sayed Ishaq Gailani, a renowned politician and a veteran journalist, is the leader of Hezb-e-Nuhzat Hambastagi Milli and is a Sufi religious leader. Gailani graduated from Nadirya High School in Kabul in 1978, and later earned his bachelor's degree in Law and Political Science from Tehran University. Upon his graduation from Tehran University, he completed his LLB. Gailani participated in the Bonn conference in 2001 as well as the Cyprus meetings.

Sayed Ishaq Gailani is chairman of the National Solidarity Movement of Afghanistan (NSMA) an announced presidential candidate for the Afghan general election which was held June 2004. The party registered with the Ministry of Justice after the creation of the new constitution in 2004.

Mr Rana Athar Javed, Director General Pakistan House



Mr. Athar Javed is currently serving as the Director General Pakistan House, a Denmark & Pakistan-based think tank on International Affairs. He has been contributing to various governmental and inter-governmental organizations including Canadian Council for peace and International Security, Ottawa, Royal Danish Ministry OF Foreign Affairs, Royal Defence College, Copenhagen Peace and Research Institute (COPRI), University of Copenhagen, Centre for Future and Strategic Studies and National Defence

University, Islamabad.

He has completed 8th Annual Summer programme on “Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in a Changing World”, ASSER Institute & OPCW, The Hague – Holland in 2017. Every year he represents Pakistan House at CSP Conference of State Parties, OPCW, The Hague, Netherlands. He has presented papers on the subject of terrorism, counter terrorism, counter intelligence and national security.

Dr. Khuram Iqbal, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, National Defence University, Islamabad

Dr. Khuram Iqbal is Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations (IR) in National Defence University, Islamabad. He is an enthusiastic researcher, who has devoted nearly a decade to research and teaching in Peace and Conflict Studies, Strategic Studies and Counter-Terrorism. Having successfully completed PhD in International Security Studies and worked with top research centres and universities in Pakistan, Singapore and Australia, he brings in 10 years of experience in peace research and training. In February 2011,



Khuram was awarded the prestigious International Macquarie University Research Excellence (IMQRES) Scholarship to study evolution of suicide terrorism in the Greater Middle East with a special focus on Pakistan. He has established himself as one of the leading authorities on terrorism in South/Central Asia.

Keynote Speaker-1: Lt Gen Asif Yasin Malik (Retd), HI (M) Former Defence Secretary



Afghanistan is the most significant external challenge that Pakistan is facing. The characterization of Afghan conflict is complex entailing tension that exists beyond South Asia, hence involves regional and international actors. Any negative or positive political and security development in Afghanistan carry serious implications for Pakistan. The presupposition that resolution of Afghan crises rests with Pakistan lacks factual analysis, and thus undermines ongoing efforts to stabilize the region. It is also important to understand that it is not in Pakistan's control to manage the threat at its own, hence the fallout of an instable Afghanistan would not only impact regional security but also can threaten international security regime. Having said that, it is between Afghanistan and Pakistan to stand up to the problem and move together in the right direction. In this context, I give lot of importance and positive hope to the recent visit of Gen Nasser Janjua, the National Security Advisor (NSA) to Kabul. I am sure Pakistan's astute diplomacy will pay dividends and will be a turning point in bringing a positive change in the emerging situation.

Before I dwell upon what lies ahead let me share my perspective on the past too. In my opinion, Afghan crisis is the most mishandled of the time, and therefore to date no one has made substantial gains. As a result, the people of this region and specifically Afghans suffered remarkably. The “policy of controlled instability” in Afghanistan and the region virtually paralyzed almost all peace efforts. Let me say upfront that with all the hue and cry, the west, particularly the US has no love for the people of the countries in which they intervene. From Vietnam, to Afghanistan and from Iraq to Libya and Syria, the people of these countries faced unprecedented destruction caused by the West. Let me say that these countries will not be able to rise from the ashes and rubble for the next hundred years. In the case of Afghanistan, despite Pakistan’s warning, the US decision making flouted the international norms of stability, and thus caused serious strategic errors. Additionally, sixty percent of Afghanistan is not under state control, which in-and-itself demonstrates that only blaming every failure on Haqqanis would not help stabilizing Afghanistan. As the sole super power, the US should refrain from introducing recipe for mistrust and allegations.

Before we assess what lies ahead, identifying major problems faced by Afghanistan, is crucial as Pakistan has been enduring consequence of present imbroglio. The first foremost is the structural problems in governance. As per my analysis, the government in Kabul is divided into three power centres i.e. Ashraf Ghani group, Abdullah Abdullah faction and finally Karzai group. Not only that each of these three are pulling the government in three opposite directions but also at times working at cross purposes. By default, the US has given an extra-constitutional space to those who lost the elections but still seeks to remain relevant. Secondly, establishing writ of the state has been a serious challenge. Nearly sixty per cent of the country is out of control of the state authority, thereby providing space to the Taliban in both physical and political spheres. Thirdly, the ever worsening law and order situation, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) for instance has not been able to develop the capacity and capability in meeting the everyday security challenges.

Fourthly, despite of billions of dollars invested by the US and Western allies, the economic situation has rather deteriorated. This should have been expected because under “war economy” pretext, all financial resources were directed to wage war. Hence, no “real budget” was allocated to public welfare and strengthens the Afghan economy. Fifthly, the

Afghan foreign policy has never been independent. The entire system of policy making is dependent on the US and other countries including India. It is very important that Afghanistan should pursue an independent foreign policy so Afghan national interest can be served. Additionally, the Afghan foreign policy especially toward Pakistan should be free from domestic pressure groups who in several ways endorse the Indian influence in policy making process. Sixthly, the presence of overstretched network of drug lords inside Afghanistan is disastrous consequence of the US invasion. Poppy cultivation has increased many folds during the period of US occupation and continues to grow with every passing day. Linked with drug money, corruption has grown roots in all spheres of life particularly in the public sector. Ladies and gentlemen, the cumulative effect of all these problems is may well lead Afghanistan to the abyss waiting subsequently sliding into anarchy and ultimately into civil war.



Most importantly, a deliberate efforts is being made to re-engineer the ethnic balance, which has become severe threat to the national unity political stability of the country. All-inclusive ethnic entities have to be recognized in their correct relative status while they are not being allowed to have proportionate representation in various walks of life, particularly in ANSF and other government departments.

Let me now state that Pakistan has too been facing domestic political turmoil that is causing dysfunction in our system, and hence at times poor foreign policy directions. The presence of nearly three million Afghan refugees is an overarching problem for Pakistan. Not only they have become burden on our fragile and resource constrained economy but also becoming a source of security threat to the region. This characterization is not aimed at implicating the majority of Afghan refugees, rather than alluding to a permanent security challenge that both Afghanistan and Pakistan are facing. The issue of Afghan refugees should be resolved by invoking an immediate, but respectful return of 3 million Afghans to their homeland. Let me say bluntly that having enjoyed unbridled hospitality from the people of Pakistan. Arguably, the status of Afghan refugees is also changed due to their economic prosperity and assets they have built during their long stay, therefore they are no more conflict-related refugees rather they have become economic migrants.



Ladies and Gentlemen! Pakistan has its own economic problems and we have been fighting our own war against home-grown and foreign sponsored militant groups. The nexuses of militants and Afghan refugees on Pakistani soil are compounding the complexity of security and socioeconomic threats. This reflection demands their immediate return to Afghanistan, as current economic scenario cannot adjust in our socio-economic landscape. FATA's political situation is also an issue effecting stability in the area. Long due FATA reform process has been stalled for petty political interests thereby threatening the already achieved success of the security forces at a huge life cost. Furthermore, Pakistan is facing threat to its biggest economic project, i.e. CPEC.

Instability in Afghanistan and consequential security situation in Pakistan will create hindrance or at least cause delay in the effective implementation of various facets of CPEC.

Now let's see what lies ahead for Afghanistan? I am basically an optimist but in case of Afghanistan I carry a conditional optimism. All the problems if not tackled immediately are each a recipe for disaster. The country is sliding at a rapid pace towards a state of anarchy transiting into civil war.

There are three dimensions of corrective measures to retrieve the situation. One can start with foreign intervention. The US has to stop forcing a Western political paradigm rather allow a system akin to history and cultural ethos of Afghans. The design to grant India an interventionist status thereby restricting the space for independent policy formulation has to be rescinded. There has to be a "Marshal Plan" for the economic revival of Afghanistan. One trillion dollars were spent on the war during the last decade and if only one fourth is spent on development of Afghanistan it would have turned the tide in favour of Afghan people. Most importantly, Afghan soil should not be used against Pakistan. A clear policy should be announced about the intent and plans about the presence of foreign troops. That would remove doubts about US and western intent and designs thereby creating an environment of trust and confidence between the people and foreign forces. Such an environment would be conducive for the reconstruction and rejuvenation efforts.

Finally, the US has to allow freedom to Afghan Government to negotiate with the Taliban or take up the negotiation process itself as the only way forward is through negotiations. There is no military solution to the problem and we must not forget that time is on the side of the Taliban because the US and its Western allies failed to comprehend the socio-political construct of Afghan society.

