

# Report

## Round Table with Brig (Retd.) Feroz Hasan Khan

March 29, 2013



**THE INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC STUDIES,  
ISLAMABAD**

## Round Table with Brig (Retd.) Feroz Hasan Khan

The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad hosted a Roundtable on March 29, 2013 with Brig. (Retd.) Feroz Hasan, lecturer in the Department of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. He has served with the Pakistani Army for 30 years, including service as Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs (ACDA), within the Strategic Plans Division (SPD), Joint Services Headquarters, and has represented Pakistan in several multilateral and bilateral arms control negotiations.

The agenda of the meeting comprised discussion on a recently published book by Brig. Feroz titled *“Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb”*. Brig Feroz Khan’s book is based on the first-person accounts from key figures involved in the uranium enrichment, plutonium production and separation, missile and warhead development, and foreign procurement for these efforts. He interviewed key members of Pakistan’s defense science establishment—S. N. Burney, Ishfaq Ahmad, Pervez Butt, Ishfaq Khan, Javed Arshad Mirza, Samar Mubarakmand, and Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood. Among the retired senior military officers, he interviewed Vice Chief of Army Staff K.M. Arif; Chief of Army Staff Mirza Aslam Beg; Chief of Army Staff turned President Pervez Musharraf, and Lieutenant General Khalid Kidwai.

The Chairman ISSI, Ambassador Gul Hanif, presided over the Roundtable along with all available researchers in attendance. The Chairman welcomed the guest and asked him to enlighten the participants with the findings of his book.

Brig. Feroz observed that history of Pakistan's nuclear program was actually the history of Pakistan. Fascinated with the promise of the new nuclear science, the

young nation's leaders were prudent enough to launch a nuclear energy program in 1956 and consciously interwove nuclear developments into the broader narrative of Pakistani nationalism. Then, impelled first by the 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan Wars, and more urgently by India's first nuclear weapon test in 1974, Pakistani senior officials tapped into the country's pool of young nuclear scientists and engineers and molded them into a motivated cadre committed to building the 'ultimate' weapon. The tenacity of this group and the central place of its mission in Pakistan's national identity allowed the program to outlast the perennial political crises of Pakistani domestic politics, culminating in the test of a nuclear device in 1998.

He explained how and why Pakistan's government, scientists, and military, persevered in the face of a wide array of obstacles to acquire nuclear weapons. He explained the conditions that sparked the shift from a peaceful quest to acquire nuclear energy into a full-fledged weapons program, how the nuclear program was organized, the role played by outside powers in nuclear decisions, and explained how Pakistani scientists overcame the many technical hurdles they encountered. Brig. Feroz said that US/West sponsored international opposition to the program only made it an even more significant issue of national resolve. Brig Feroz spoke about his role as Director ACDA at SPD in contributing to Pakistan's policy on nuclear and conventional arms control in the formative years following the nuclear tests by Pakistan.

Elaborating the mutual benefits of strategic cooperation between Pakistan and other countries, he added that transfers of Chinese equipment were quite substantial. Estimates of Libya's financial assistance to start Pakistan's nuclear

program vary from \$100 million to \$500 million, and the exact extent of Saudi Arabia's support to Pakistan's nuclear program cannot be accurately measured. As regards A.Q. Khan Network, Brig Feroz remarked that creation of a parallel, profit-making network to sell nuclear material occurred without official sanction, and that Pakistani authorities were shocked to discover the extent and reach of the network's sales to Iran, Libya, and North Korea. According to Brig. Feroz, this network had taken on a life of its own wholly due to A.Q. Khan's greed and hubris, and was the most unfortunate part of the story.

As to the question of the readers of his book, Brig. Feroz thought that his book was ideal for those who want expert assessments of the history, current state, and future prospects of the South Asian nuclear environment, and especially, Pakistan's unique story of its nuclearisation.

In reply to the question on what now? Brig Feroz observed that situation of Pakistan resembled that of "Bomb and the Boy" type movie, where Pakistan is sitting alone with its bomb, wondering what to do with it. According to him, there are two pathways for future: Moderate Pakistan or Radical Pakistan. At present, both pathways are open.

In reply to a question on economic effects of nuclear program, Brig Feroz said that the program was not a drag on Pakistan's economic development. Total cost incurred is estimated in hundreds of million dollars and not really in billions.

On the North Korean connection, he said that the cooperation between the two countries was based on a formal state to state agreement on nuclear cooperation signed during Benazir's first tenure.

Regarding a question on Pakistan's response to Iran's nuclear program, he agreed that Pakistan should neither support nor oppose Iran's nuclear program, and that

Pakistan should maintain that Iran has every right to peaceful use of nuclear energy as is agreed in the NPT.

Concluding the discussion, the Chairman thanked Brig Feroz for sharing the main ideas of his book and for adding to the ISSI researchers knowledge on a subject which is extremely important for the people of Pakistan. Brig Feroz in turn thanked the Chairman for affording him the opportunity of explaining his work. He fondly recalled his long-standing association with ISS and said that ISSI was the oldest and the most recognized Pakistani think tank in the world.

*Prepared by:*

*Air Cdre (Retd.) Ghulam Mujaddid*

*Senior Research Fellow*