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Report- In-House Meeting

South Korean Delegation from Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security (IFANS)

November 17, 2016



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Pictures of the Event



In-House Meeting

Regional Security (Korean Peninsula & South Asia); Global Non-Proliferation & North Korean Nuclear Issue

A four-member South Korean Delegation visited the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI) on November 17, 2016. The delegation was led by president of the South Korean Institute of Foreign Affairs & National Security (IFANS), Ambassador Shing Dong-ik. Other members of the delegation included: Mr. Wi, Minbok, Deputy Director and Ms. Cho, Min-Jeong Deputy Director. The delegation was accompanied by the Deputy Chief of Mission from the South Korean Embassy, Mr. Kim, Jinwook.

The agenda of the meeting included discussion on regional security issues in the Korean Peninsula and South Asia, nuclear non-proliferation and the North Korean nuclear issue.

The session was opened by the Chairman BOG, ISSI, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood who welcomed the delegates warmly and briefed everyone regarding the topics to be discussed at the meeting. The Chairman described the relations between Pakistan and South Korea as cordial and historic in nature. He explained how these two countries while not being geographically adjacent, have several commonalities in terms of their strategic and regional security concerns. He informed the attendees about the rich Buddhist culture and history of South Korea and mentioned that the first accounts of contact between the Sub-continent and the Korean Peninsula date as far back as the 8th century. Both countries have comparative religious and cultural ideologies. The Chairman also highlighted the issues of mutual interest between Pakistan and South Korea such as the North Korean nuclear issue, the Sino-US relations and their impact on collective regional security, as well as the strengthening Pak-China ties with reference to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The Chairman also mentioned the possibility of signing an MoU with IFANS.

Ambassador Dong-ik briefed the audience about the history of IFANS which was founded in 1975 and is affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, South Korea. It is dedicated to developing mid- to long-term foreign policy visions through participation in academic exchanges, public diplomacy, training and researches, and the production of publications. Ambassador Shing Dong-ik then started the discussion regarding the North Korean nuclear issue which according to him, was a significant security threat to not only the Korean Peninsula, but to the entire world. North Korea has conducted nuclear tests about five times in a major violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and other laws of international security.

He reiterated that the North Korean leadership's policy of parallel nuclear development and economic cooperation with the international community was an unacceptable premise. Despite the constant international warnings and threats from the international community, North Korea remains adamant on increasing its conventional and unconventional weapons inventory. It is a source of serious apprehension for the South Korean national security that North Korea refuses to indulge in any dialogue on its nuclear proliferation policy. The Ambassador explained how the

mindset of an individual ruler is adversely affecting the internal atmosphere of his own country, as well as that of the entire region.

He suggested that in their opinion, the only solution was to employ an international diplomatic, economic and strategic embargo on North Korea. Ambassador Shin Dong-ik also recommended the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) model to be followed as in the case of Iran. The Iranian nuclear deal, he said, is an international agreement on the nuclear programme of Iran reached in Vienna on July 14, 2015 between Iran, the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council—China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States—plus Germany and the European Union. He stressed that the South Korean policy is not aimed at any regime change in North Korea. It simply wishes that the North Korean leadership cooperates with them by softening its strategy of beefing up its military muscle and by signing and obeying the NPT. He also assured that South Korea has no plans to pursue any nuclear programme.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood praised the peaceful stance of South Korea towards this entire matter. He explained Pakistan's position as the forerunner of declaring South Asia as a 'Nuclear Weapons Free Zone' which has been vehemently opposed by India and Bhutan. He was of the view that North Korea's stance might be the result of an irrational fear that the international community plans to bring about a 'forced' regime change. He stressed the importance of an inclusive and joint approach to solve this issue through negotiations with all stakeholders. He also pointed to the concerns of the regional countries, especially China and Russia, over deployment of THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defence) missile defence system in South Korea by the US.

Senior Research Fellow, Shamsa Nawaz gave an illustrated presentation on the South Asian security dilemma and how the points of conflict between Pakistan and India are adversely affecting it. After a few useful facts and figures regarding the economic, demographic and strategic importance of South Asia, she focused particularly on the different issues that have become a bone of contention between India and Pakistan such as Kashmir, Sir Creek, Siachen and the countless ceasefire violations. The historically adverse relations between the two recently worsened after the Pathankot Air Base incident of January 2016. In the months that followed, India has committed blatant violations of the international code of conduct by firing across the LoC regularly and also along the Working Boundary which has resulted in deaths of many civilians.

Residential areas proximal to the border areas have been mortared and houses destroyed. Even after such committing such heinous offences, India has had the audacity to blame Pakistan for any turbulence in its national security. Modi's government has always tried to implicate Pakistan on the incidents of terrorism in India without prior investigation. The Uri attack reactions were no different. Pakistan believes that the Baloch separatists receive training in camps in Afghanistan established by India. The Indian embassy in Afghanistan has also funded militants against Pakistan. Afghan spy network, NDS, has a very close alliance with Indian agency RAW and both are jointly undertaking the terrorists activities in Pakistan. Balochistan also borders the tribal area of Pakistan, where Pakistan's armed forces are combating terrorists. Hence, Balochistan's border with the Sistan province of Iran has also become vulnerable.

She further emphasised that Kashmir is the key to prosperity and peace in South Asia. Pakistan maintains its principled stance that Kashmiris should be given their right of self-determination promised in several UNSC resolutions. Wide-spread human rights' violations in Indian Occupied Kashmir, particularly after the extrajudicial killing of a 22 year old freedom fighter, Burhan Wani in July 2016, are of grave concern for Pakistan. So far, over a 100 innocent Kashmiris have been killed and over 1000 injured by the use of the pellet guns. Many have been blinded. The United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) is currently unable to fully function in Indian Occupied Kashmir due to India's non-cooperation. Hence, rests Pakistan's case against India's bid for a permanent seat at the UNSC. A country in violation of the very resolutions of the Security Council on matters of peace and security, does not qualify for a special status in the Security Council. Grouped with Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan, India also sabotaged the SAARC conference which was to be held in Pakistan in November 2016. SAARC was meant to promote regional economic and cultural connectivity. They even tried to use the forum of BRIC to malign Pakistan.

Senior Research Fellow, Dr. Ahmed Rashid Malik expressed his views in terms of the stance of North Korea and how it feels threatened by the increased US presence and influence in the Korean Peninsula. Ambassador Shin Dong-ik addressed these concerns by furthering the South Korean agenda for regional peace and inclusion of North Korea in this respect. He said that the declaration by the North Korean supreme leader, Kim Jong-un announced that they will be a declared nuclear state by year 2020. But the South Korean government has offered a handsome economic package for the North Korean people, as well as offered their reassurances that they do not plan to take any initiatives to overthrow the North Korean leader.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood wrapped up the session by proposing that the Security Council resolutions must be followed and implemented regarding both North Korea and Kashmir. He suggested that both countries should endorse each other's stance in the UNSC. In order to induce regional integration and a sense of security among the Asian countries, Pakistan and South Korea should join hands and work for peace in South Asia.