Now let me propose a few recommendations, in order to address the above mentioned problems. First and foremost, there has to be a review of the constitution and it should be amended to bring it in line with Afghan people's aspirations and ethos rather than foreign dictates. Secondly, earnest steps must be taken on the economic front with foreign support and immediate to long-term plans put in place to put the economy on a progressive path, particularly the exploration and exploitation of massive fossil reserves

of the country. Thirdly, concerted efforts should be made to secure the borders and regulate cross border movement, particularly on the eastern border.

Fourthly; to start a real political negotiation with the Taliban, it is crucial to consult and include the opinion of Loe Jirga. Fifthly, the poppy cultivation needs to be curbed, and the US and its Western allies must end illicit drug trade. Finally, the menace of growing corruption particularly in the government has to be crushed with an iron hand.

Now a few recommendations for Pakistan: We are the most affected country from instability in Afghanistan. In my opinion Afghanistan is very important for our stability. A peaceful resolution is crucial, and that's why Pakistan must appoint a Special Representative for Afghanistan which should be placed directly under the prime Minister's secretariat. The representatives of secretariat should hail from all concerned ministries and departments. A fortnightly meeting or weekly briefing session should be chaired by the PM. Pakistan has to develop significant stakes for Afghanistan in maintaining good relations. Importantly, we should ensure that our soil is not used against any interest of Afghanistan. Border control mechanism should be strengthened at a very fast pace and at an appropriate time the Afghan Border Security Force should be integrated in it. We must take extra measure to facilitate bilateral trade including favourable tariff regime.

Pakistan must complete all projects under process in Afghanistan. We have to increase our soft footprint by a proactive media and socio-cultural campaign. I will not go into details of such soft measures as sky is the limit for such efforts. In fact, we can hold a major public-private Pak-Afghan conference on this subject and Pakistan House can take the lead. In case we have the capacity, we should facilitate the reconciliation process, if not then stay out of it. Our diplomatic missions have to have the best selected staff with extra incentives as these missions play a decisive role in our efforts to improve bilateral relations.

To conclude one can only hope that a stable Afghanistan should be the top priority of the US and all other Western allies. Pakistan must facilitate peace and political negotiation process, according to its capacity.

Keynote Speaker-2: Dr Abdul Baqi Amin
Director General, Centre for Strategic and Regional Studies
(CSRS), Kabul



Afghanistan and Pakistan are two Islamic countries, friends and neighbours who have mutual benefits. The people and government of Pakistan have helped Afghanistan with the most difficult conditions during the battle of the Soviet Union, with more than five million Afghan refugees in their homeland, and so far, about two million Afghan refugees are still living in Pakistan.

The interests of the two countries are tied together in numerous areas. Afghanistan is a landlocked country, because Pakistan has a great transit importance for the Afghan economy. It is also important for Pakistan to transit route to Central Asia's markets and energy through Afghanistan.

Along with this, both countries are considered to be good markets for the products of both countries. As a result, Afghanistan and Pakistan have a great economic significance for each other.

Peace and stability are the necessities of both countries. As the war is harmful in Afghanistan, also has a negative impact on Pakistan. Pakistani security has been hurt after the 2001 incidents, and the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan have both paid the exorbitant price of the 17-year-old war. Afghans have sacrificed about 150,000 people have been killed. Since 2001, over a decade, about 60,000 people in Pakistan have also fallen victim to this war.

War and insecurity have damaged economy of both countries, Afghanistan has not been able to stand economically and self-sufficiently, attract investment, and find solutions to the unemployment problem in the country. About 40 percent of Afghans live below the poverty line, and the unemployment rate in the country, currently is increased up to 40%. Today, Afghanistan provides itself with less than half of its total annual budget. On the other hand, if the war in Afghanistan has taken a toll on its own self-sufficiency, Pakistan's economic development has also suffered; Pakistan's investment in 2009-2010 has fallen by 45%, according to the pre-war years, Pakistan due to insecurity and instability has not been able to properly use its human power or increase its capacity. As a result, Pakistan was ranked 149 out of 187 countries in its development index in 2014.

The unemployment rate and poverty in Pakistan are also high about 30% of the population of Pakistan live below the poverty line. Due to the war and insecurity, drug addiction and drug trafficking have peaked in Afghanistan. Today in Afghanistan, 3.5 million Afghan drug addicts account 10 percent of Afghanistan's population. This damage is not limited to Afghanistan, but Pakistan is also suffering from the tragedy of narcotics. According to United Nations statistics, there were six million drug addicts in Pakistan in 2015.

Good governance in both countries was badly damaged by political instability and failed to properly manage the facilities in the two countries. For this reason, both countries are struggling for good governance. Insecurity and warfare have helped spread corruption in Afghanistan. According to a recent report by the International Organization for Transparency, Afghanistan rank fourth in 2017, including the most corrupt countries in

the world after Somalia, South Sudan and Syria, ranking 177 among 180 countries. Pakistan is also ranked 117 in 180 countries. Therefore, the necessity of governance for the people of both countries is urgent and fundamental, and the people of both neighbouring countries are severely affected by the lack of good governance.



Creating trust between Pakistan and Afghanistan and ensuring the cooperation of the interests of both countries, and this cooperation can provide the environment for the stability and development of both countries. In today's world, individual countries cannot achieve a comprehensive development, and development in this age is related to concerted cooperation. A country can move towards progress and stability that has a coherent and collaborative environment.

This coordination and cooperation comes at the time that all aspects are convinced of a mixed-interest strategy, and relationships are based on bilateral or multilateral, regional, interests. The policies of each country are based on national interests that can also take into account the same interests of neighbouring countries, as a result of which the trust and spirit of cooperation are strengthened and developmental relations take on.

Some countries think that the strengthening of regional cooperation threatens their interests and therefore does not strengthen these partnerships, but sometimes they want

to create queues and conflicts between the countries of the region, and that kind of policy is threatening to the security of the countries so we should try to hunt this kind of policy (Especially the superpowers in the world) in such a way that we do not mislead the Benefits of our peoples and the region as a victim of these great powers.

Weak relations between government of Afghanistan and Pakistan seriously affected interests of both countries. Pakistan had a decade before the soft power in Afghanistan, but now about 80% of the Afghan people have a negative thought towards Pakistan and its policies. Trade between the two countries has fallen from \$ 2.7 billion to \$ 1.2 billion over the past two years.

Efforts to improve the relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are required for security and stability of both countries. In addition, for the sake of good life we had in the 80s of last century, serious efforts need to be made to build trust between the two countries. Negotiations against each other should be stopped, in which it increases the distrust between the two countries.

The tense relations make things worse and never result in a better situation, so the door to dialogue and understanding should be left open forever and all the demands should be clearly discussed with each other. Civil society organizations should play a constructive role in resolving tensions between the two countries, especially research centres should play an effective role in expressing the consequences of tensions between the two countries, try to convince the politicians of the need for regional cooperation to be a positive influence on decision-making directions.

The world is at a crucial stage of evolving international landscape and shifting balance of power, facing growing destabilizing and uncertain factors, new problems and challenges on multiple fronts. Should one opt for openness or isolation, cooperation or confrontation, win-win or zero-sum game? There are questions we are all thinking about. China believes it is essential to advance peace, development and win-win cooperation, foster a new form of international relations and build a community with a shared future for mankind.

In this regard, we need to find a new approach to develop state-to-state relations with three principles, first, mutual respect. Countries of different size, strength or wealth, and

with diverse systems, religions and civilizations, are all equals, second, fairness and justice. The law of the jungle which puts the weak at the mercy of the strong must be rejected, and the legitimate and fundamental rights and interests of all countries, in particular the developing countries, should be upheld. The third is win-win cooperation. The out-dated mind-set of zero-sum game should be replaced with a new approach of working for common development and shared benefits.



To build a community with a shared future, we need to come up with solutions to various global and regional challenges. We will build a five-in-one world, namely a world of lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity, and a world that is open, inclusive and enjoys a well-preserved ecology.

China and Russia are each other's largest neighbours. Having stood the test of a changing international landscape, this relationship has proven to be both historic and forward-looking, and has grown increasingly resilient and stable. China-Russia relationship has become a major cornerstone for world peace and stability, fairness and justice, and win-win cooperation.

China and Pakistan enjoy an all-weather strategic partnership, and the relationship is exemplary for China's neighbourhood policy. We respect each other, support each other,

and trust each other. In recent years both the leaderships and governments have great attention to the practical cooperation including the CPEC and a lot of tangible achievements have been made under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. This relationship is crucial to the region as well as the world.

The Chinese side holds that peace and development is still the theme of our times. Unfortunately, the region is far from peace and prosperity. The Afghanistan issue has not been addressed yet. We now are not only facing the traditional challenges but also the non-traditional ones. To achieve peace and development for the region and at large further requires concerted and institutional efforts from our three countries.

It is hoped that all the countries could strengthen the cooperation and coordination to tackle the problems based on dignity and mutual respect. The three countries of China, Russia, and Pakistan may further deepen practical cooperation through UN and SCO. Development is our final goal. But many people are still struggling due to poverty, unemployment and illiteracy. We hold that common coordination, mutual beneficial cooperation and regional connectivity are the roads to shared prosperity.

