



**INSTITUTE OF
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Report- In-House Meeting

with

Nigerian Media Delegation

January 30, 2017



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Pictures of the Event



Nigerian Media Delegation

The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted an In-House Meeting with a four-member Nigerian media delegation on January 30, 2017. The members of the delegation included: Mr. Isiyaku Lukuman, *Cameraman, Nigerian Television Authority*, Mr. Iyobosa Rex Uwugiaren, *General Editor, Leadership Newspaper Group*, Mrs. Raliat Oyinyioza Abdulazeez Yusuf, *Research & Development, Leadership Newspaper Group*, Mr. Ahmed Olanrewaju Ambali, *Reporter, Nigerian Television Authority*.

The Chairman Board of Governors ISSI, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood in his opening remarks presented the historical context of the bilateral relations shared between the two countries. He lauded Pakistan's role in anti-colonial campaign at multilateral forums. He further added that despite the shared cordiality, Pakistan-Nigeria bilateral relations lack content. He believed that Pakistan-Nigeria relation has much potential that needs to be realised. He pointed towards the potential in the field of economic cooperation, especially with regard to oil and gas, textile, agriculture and livestock industry.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood said that irrespective of missed opportunities and potentials, Pakistan has strong ties in defence cooperation with Nigeria. Pakistan has provided Nigeria with Mushshak trainer planes and now intends to provide JF-17 fighter planes. Moreover, Nigerian delegation actively participated in defence exhibition IDEAS 2016, where deliberation on new avenues of cooperation and joint ventures was undertaken between the two countries.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood also highlighted that Pakistan has many pending MoUs which need to be implemented. He congratulated the delegation on the recent signing of MoU in the education sector which would provide scholarship opportunities to youth from both countries. Moreover, he emphasised that both countries face common challenges which should be dealt through cooperation and joint efforts, most importantly, the menace of violent extremism is a mutual threat to both the countries.

Ms. Mahwish Hafeez, research fellow at ISSI briefed the delegation on the recent emerging trends in the India-Pakistan bilateral relations highlighting the adverse and belligerent Indian posture towards Pakistan's conciliatory policy in the region. She emphasised that both countries should engage in a sustained dialogue process and avoid war-mongering. In addition, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood expressed grave concerns on recent incidents in Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir and India's threat of adversely affecting the bilateral Indus water agreement. He added that international community should take notice of India's actions.

Ms. Amina Khan, research fellow at ISSI briefed the delegation on Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and focused on the past three years, especially since the new government of Ashraf Ghani in Afghanistan. The recent border skirmishes on Pakistan-Afghanistan border have been of concern for Pakistan. Moreover, Pakistan has improved its border management system which has irked the Afghan government. In terms of the Afghan peace process, Ms. Amina was of the opinion that more than anyone else, it is the Afghan government that is a spoiler to these processes. Other issues of concern included the Afghan refugee crises which due to domestic

limitations in Pakistan must be resolved. She believed that rather than blaming Pakistan, the Afghan government should take responsibility and the onus of peace is now with them.

Mr. Asadullah Khan, research fellow at ISSI briefed the delegation on the security situation in Pakistan. He highlighted the recent successes of Pakistan in fighting terrorism. In his opinion kinetic military operation in tribal areas and National Action Plan (NAP) have successfully fractured terrorist network and in an on-going process of carrying intelligence-based operation across country, societal space for terrorists is drastically shrinking. Furthermore, he highlighted the strengthening of the National Counter-terrorism Authority (NACTA), reforms in FATA (tribal areas), actions against hate speech and other important points of NAP. He believed that a combination of both hard and soft power will ultimately provide a comprehensive road map to countering violent extremism.

Ms. Neelum Nigar, research fellow at ISSI's Pakistan China Study Project briefed the delegation on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). She provided a detailed overview of each and every single project which falls under CPEC, with recent developments in Gwadar, energy sector, industrial zones and infrastructural projects in Pakistan. She emphasised that a special security plan has also been devised for CPEC, where Pakistan Army has raised two separate divisions in aid to civil forces. Moreover, she pointed towards policy interventions required in future to match the momentum gained under CPEC.

Question and Answer

The a question on how was Pakistan able to harness a national consensus against terrorism and what role did media played, it was clarified that the attack on innocent children of Army Public School in Peshawar was a tipping point for the Pakistani nation, where every person could relate to this pain and heinous act against humanity. As a result of this, an all parties conference was convened where a national consensus was reached on fight against terrorism. Media played a vital role in building the national narrative against violent extremism. It presented the negative side of extremism and consciously avoided the glorification of terrorists by not giving them air-time.

On a question of how can the untapped potential in the bilateral relation of Pakistan and Nigeria be achieved, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood said that there is a need to implement the signed MoUs and to further explore areas of joint cooperation. He said that a pro-active diplomacy and exchanges will provide a momentum to the bilateral relations which must be trickled town to the common man in both countries. He emphasised that such exchanges must be increased and new forums created where people from both countries could interact in a positive manner. He acknowledged and highlighted the role of the media in creating a positive image and bringing information to the common masses of the potential and huge opportunities that lie both in Pakistan and Nigeria..