In the regard, China suggests that we should cooperate to deal with two major challenges: Afghanistan issue, terrorism and extremism. For Afghanistan, we need to enhance the international cooperation on anti-terrorism within the war-worn country. And we should promote the peace and reconciliation process which is the only realistic approach to end the internal conflicts. Finally, we ought to help Afghanistan to achieve social economic development goals. Only development could bring durable peace and stability.

China, Russia and Pakistan are all victims of terrorism. Thus, we need to work together to cope with this common threat. Recent years, the bilateral law enforcement security cooperation on fighting the three forces between China and Russia or China and Pakistan has been fruitful. We think terrorism is the enemy of the world. So, anti-terrorism calls for international cooperation and joint efforts. No single country can keep itself out of this mission or win this battle. Second, we need to tackle the issue in the long run and take comprehensive measures, address both symptoms and root causes. Third, we need to promote the social development to eliminate the hotbed of terrorism. Finally, we insist that the UN need to play the leading role in fighting against terrorism. And the member states should fully implement the UNSC resolutions on anti-terrorism.

Keynote Speaker-3: H.E. Jean-Francois Cautain Ambassador, Delegation to the European Union to Pakistan



Geographically, historically, culturally, politically, economically Pakistan and Afghanistan are bound to each other. Their relationship is symbiotic. Trying to understand the regional dynamics without highlighting, or simply taking into account, this particular interdependence would be an important mistake.

Stability in Pakistan depends on stability in Afghanistan and vice-versa. The longstanding political and security crisis in Afghanistan obviously hampers the capacity of the region to interact, to connect. Solving this crisis is an essential prerequisite to create the conditions and reach a sustainable and prosperous economic development at regional level.

Generating peace takes time. He insisted that cooperation is essential because regional stability and peace based on cooperation is universal. It is applicable everywhere if all efforts are channelled to serve the purpose of peace of via interdependence. This should not be perceived as a utopian dream that we only think in right-thinking books or hear in conferences. It is a clear possibility, if the purpose to reach identical objectives is shared.

In the current context, it is urgent that Pakistan and Afghanistan work together for peace. The safety of the population in both countries is at stake and the time has come to move beyond naming and blaming not only the bilateral but also at the regional and international level. Both states should put an end to mutual accusations which have never led anywhere. Suspicions must be eradicated from the relationship and for that reasons, the goals, counties commit to achieve, must be unquestionable, notably when it comes to the fight against terrorism.

European Union welcomes the ongoing bilateral process of cooperation that has been taking place between Afghanistan and Pakistan since 2000. He stressed that the implementation of an ambitious Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan on Peace and Solidarity could become a solid basis to move forward and consolidate mutual trust on issues of common concern. This current irritant between Pakistan and Afghanistan must be solved to move forward. Only a multilayer and comprehensive dialogue steered by the respective leaderships can rebuild trust and confidence for the benefit of the both countries.

But any dialogue should be shoulder by concrete actions. Creating the conditions to enhance and strengthen bilateral trade is an important instrument. Interdependence can be built on connectivity and a reinforced cooperation between the business communities of both Pakistan and Afghanistan. Political trust can only be boosted by improving commercial ties. This calls for a further engagement of the private sector and the business community which should be encouraged to interact and explore ways to maximize their mutual interest.

Connectivity with projects such as CASA 1000 and TAPI is also an important element where public and private partnership can sustain bilateral and regional cooperation. Sustainable solutions are never in the hands of the governments alone.

Other channels of bilateral cooperation could include the joint management of watersheds such the one of Kabul River and its main tributary the Kunar River. Another important element into the bilateral relationship is the millions of Afghan refugees that Pakistan has hosted for 38 years. If some terrorist groups remain in Pakistan, dealing with them should not be at the price of the Afghan Refugees. Pakistan should keep the

principles of voluntary, dignified and secured return of Afghan refugees as it is a people to people asset that should not be wasted.



A positive development on the bilateral Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan together with supporting initiatives would also directly serve another purpose that is the Afghan Peace Process. Like, Pakistan the European Union strongly believes that it should be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led. All relevant stakeholders must be encouraged to sit at the negotiating table and to play a constructive role. And there is no doubt that Pakistan has leverage on some of the stakeholders. From our side, through its participation in the different fora supporting this process, the European Union wants to contribute at its level to regional stability. It is the essence of EU Strategy to Afghanistan.

Actually, the EU did not wait for other actors' policy orientations to develop its strategic orientations. The EU announced its strategy for Afghanistan in October 2017, which is a public document available on the internet. Our strategy aims at (1) promoting peace, security and regional stability, (2) reinforce democracy, (3) enhance economic and human development and (4) promote the rule of law and respect for human rights. This political engagement comes in support to the EU's sustainable economic assistance to

Afghanistan, the most important one, which amounts to approximately £ 1 billion every year beside the security assistance provided by several of our member states.

The EU is also Afghanistan's fourth trading partner, benefiting like Pakistan from a preferential trade agreement (Everything but Arms). We believe that only a comprehensive support can generate a longstanding stability and prosperity. This integrated approach is an important dimension of the EU's external action, supporting via tailored instruments the different sectors involved in the long-term development of Afghanistan.

The engagement of the EU in Pakistan responds to the same objectives. If we have increased substantially our development co-operation fund for the period 2014-2020, it is because the Europeans want to consolidate the conditions for peace in the region. Our engagements in Afghanistan and Pakistan serve the same purpose. Our approach is a regional one, because it is only through regional dynamics that stability will be possible. While our efforts should be put on defining common grounds for peace, isolation is meant to fail as well as blind cooperation serving only the interest of some.

The road to peace is not an easy one and the Afghan crisis will not be solved in one day. It requires a comprehensive engagement for which only those truly committed to the stability and the prosperity of the region can make a difference. This should remain the basis of our respective commitments.

Noteworthy Snippets



“It is between Afghanistan and Pakistan to stand up to the problem and move together in the right direction and the astute diplomacy will pay dividends and that will be a turning point in the relationship between two countries”.

Lt Gen Asif Yasin Malik HI (M) (Retd.)



“Creating trust between Pakistan and Afghanistan and ensuring the cooperation is in the interest of both countries, as the cooperation can provide the environment for the stability and development of both countries”.

Dr. Abdul Baqi Amin



“The road to peace is not an easy one and the Afghan crisis will not be solved in one day. It requires a comprehensive engagement for which only those truly committed to the stability and the prosperity of the region can make a difference”.

H.E. Jean-Francois Cautain



“Pakistan is not the stakeholder in the solution or peace process. There should be United States instead of Pakistan, because if you exclude the United States then we are in denial mode somewhere”.

General Ehsan ul Haq (Retd.), HI (M), NI (M)



“There is a realization on both sides that we need to overcome the trust deficit; the relationship has to be mended before it becomes unfriendly. Although it appears difficult to establish peace in Afghanistan in short period but one can hope for a joint mechanism between Pakistan, Afghanistan and the U.S.”.

Mr Rahimullah Yousafzai



“The road ahead is beset by threats but if these are mitigated and those few emerging opportunities are exploited to the full by calm heads and by all the stakeholders perhaps there is a change of drawing to a close this bloody butcher’s bill that has blighted the region for 40 years”.

Maj. Robert Gallimore (Retd.)



“The stability in Pakistan is directly proportional to the stability in Afghanistan and the region would get stable once Afghanistan is stable”.

Brig Ishaq Ahmed (Retd.)



“Better Pak-Afghan ties in political, economic and security field can help in bringing stability to the region. The military to military and intent to intent cooperation between the two countries can bring peace on both side of the border”.

Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussian



“We should be talking in friendly and calm manner. We are neighbors; we coexist and live side by side. There is no other way to resolve our issues but to sit and talk. If we did not become the slave of the Soviet Union, don’t expect us to be slaves of United States or India”.

Pir Sayed Ishaq Gailani



“As for the increased Indian presence on Afghan soil and its systematic campaign to establish illegal intelligence networks inside our territory, Pakistan will defend and protect its territorial integrity, whatever it may take. We have been sacrificing since decades; we shall not hesitate to do so against any future threats”.

Rana Athar Javed



“There is a need from western capitals to take Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey into confidence because the relocation of Daesh to Afghanistan is not accidental, rather it’s by design”.

Dr. Khuram Iqbal

Conference Report

The conference formally commenced with the recitation of The Holy Qur'an. In his introductory remarks, DG Pakistan House **Mr Rana Athar Javed** welcomed the audience and explained the broad motives of the conference. He reiterated that it is absolutely important to look into the future of Pak-Afghan Relations. Afghan crisis is a very complex issue, it has so many components of instability that it will be highly complicated to find a time bound solution, but an effort will be made to present some policy recommendations and solutions out of today's discussion.

He said that this conference is about the vision in which our experts will present compatible arguments that how better the countries involved within this crisis can save and protect the coming generation from the ongoing crisis. This also means that Pakistan has been willing and is willing to facilitate the peace process which should be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led. He lamented that Pakistan has sacrificed more than 70,000 lives and 120 billion dollars. Afghanistan has faced a similar fate and we should start a discussion that goes beyond allegations and blame games and try to find a solution where the US, NATO, EU and all other allies, must adopt all-inclusive approach to resolve Afghan Crisis.



General Ehsan ul Haq (Retd.), HI (M), NI (M), was the Chief Guest at the occasion. He stated that Pakistan and Afghanistan share common ties, geographical, historical, religious, and cultural and no two countries can be compared in the identity of their ties to Pakistan and Afghanistan. He opined that Afghanistan and Pakistan will always bounce back the inherent strength as these ties will hold us together and will always bring us back. There are difficulties and serious challenges. There would be recrimination and accusation on

both sides. But we must understand that these must be the impact of the environment. He stressed that Peace and stability in Afghanistan is vital for Pakistan's own long-term prosperity, security and progress. We will continue our struggle for peace and stability in

Afghanistan because it is for our very own good. Pakistan, in the absence of military solution, has been unswerving in its support to an Afghan led and owned process of peace and reconciliation. Whether it is based at Doha, the QCG, the Russian initiative or the Kabul process. The Kabul process has brought good news. It has created an atmosphere of optimism and we hope there is progress.

He stated that President Ashraf Ghani once gave very important statement that, “We are not looking at winning the war. We are looking at the conclusion of this war”. I hope that this is reflective of the policy implementation that follows. Particularly focusing on U.S. side, Gen Ehsan said that U.S. and Taliban have never had a fundamental problem. The US always said that Taliban are Afghan national phenomenon and they are not element of international terrorism. The Taliban have never indicated or expressed the desire to export their ideology beyond Afghanistan. The Taliban always maintained that they are struggling against foreign occupation. The core demand from Taliban has been that they must end up their linkages with international terrorism, stop violence and accept the Afghan constitution. From the Taliban side, there is only one demand: no foreign occupying forces.

He said that Afghan government has given a very strong message on establishing peace during the Kabul process. But the U.S. ambivalence has yet to be removed and clarity emerged on what it wants. And it must come at the earliest. The U.S. somehow or the other dilute itself to think that it is not a part of conflict. The US authorities always make one believe that a dialogue between Taliban and the Afghan government is the key for peace. As Afghan representatives said that there are three parties to the solution: Afghan Government, Taliban and Pakistan. But Pakistan is not the stakeholder in the solution or peace process. There should be United States instead of Pakistan, because if one excludes the United States then all parties are in a denial mode. The United States must clearly announce conditions for its withdrawal as Taliban have only demanded for the withdrawal of foreign forces. If the U.S. offers to that demand, the Taliban cannot refuse. Therefore, the dialogue should be done accordingly but there must be very robust back channel dialogue between the United States, Taliban and Afghan government.

He added that there is also another proposal that there should be a quadrilateral group: Pakistan, China, United States and Afghanistan. There have been proposals from the Chinese side that Taliban should be added as a fifth party in the dialogue. He suggested

that there is increasingly positive environment for a peace process to emanate and to sustain. Despite the intensification of violence and conflict in Afghanistan, what is said in Kabul process is actually meant and it has strong U.S. backing. A time may come that there should be a call for ceasefire. He stressed that ceasefire must come unilaterally from the United States and the Afghan government. There can be a back channel understandings but it must come from the United States and the Afghan government. This will trigger positivity in environment of mistrust and war, which in turn can facilitate the dialogue and peace process. On an optimistic note, he hoped that this assessment will prove beneficial both for the Afghan and Pakistani people, and for the wider international community.



Mr Rahimullah Yousafzai lamented that there are grievances between Afghanistan and Pakistan, some are old, and a few are new. It is often said that people to people contact between Afghanistan and Pakistan is good but the government to government connections are not good. Starting with the Afghan complaints and allegations against Pakistan, he mentioned few points. First, In 1970s Pakistan hosted and trained fugitive Afghan leaders, members of Islamic group after a failed uprising in Afghanistan. Some of the Afghans

leaders, such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Mohammad Yunus Khalis, Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Massoud, came to Pakistan. They were all given refugee status and also some training in Peshawar. Second, Pakistan served as a base camp for the Afghan Mujahidin in 1980s and 1990s and allowed them to launch attacks against Afghan communist regime. This was the complaint made by the Afghan governments at that time. Third, Pakistan supported the Afghan Taliban in 1990s and allowed Afghan Taliban leadership after the fall of their regime and in 2001. That was the major complaint that Pakistan supported the Afghan Taliban and allowed their leadership to come to Pakistan and stay there after the fall of their regime in December 2001. Even now Afghanistan complains that Pakistan has enough influence on Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani network to make them agree to peace talks with the Afghan government.

Fourth, Pakistan has been accused of encroaching on Afghan territory because they say that Afghanistan became a weak state due to the long conflict and because of this, there are some border disputes and clashes. Fifth, the issues concerning Afghan transit trade via Pakistan for landlocked Afghanistan, is also another issue which lingers on. Also there are issues on bilateral trade between the two countries. For example the transit trade agreement, signed in 2010 expired in 2015 and the negotiations to renew the agreement have not yet started. Sixth, Afghanistan believes that Pakistan has yet to recognize Afghanistan as a sovereign independent state and that Pakistan believes that Afghanistan can become the fifth province of Pakistan. All these are grievances of Afghanistan, some may be right, some may not be right but these are what we have from many Afghans.

He further added that Pakistan also has many complaints. First, Pakistan says that Afghanistan was the only country in the world to oppose Pakistan membership when Pakistan became independent in 1947. It was the first salvo and that has left to a lot of misgivings along the way. Second, Pakistan refused to accept the Pak-Afghan border, the Durand line, as international border for the last 70 years. Third, Afghanistan is supporting for Pakhtoonistan, and Pakhtoon and Baloch rights. Also Pakistan says that Afghanistan played host to Pakhtoon and Baloch nationalists in the 1970s. Afghanistan also hosted Pakistani tribal elders from FATA, who were angry with Pakistan. Afghanistan hosted Al-Zulfikar, an organization led by Murtaza Bhutto and Shahnawaz Bhutto. This organization was responsible for one of the hijacking of a PIA plane and one Pakistan army captain was killed and the plane was taken to Kabul. Fourth, Pakistan militants are present in Afghanistan. They belong to TTP, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar and Lashkar-e-Islam along with Baloch separatists, and they have links with the national directorate of security of Afghanistan and the Indian RAW. That is the Pakistani complaint. Fifth, Pakistan also has concern about the close security and defence cooperation between Afghanistan and India. Pakistan argues that Afghanistan has not addressed Islamabad concern on this account. Sixth, Pakistan believes that Afghanistan has not shown interest in the issues of border management, repatriation of Afghan refugees and the water sharing issues which may come up as a major hurdle and dispute in future.

He argued that we know there is a trust deficit but we don't know how to overcome it and all previous attempts to overcome the trust deficit proves to be failure. But the good thing is that there is a realization on both sides that we need to overcome the trust deficit. He

suggested that the relationship has to be mended before it becomes unfriendly. Right now the major effort is underway through high level visits to overcome the trust deficit and to improve relations.

The Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has been invited by President Ashraf Ghani to visit Afghanistan. He will definitely go but I think expectations should be kept low. The Prime Minister was in Herat on February 23 to attend the inauguration of work on the TAPI gas pipeline in Afghan territory. If TAPI materializes, it will benefit all the four countries, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, generate jobs and business activities. It also contributes towards peace because Taliban's have also supported TAPI and they have pledge to provide security to the gas pipeline. This could also improve regional connectivity.

He shed light on numerous high level visits. Pakistan army Chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, twice visited Kabul from October 2017 to February 2018. His first visit in October 2017 may be an ice breaker and it prompted President Ghani to say that they are starring a new chapter in their relations. Suddenly his harsh tone has changed and he became friendly towards Pakistan.

Regarding Ashraf Ghani visit to Pakistan, he has been here twice. On September 2014 he came to Pakistan and then in December 2015 to co-host the Heart of Asia conference in Islamabad. But unfortunately there was a spike in violence between the two countries and after every round of violence the ability to continue the peace process or the reconciliation faltered. One of those attacks was the terrorist strike at the Army Public School, Peshawar in December 16, 2014. 147 people were killed including 122 school children and the responsibility was claimed by the TTP based in Afghanistan.

Now Ashraf Ghani's third visit is awaited and according to media report, he declined to come. We know that Ex-Prime Minister broke protocol to receive Ashraf Ghani at Islamabad airport along with all his cabinet and three services Chiefs. Also Ghani received first at the GHQ, Rawalpindi instead of the PM office. The previous Afghan army chief, General Sher Mohammad Karimi, was the guest of honour at the Pakistani Military Academy, Kakul. This is the first time that an Afghan dignitary was invited as guest of honour. However, the most awaited visit is that of CEO of Afghanistan, Mr. Abdullah Abdullah. Despite of several official invitations, he could not manage as each time some

type of terrorist attack occurred, like the one in Kabul (last year). Such unwarranted cancellations of official trips are detrimental for ongoing efforts of improving relations.

International media reported, quoting Afghan sources that President Ashraf Ghani was advised by not to smile while in Pakistan. Many Afghans believe that Pakistan border management fencing is to reinforce facts on the ground and solve the Durand Line issue once for all. Afghan lawmakers and intellectuals are saying that Pakistan's nuclear weapons pose a threat to Afghanistan. I also heard from participants of Track-II dialogue, very well-meaning Afghans and intellectual and former government officials that Pakistan deliberately closes the border because they want that the Afghan fresh fruits and vegetables entering Pakistan to rot.

Afghan media quoted that the governor of Zabul's spokesman, Gul Islam Seyal, claiming that pro-Pakistani's including a Pakistani Army General were killed in incident in Shah Joy district of Zabul. No details were given about that but these kinds of things are published in Afghan media or telecast in Afghan television. These are the things that are damaging our relationship.

I will quote the first Vice President, General Abdul Rashid Dostum, who claimed last year that senior Pakistani military officials led the Taliban in their fight against foreign forces which of course is untrue and not factual. Mr. Yousafzai alluded towards systematic propaganda warfare against Pakistan's military, launched by as high as the first Vice President of Afghanistan.

Mr. Yousafzai presented a contrasting narrative of Pakistan and Afghanistan, which is believed to be popular in respective media and society as a whole. The terrorist attacks, for example in anywhere in Pakistan will always be blamed on Pakistan and vice versa. According to Mr Rahimullah, by fencing the Afghan border, Pakistan is secluding itself from the future generations of Afghanistan. This reflection he implied in terms of declining trend in the Afghan transit trade.

After Ashraf Ghani Peace offer in February 28, there is no justification for Taliban to continue fighting. This is significant for Pakistan because Pakistan now believes that there is no justification for continuation of war by the Taliban. When Afghanistan signed the first strategic partnership agreement with India in 2011, soon after that Pakistan made a similar offer to Afghanistan which was rejected. Also Hamid Karzai came up with

number of conditions before they can agree on this kind of a strategic partnership agreement. But this offer has been delude by General Raheel Sharif and General Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Mr. Rahimullah Yousafzai stated the various efforts which are underway including Pakistan's profound commitment to support the Taliban's participation on Afghan Peace Process. In conclusion he said that although it appears difficult to establish peace in Afghanistan in short period but one can hope for a joint mechanism between Pakistan, Afghanistan and the U.S.



Maj. Robert Gallimore (Retd.) The problem about going into to bat at three is by the time the first wicket has fallen sometimes the openers have scored all the runs and played all your best strokes. The best you can hope to do is imitate but you are more likely to disappoint.

When I see the security maps of Afghanistan that appear from time to time on British news I almost weep as I look at the land in the south that is now shown in a menacing red representing the swathes of the country that are now controlled and run by the Afghan Taliban.

This is where I spent 18 months fighting alongside the Afghan National Army and where I saw my men and my friends killed and where we were involved in the ugly business of killing young Afghans not perhaps so different from my own Afghan soldiers. It is a tragedy for me personally and to an extent for my country, which has lost 500 of its sons in vain.

This tragedy is nothing, utterly nothing, compared to what this beautiful country of Pakistan has suffered in this awful conflict. The number of Pakistanis killed in this most recent iteration of Afghan wars is not known precisely but estimates vary between 55,000 and 70,000. What makes this sacrifice so tragic is that the seeds of it lay in the West's untended meddling in Pakistan's north in the 1980s and that Pakistan inflamed such internal turmoil to stay loyal in the Global War on Terror to those who had meddled so clumsily in their country in such recent memory.

But even this tragedy is mere misfortune compared to the catastrophe that has been poured over the people of Afghanistan. Estimates are almost impossible to make on the numbers of Afghans who have been slain by the bomb or bullet over the last 17 years. The most conservative estimate from a Brown University study of 2016 was over 200,000 and I imagine a very small percentage of them were carrying an AK 47 at the time of their demise. Mere words demean the scale of such slaughter. All one can say is that this must stop and that in a way is what we are all here today trying to scope out.

A commitment to change inevitably bestows upon us the requirement to look forward and dwelling on the past can often merely serve to stoke old resentments – particularly in a place like Afghanistan where memory runs deep and strong; I can assure you those who we fought against from 2006 to 2013 in Helmand knew all about the defeat of the British at Maiwand in 1880, for once perhaps it was a good thing that the British soldier does not know his History! However, I cannot help but look back and investigate how recent History – in particular the circumstances faced at the end of the 1980s - could enlighten the way forward. I do not believe that History repeats itself; circumstances are always different. But History can be the things we have forgotten to remember. As often it is the French who sum this up so well with “plus ca change, plus ca meme”, much has changed, much is the same.

First of all, the “plus ca meme”, that which is the same now as was the same during the 1980s. Pakistan has been incorporated into the West’s fight in Afghanistan with little contextual understanding on the part of the west, or rather what contextual understanding there is, is subservient to western agendas.

Pakistan has then been left with a sense of abandonment by the west as they disengage leaving behind a malignant cancer with a diminishing interest from the west in treating it. Western diplomats and politicians from both periods I refer to may call me a traitor for saying this but I would welcome that discussion with them.

Now I would like to identify 3 critical differences, The ‘Plus ca change’ piece.

Firstly, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas: In 1989 this is where the threat to security was allowed to fester in a hinterland brimming with bored outsiders with no more war to fight. Today after gargantuan efforts by Pakistan it has begun to slowly become a little more incorporated, however loosely, into broader Pakistan. The FATA is

critical to Afghanistan – Pakistan relations and the Government of Pakistan being able to operate there with more confidence provides opportunities for stability in the region. Secondly in 1989 India was not a major player in the resolution or escalation of the conflict. In 2018. It very much is.

Thirdly is the existence of the Afghan Taliban. They emerged from the hellish consequences of 1989 but they did not exist in 1989. In 2018, they very much exist; cohesive, organized and arguably one of the biggest political forces in Afghanistan.

Each of these changes presents both new threats and new opportunities.

In the FATA, the provision of basic amenities such as hospitals and a precarious peace may cause the region to bed in closer to Islamabad and for those in the region who do not want this to drift north in mind-set if not in being. This separation would bring about the end of so called Talibanistan and lend considerable security to the broader region. However, there is also the very real chance that seeing these green shoots of progress in the FATA the Afghanistan Taliban may want to smash them to prevent defection from their people. The only way to stop this is very simple it is money. Not money just for projects and not just money for security but money for both. Do this and Pakistan wins in the FATA and if Pakistan wins in the FATA the broader region's security is enhanced. I fear however Pakistan's pockets alone are not deep enough for this.

Inextricably linked to security in the FATA is the border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Something that never failed to make me laugh during my time in Afghanistan was the frequently aired accusation that Pakistan provided safe havens across the border for the Afghan Taliban. I am not saying this never happened but I was intrigued as to how NATO knew this given NATO's minimal presence on the border. Pakistan could just as easily accuse NATO of providing safe havens for the Pakistani Taliban. It was a ridiculous and unwinnable argument. What was undeniable was that Pakistan was providing NATO with its lifeline through the Khyber Pass as the snakes of container lorries tens of miles long attested to. My point is this. Either side cannot ever properly seal the border; or the borderlands are hinterlands, and like all hinterlands all over the world can never be properly governed. What Kabul and Islamabad must do is accept this and learn to manage them in a manner that does not let these fiercely parochial areas infect the regions wider security. This will require much compromise and even more patience.

In the post Russo Afghan war phase India did little more than observe with some glee the struggles of her neighbour. In 2018 the situation is very different. India is pouring money into Kabul and into a plethora of proxy actors across Afghanistan. Using Afghan soil to destabilize Pakistan. This naturally concerns Pakistan and the understandable reaction is to employ counter proxies and try and match India's funding. But this would lead to inevitable escalation and a commensurate deterioration in the region's security. I suspect Pakistan might sponsor in a more focused manner but the Indian coffers are larger. This is a fool's game. It might be seeming overly naïve of me but surely there must be some hope of India and Pakistan sitting down together or even apart and analysing the motivations behind their meddling in Afghanistan? An Indo-Afghan Alliance offers very little benefit to India beyond frightening Pakistan. The Karakoram highway would not be effected by such a friendship, the Silk Road is no longer a trade route, the economics of logistics are such that trade from India will always be cheaper by sea than any northern land route and it is highly unlikely that Afghanistan would be capable or willing to participate in some military pincer operation against Pakistan that might be imagined in an extreme Hindu Nationalist wildest dreams. Perhaps Indo-Pakistani relations vis-a-vis Afghanistan might be an ideal moment for both governments to put a cool towel on their heads and reflect on the motivations and intentions beyond base antagonism. But perhaps I am a very naïve dreamer!

And finally, I come to the Afghan Taliban. Were Pakistan to recognize them and negotiate with them as equals and they end up playing a significant role in a future Kabul administration then harmonious relations and hopes of a peaceful future for the region would seem hopeful. Recognize them and they are defeated or diminished and have no seat at the table in Kabul than perhaps any future Kabul government in vengeful towards Pakistan and destabilization beckons. Don't recognize them and they end up with a seat at the table perhaps their vengeance will be further insurgency operations within Pakistan. Don't recognize them and they lose well Kabul will be grateful but I suspect the Afghan Taliban will not disappear and vengeance will be theirs. These are extremely difficult choices regarding a situation of almost impenetrable complexity but for stability to triumph Pakistan's diplomatic, intelligence and security services must operate with an incredible deftness whilst threats intrude on them from every side but for peace to reign they must find a way. I wish them all the luck in the world but do not envy them.

Particularly given the Taliban's most recent position on negotiations. Their intransigence on the position of foreign troops is understandable in that in the end they must go but unrealistic if we consider the organic capability of ANSF and take into account their performance when Russian support was removed 30 years ago. The Taliban appear to be positioning themselves to win not negotiate.

These are all mere thoughts and are intended to generate debate rather than pass any judgment for which I am far too unqualified to do.

The road ahead is beset by threats but if these are mitigated and those few emerging opportunities are exploited to the full by calm heads and by all the stakeholders perhaps there is a change of drawing to a close this bloody butcher's bill that has blighted the region for 40 years.



Brig Ishaq Ahmed (Retd.) remarked that India has always stayed on the other side of the fence vis-à-vis Pakistan when it comes down to Afghanistan. Who took good advantage of Pakhtoonistan Issue when Pakistan-India got independence of the sub-continent by the separation and they still continue to enjoy some of those proxies-political proxies in shape of Balochistan. They stayed quiet when it comes to soviet invasion of Afghanistan and never said a word about the Mujahedeen who were fighting against the Soviets. Northern alliance, which then emerged, they were also close to the Indians because they were not happy with Pakistan.

He added that After 9/11, Pakistan categorically told the United States that do not allow the Indians a wider space in Afghanistan but despite our reservations, we still see the Indian influence rising with each passing day and probably the sixteen years of war is due to this mistrust which led to absolutely mistrust driven relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan. But on the positive side, he said that the Indians have invested a lot since 2003 onward till 2018. The completed projects are in the variety of the fields that include

health, education, power generation, reconstruction, model villages, military and intelligence etc. The work has been in big quantum and we encourage that India could come help in rebuilding Afghanistan. The predominant activities of India have occurred in eastern provinces and a little in the south. India has a strong diplomatic presence in Afghanistan as compared to Pakistan given the number of its consulates being established in Afghanistan and India had more than 30 Indian Medical Missions in 2006.

He stressed that the Indian influence has risen over the years but has it given rise to militancy, this is the main question to be asked. We know that country would be used for third country operations. He argued that Strained Pak-Afghan relations have been very effectively exploited by India and it has been using Afghan soil for causing disturbances in Pakistan that could be clearly seen in case of Balochistan. He highlighted that the terrorism acts in KPK were caused by RAW and it is very active in Afghanistan in shape of diplomatic presence, advisors and Indian Medical Mission had a RAW officer.

We should ask that what effects it had on the militancy and peace in the region. Afghan land was used to destabilize Balochistan and if Balochistan gets unstable then Pakistan is unstable. So, the stability in Pakistan is directly proportional to stability in Afghanistan and the region would get stable. So, this is one and we need to look at Balochistan from that point of view.

Furthermore, he asked that from where the mistrust comes in Pak-Afghan relationship. Pakistan was supportive of Taliban, Taliban were over powered by the Americans, but those Taliban are still fighting for 16 years. So is it Pakistan's responsibility to overpower Taliban, we are ourselves facing serious terrorism generated by the Indian side through supporting separatists in Balochistan and TTP terrorist in various operations in Pakistan. He stated that now TTP terrorist are mostly living in eastern provinces. Fazlullah and his party and ISIS are accommodating eastern provinces and majority of the Indian presence could also be observed in these provinces. India is carrying out undeclared war with Pakistan by using Afghanistan. Terrorism was in peak from 2004-2005 to 2011-2012. Now that instability, can it only be attributed to Pakistan Itself and the answer is no. RAW influence, activities and operations have been generated from Afghan soil and the example is Kulbhusan Yadev. Kulbhusan was biggest in Iran but the intelligence

operations are mostly launched from the Afghan border and that is where we are lacking, we have not been able to effectively manage Pak-Afghan border.

To conclude, he said that Bhutan stands on the top and Afghanistan comes on second for Indian investment and Aid. In 2017-18, huge amount of Indian budget (3.51 billion) has been dedicated to Afghanistan and it only relates to one point that India has effectively used Afghan soil against Pakistan. Indian presence in Afghanistan has to be seen as a problem for Pakistan.



Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain said that there are reasons of mistrust between Pakistan and Afghanistan and we have to overcome them. Pakistan is funding number of projects in Afghanistan, i.e. health, education and infrastructure. Pakistan has built an engineering university in Balkh, started science faculty in Jalalabad University and introduced Arts faculty in Kabul University. Pakistan granted 3000 scholarships to Afghan students and another 3000 scholarships were announced last year. More than thirty thousand Afghan students have graduated from different universities in Pakistan. In infrastructure and field of health, Pakistan made three big hospitals in Afghanistan and number of roads. So it's not that Pakistan is not doing anything on the economic side in Afghanistan. Almost 500 million dollars have been spent in Afghanistan on these projects and another 500 million dollars have been announced for similar projects.

He reiterated that there are three aspects of the situation in Afghanistan, i.e. political, security and economic. Each aspect involves number of questions. For example, the presence of U.S. forces in Afghanistan is part of the problem or part of the solution. It leads us to another question. What are the objectives of the presence of U.S. forces in Afghanistan? Some regional analysts may refer to the view that U.S. would like to stay in Afghanistan to contain the influence of its rivals in the region. However, the U.S. would say that it wanted to eliminate Al-Qaeda and bring peace to Afghanistan. The first target

has been achieved. Now is it possible to bring peace through militarized approach? The answer is 'No'.

Mr Abrar quoted Aaron B. O'Connell and stated that America's militarized approach has actually diminished Kabul legitimacy because the mere presence of foreign troops fuel narratives of crusades and colonist.

He opined that the Afghan war will end in a negotiated settlement rather than a military victory. Let me clarify that perhaps the regional countries also don't want an abrupt withdrawal of U.S. forces as it may lead to a chaos in Afghanistan. So the only way out is political talks leading towards a negotiated settlement. But before working for a future strategy for peace, we need to analyse why efforts in recent past didn't succeed. Why the Marri talks in QCG failed. Did someone scuttled those efforts or the failure was by default. We also need to see that who benefits from violence in Afghanistan and the weak relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

He was of the view that better Pak-Afghan ties in political, economic and security field can help in bringing stability to the region. The military to military and intent to intent cooperation between the two countries can bring peace on both side of the border. But such cooperation is opposed by the certain elements in Afghanistan and in the region. Will peace in Afghanistan remain hostage to such elements? Moreover there are certain elements benefited from war economy but Afghanistan as a nation should look for avenues beyond this.

To conclude he said that a peaceful Afghanistan will benefit from KASA-1000, extended CPEC and regional rail and road connectivity. Let's join hands, coordinate and cooperate and have a futuristic approach.

Pir Sayed Ishaq Gailani talked about the historical ties of India and Pakistan with Afghanistan. India has historical relations with Afghanistan and in fact, both Pakistan and India have the same number of consulates. India has one consulate in Herat and Pakistan has one consulate in Mizar Sharif. There are now four daily flights from Kabul to New Delhi and one from Kandahar to India. Every day one thousand visas for India are issued. Most of patients were also gone to India for treatment. About one thousand Pakistani visas are given daily and there are two flights from Kabul to Islamabad. He stressed the need to enhance further connectivity between two countries.



He said that millions of Afghan people have been living here and have been educated here, we consider Pakistan our second home and I am sure Afghans will never allow anything that is anti-Pakistan. We will never even think about harming Pakistan.

He stated that Pakistan is not Czechoslovakia or Poland but Afghanistan is also not Czechoslovakia or Poland and we have given 1.5 million martyrs in this war. Talking about the suffering of Afghan people at Torkham border who cross the border

and come to Pakistan, he requested to all the Pakistani people and especially to officials that this kind of negative attitude is harming our relations. Border guards at Torkham or other places tell these people or refugees that u are a son of Hindu and that is really very annoying and can never be forgotten. Many Afghans are fighting with Americans and they are referred to as terrorist. We should not look down at them; it was the same thing that was happening earlier during Soviet occupation. Previously they were fighting with Soviet invaders and these people are now fighting with Americans who came in our country. They are performing the same role, and I think it is not very much different to what they are doing. Those forces who have come to Afghanistan from outside until and unless they tell us that when they are leaving, we may say that Afghanistan is an occupied country.

Talking about Taliban, he argued that Taliban say that they will only talk to America and not to the Afghan government. On the other hand, America says that Taliban should talk to Afghan government. He gave a proposal for this problem that the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan and those with their forces in Afghanistan and Taliban, they all should sit together and try to end the suffering of Afghan people. We have to give respect to Taliban's and we should not criticize Taliban's all the time then there will not be any confidence building measures that can bring peace in Afghanistan.

To conclude, he suggested that all stakeholders should be talking in a friendly and calm manner. We are neighbours, we coexist and live side by side. There is no other way to

resolve our issues but to sit and talk. If we did not become the slave of the Soviet Union, don't expect us to be slaves of United States or India.



Rana Athar Javed stressed that Pakistan is seriously interested to have a stable Afghanistan but it is also the responsibility of Afghan Government and those who are supporting that they should not use Afghanistan as their operational base. If we look at the Daesh's composition, this composition emerges from Central Asian states but mostly from the Middle Eastern countries and these fighters were trained to upset or topple different regimes. So, if we look into social chaos theory, the sabotage and all those conceptual frameworks where this

is not a part of conventional warfare, rather it is a part of sub-conventional warfare, where groups are being designed and trained to topple governments or breach their security regime. In this case, since Pakistan is facing so many challenges of TTP, Lashkar-e-Jhangwi (LeJ) and Sipha-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and many other groups and these groups have sponsored/funded by the front companies of different intelligence agencies in the world.

He argued that there are three points which we should keep in consideration. The first point is that it is impossible for any country to prevent emerging groups within the society, especially when a major international consortium is established to create that kind of private army culture. The second point is that hiring defense contractors and security companies, this is the institutionalization of the private armies and that is one of the reasons that Afghanistan should take responsibility and propose to Americans and to other international forces to expel those defense contractors. Who are harming more Afghan people than anybody else in the region? The third point relates to Pakistan's international security policy. Pakistan is in a very difficult position and many people say that Pakistan is not cooperating and doing more but we offered many times that doing more together is the key, however, the failures of international forces cannot be blamed on Pakistan. As for the increased Indian presence on Afghan soil and its systematic

campaign to establish illegal intelligence networks inside our territory, Pakistan will defend and protect its territorial integrity, whatever it may take. We have been sacrificing since decades; we shall not hesitate to do so against any future threats. In his view, the consequences of psychological warfare are enormous. A country creates some issues in our people, we will make sacrifices and we will not let this country to be radicalized and controlled by the foreign militant groups and this will never happen.



Dr. Khuram Iqbal while talking on the topic of Da'esh: recruitment, finances and threat to international stability' opined that pattern of Da'esh in the region exactly one year ago was different, when the world was celebrating back to back defeats of Da'esh in Mosul. Abu Bakar Al Baghdadi had a different approach to what was happening to his group in Mosul. Da'esh has suffered number of military defeats but Baghdadi tried to dissuade his followers by drawing some false analogies in what has happened in Mosul

and what has perhaps happened during Battle of Khandaq. He tried to convince his followers that believers face the similar tough time during Battle of Trench (Khandaq, reference to a battle that was fought between the Prophet Muhammad PBUH and the infidels) but that did not discourage them (reference here to the followers of Islam) for holding their grounds. They held their grounds and they ended up conquering Makkah in few years' time. We must not forget that militancy of any origin or colour is very apt at manipulating misinterpreting and corrupting the religious teachings. This is what exactly Abu Bakar Al Baghdadi did. His followers dig whole ground until hundreds of them would provide a safe passage from Raqqa under the watchful eyes of Americans who were posted there.

He quoted that according to reports published in BBC and Western media outlets, confirmed by Western intelligence outlets, some fifteen hundred Da'esh militants were given a safe passage from Raqqa with their family members and trucks load of weapons. Capitals in Russia, China, Iran, and Pakistan believe that some of these fighters moved to Europe and most of them ended up in Afghanistan. He argued that this is a privilege

perspective in the regional capitals that Da'esh has been intentionally and is being cultivated by Western Capitals in Afghanistan to counter resurgent Russia to destabilize Belt and Road initiative to teach a lesson to Iran and basically to reverse the gains that Pakistan has made against terrorism during the last 5-6 years.

He stressed that when we talk about Da'esh presence in Pakistan, it is not in November 2016 that Da'esh basically moved to this region but it was end of 2014. What we have seen during last 3-4 years that Da'esh has not radicalized a new generation of extremist, rather it has recruited from an existing pool and those existing pools basically was composed of those militant outfits who have been operating from this region for last few years. He said that starting with Al-Qaeda in Indian subcontinent, the first attack involving Da'esh in Pakistan was actually conducted by the individuals who were previously linked to AQIS but then they switched side to Da'esh. Then Da'esh has also tried to draw fighters from TTP and some of the actually joined Da'esh because of their differences with the leadership of TTP and for financial reasons as well. Then in FATA, there are some other groups, like "Amar Bil Maroof Wa Nahi Anil Munkar", operating from Bara who has sent almost fifty fighters to joined Da'esh in Afghanistan. In mainland Pakistan, Da'esh tried to approach Salafi groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba but they helped Pakistan's law enforcement agencies to identify those who were switching sides from Lashkar-e-Taiba to Da'esh. The leadership of Lashkar-e-Taiba or Jama'at-ud-Da'wah worked as bulwark against the expansion of Da'esh in Pakistan. So therefore when some elements from Jama'at-ud-Da'wah expressed their desire to join political mainstream we must take it seriously. Practically one cannot kill or capture every terrorist. Those who wish to be part of political mainstream, those who can provide ideological anti-thesis to militants may be given a chance.

Furthermore, there are concerns, expressed by Pakistani media and some political constituencies that the transformation of Jama'at-ud-Da'wah may end up radicalizing the political constituency. But the point is how frequently Pakistan or Pakistanis have voted for the religious organizations. Give them a chance and let Pakistanis decide whether Jama'at-ud-Da'wah in form of mini-Muslim League has any future in the country.

Another group Hizb-ut-Tahrir also attracted Da'esh recruiters from the Middle East. Daesh has tried to approach them through personal couriers and number of them was

arrested from the mainland Punjab. In case of Hizb-ut-Tahrir, their leadership has been arrested by Pakistani law enforcement agencies and their followers are disillusioned as what to do in the absence of their central leadership. So Hizb-ut-Tahrir still provides an ideal recruitment ground to Da'esh. Furthermore, the current wave of militancy in Baluchistan may involve some of the individuals who got training from Da'esh camps in Middle East and then they return to Pakistan.

This was the story of drawing from an existing pool of militants. On the same side, Da'esh in very rare cases has tried to radicalize some individuals but those cases are very isolated. For example, what happened in case of Noreen Laghari, Da'esh has successfully manipulated the social media? So when it comes to Da'esh recruitment in Pakistan, it's basically through personal couriers or using social media to radicalize new generation of fighters here.

When Da'esh move to this region (Khorasan), consisting of Pakistan, Afghanistan and some parts of Iran and North India, they were pretty rich. They were holding lot of oil refineries in Middle East so they came with bags full of dollars. Using that money, they attract number of fighters from Therek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, Amar Bil Maroof Wa Nahi Anil Munkar. But as Da'esh suffers back to back defeats in the Middle East, they were deprived of the financial muscle that they wanted. He deliberated that in Pakistan, Da'esh had a tuff time for two main reasons. When they came to this region, there were no agreements within the local militant organizations as to how accommodate this new comer as already a number of organizations is operating from this region. Secondly, an effective response from Pakistan law enforcement agencies hinders the take-off of Da'esh in Pakistan. From 2015 to 2016, they arrested more than 100 Da'esh operatives from mainland Punjab, KPK, Baluchistan and FATA.

He opined that we must focus with all our energies especially on northern Afghanistan, where at the moment Da'esh is trying to expand its influence. From the last ten years the opium cultivation and drug trade has flourished in Afghanistan. As of today, there are number of non-state actors who have benefited from this opium trade. Daesh may top into that industry and the opium cultivation in Afghanistan may become a life line for Daesh to sustain itself.

In the end, he suggested that there is a need from western capitals to take these regional countries into confidence. Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey firmly believe that relocation of Da'esh to Afghanistan is not accidental, rather it's by design. It is a part of grand strategy of the West. So, if that is not the case, Washington must take these regional stakeholders into confidence. At the moment Da'esh is a challenge. But Da'esh can be a point of convergence between West and a new bloc which is in making and if there is a convergence of interest over Da'esh that would lead to a long term and durable peace in the region, he concluded.

Question/Answer Session

Question: The nexus between Afghanistan and India is aimed at countering Pakistan. Do Pakistan really wants to antagonize both the states further or we would like to have better relationship with Afghanistan and India?



Lt Gen Asif Yasin Malik HI (M) (Retd): The descending of India's interventionist status which is been drafting by the US government particularly and West is general, is creating problems. India has been given access to help develop Afghanistan, but as the Indian National Security Advisor clearly said that they have lost the opportunity of helping the Afghans but managed to create a two front scenario for Pakistan. In this context, Afghanistan is not directly blame for being party to it but Afghan government does not have the capacity to check the Indians. They owed so much to the Indians as India has invested millions of dollars in Afghanistan. Therefore the issue is use of Afghan soil against Pakistan by the Indians and I would blame West more than the Afghans themselves for approval or looking the other way while the Indians are interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan. The interrogation of Kulbhushan Yadav also highlighted the use of Afghan soil by India. So therefore we are not planning to fight Afghanistan on this issue but we have to sensitize the Afghan government on the implications of the soil being used by a third country. It is not just any third party; it is a third country and a country which is completely hostile towards Pakistan. Pakistan has to stand firm on it and exert

international pressure to seize such activities. Pakistan has never objected the positive role of India in Afghanistan, in helping Afghanistan on economic front and all the development.

Question: While keeping in view the footprint of India in Afghanistan and the chequered history and bilateral relations of the two countries (Pakistan & Afghanistan), is there a possibility to neutralize Indian presence OR it would further increase?



Dr Abdul Baqi Amin: I am not speaking on the behalf of Afghan government but we want every nation in the world that is supportive or must support Afghanistan because of the severity and complexity of the Afghan crisis. I have been telling the Afghan government and people too that balance is to be struck when the relations are to be made between Pakistan, India & Afghanistan. Negativity has reached because of the Pakistan-Afghan relations, Pakistan - India relations and India-Afghan relations. But I will request both the governments and the world that we must work towards the positive ending of this rivalry rather than alleging and blaming each other.

Question: As the EU ambassador, H.E. Jean-Francois Cautain, mentioned about the recent positive approach of President Ashraf Ghani. Recalling back when the Afghan President came into new government, there was another kind of positivity emanating from the Afghan side. Keeping in view your personal experience on Afghanistan and your research in that subject, do you think that this initiative by the Afghan President will bear some fruit as there is involvement of foreign forces in that country also?



H.E. Jean-Francois Cautain: Pakistan needs a leadership who look beyond the incidents of past failures, a leadership who is keeping in mind the main objectives. It is obvious that President Ashraf Ghani is under pressure but at time the invitation of President Ashraf Ghani to Pakistan Prime Minister Khaqan Abbasi is very important. We hope that it will be a new step, a new start between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Question: Keeping in view the historical relations between both states, we have many similarities on people-to-people level between Afghanistan and Pakistan which is contrary to government level relations. How we can enhance people-to-people contact and people-to-people relations between both states which can pressurize both governments to have friendly relations in future?

Dr Abdul Baqi Amin: We would like to have same kind of good relations that Pakistan and Afghanistan were enjoying the Russian times. The common decisions do effect the relations between both states and unfortunately the incident at Torkham created bad impact on the relations. There is a need to improve our cultural relations. Most importantly media reporting should be controlled, though media is not playing a positive role when it comes down to Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. Pakistani media is saying that Afghanistan is supporting Indians. In Afghanistan they say that Pakistan is a major contributor to the problems in Afghanistan. What we need to do is that, research organizations (e.g. Pakistan House and our think tank) must work together to improve the bilateral relations. Both governments should find alternative means to resolve the

issues. Those steps and initiatives should be taken from both sides which is better and beneficial for Afghanistan and Pakistan.



Question: Pakistan and Afghanistan need to formulate a group which should work for peace in Afghanistan. Currently Hear of Asia is also working for this but only formulating a group will not work. We need to show sincerity towards the problem and also these two brotherly countries should trust on each other. How the two countries increase the trust deficit because due to Indian excessive influence in Afghanistan both countries will not be able to achieve that goal. What should be the parameters to achieve that trust deficit?

Lt Gen Asif Yasin Malik HI (M) (Retd): Truth is the key to trust. If these two countries are able to convince each other that they are honest towards each other, then that will be the biggest trust and biggest move.

Dr. Abdul Baqi: Do we know that the superpowers or the bigger powers are working for peace in Afghanistan and improvement of relations or peace in the region? There are people in both societies who are playing negatively and the need is that media has to play positive role on both sides by exposing those people and groups who are spoiling the relations of two countries. An anti-lobby that exist on both sides of the border, should be exposed. The neighbours of Pakistan and Afghanistan have to work towards stopping those forces who are trying to spoil the relations of both countries. Students must write and talk positively rather than negatively portraying the situation.

Question: The state of the statements coming out from United States of America in recent past are: 1) Pakistan received aid from U.S., 2) Pakistan has been doing quite a lot but it has to do more, 3) the statement from U.S. officials that Pakistan was doing the “bare minimum”. Is United States not aware of the sacrifices made by Pakistan or these are the mixed signals deliberately to put Pakistan under pressure?

Lt Gen Asif Yasin Malik HI (M) (Retd): The confusion in the US administration has seriously damaged the foreign policy contours. Let me ask this, what really is the right of the US to comment on Pak-afghan relations? Pakistan and Afghanistan will decide what is in their mutual interests. Since both are weak states in pursuing their own interest and discussing bilaterally, however, when both countries do not adhere to a bilateral mechanism, the third party jumps-in, which in fact amounts to direct interference. The other issue of Americans about doing more mantra, it's a deliberate effort to continuously negatively engage Pakistan. Therefore it is the Afghan and Pakistani people and their respective governments to decide what the best is for them.

Analysis & Recommendations

The textual analysis of speeches offered by the Hon. Chief Guest, eminent keynote speakers, and guest speakers presented several important points. The ensuing analysis of speeches also highlighted that other regional players especially India should not use Afghan soil to undermine the peace efforts of the US, NATO and Pakistan. This reflection flows from the presence of hostile militant and terrorist groups in Afghanistan.

Broadly, following are some of the statements that constitute the basis for further analysis and recommendations:

1. The US and Afghanistan are main stakeholders. For Pakistan, Afghanistan is more important than any other country because an instable Afghanistan is the greatest threat to Pakistan's security.
2. The design to grant India an interventionist status restricts the space for independent policy formulation. The US and its Western allies must change this approach as Afghanistan needs to make its own foreign policy decisions.
3. The US has to stop imposing a western political paradigm and allow a system that has traditionally been part of historical and cultural ethos of Afghans.
4. There is no military solution to the problem and we must not forget that time is on the Taliban's side, and the US and its Western allies must invest in political negotiation rather than brining more miseries to the Afghan people.
5. The future of regional stability is interconnected with the idea to promote promotes balance of power, peace and harmony. As a regional super power Indian must play a positive role to support Afghan people, and refrain from expanding its own strategic depth.
6. Sustainable socioeconomic development along with greater economic integration should become a significant factor of security and stability maintenance in the countries of the region.
7. A stable and peaceful Afghanistan is essential to region's security and economic wellbeing and a new quadrilateral group comprising of Iran, Pakistan, China and Russia be formed to help resolve the Afghan crisis.
8. The out-dated mind-set of zero-sum game should be replaced with a new approach of working for common development and shared benefits.
9. An immediate negotiation framework should be developed with the consent of the Loe Jirga to start political negotiations with the Taliban.

Recommendations:

1. Re-establishing Trust

Recreating trust between Pakistan and Afghanistan is crucial for any further dialogue process. Convergence of mutual national interests is a consideration that Afghanistan and Pakistan should consider. Allegations and counter allegations in the wake of a terrorist attack must not impede an on-going dialogue process.

2. Economic and Social Development of Afghanistan

There must be a Marshal Plan for the economic revival of the country. The policy of war economy should be terminated, and the US must direct all foreign funds in socioeconomic development of Afghanistan. No country should use developmental work to establish its strategic assets on Afghan soil. Afghanistan needs to take very strict actions against menace of corruption.

3. Pak-Afghan Economic Cooperation

Pakistan must develop an exclusive strategy of economic cooperation, and should take extra measure to facilitate bilateral trade including favourable tariff regime. Pakistani companies must complete all projects under process in Afghanistan.

4. Good Governance

Both Pakistan and Afghanistan are facing issue of governance, due to which the people have been severely affected. Promoting good governance and sharing experiences can further enhance bilateral ties.

5. Afghan Freedom in Negotiation Process

The US and its Western allies must create conducive environment for a peaceful negotiation between Taliban and the government. The US efforts should not be coupled with conditions as reconciliation, reconstruction and rejuvenation efforts are interconnected. Therefore, it is important to ensure an independent negotiation process because Taliban have clearly demanded direct dialogue with the Afghan government.

6. Productive Role of Media and Negative Propaganda

Both Afghanistan and Pakistan should device respective media strategy to discourage negative social/print and electronic media campaign against each other as the phenomenon of false and abusive propaganda is bringing disrepute to our cultural values. Most importantly wrongful reporting and media allegations have seriously damaged the trust of state apparatuses. Both Afghan and Pakistan authorities should not communicate through media. Indian media too is exploiting the confusion between two countries and promoting a culture of FAKE NEWS. The efforts should be made to neutralize such negative designs. Pakistan should focus on promoting our soft cultural footprints in Afghanistan, in order to dilute the negative image of our country.

7. Safe Re-settlement of Afghan Refugees

The US and Afghanistan should create a conducive environment so the three million Afghan refugees/economic migrants should return to their homeland and help rebuilding the country.

8. Regulation of Afghan Border

Pakistan is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to build security fence on its side of the border. This effort would directly help both countries to halt illegal

cross border movement. Concerted efforts should be made to secure the borders and regulate cross border movement, particularly on the eastern border.

9. Role of Afghan Special Narcotics Force (ASNF) for Drug Trafficking

The US, NATO and other international forces must help ASNF to end drug trade. An immediate policy to curb poppy cultivation is the key to save next generations of Afghans as well as Western youth who are being directly affected.

Photo Gallery













