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Report – Roundtable

“Changing Dynamics in Kashmir – A Challenge to the World Conscience”

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India Study Centre at Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI) organized a Round-table Interactive Discussion on “*Changing Dynamics in Kashmir – A Challenge to the World Conscience*” with a delegation from All-Party Parliamentary Kashmir Group (APPKG) from UK/EU led by Ms. Debbie Abraham, MP on February 19, 2020. Members of the delegation included: Lord Qurban Hussain, Ms. Judith Cummins, Sara Britcliffe, Raja Najabat Hussain, Br. Imran Hussain, Mr. James Daly, Mr. Mark Eastwood, Mr. Tahir Ali, and Ms. Yasmine Dar.

The round-table was attended by academics from National Defense University, Quaid-e-Azam University, National University of Modern Languages, COMSATS, International Islamic University and Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi. Participants from think tanks in Islamabad were also present at the occasion.

The delegation was welcomed by Director General ISSI, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry. Deliberating on the subject, Ambassador Aizaz said that though human rights issue is being rightly raised, but the real issue remains that of Kashmiris exercising their right of self-determination. There is a need for the international community to put more pressure on India so that it fulfils the promises it made to the community.

Ms. Debbie Abraham, in her remarks, said that the purpose of their visit to Pakistan was to assess the situation in Jammu and Kashmir in the light of recent developments. While acknowledging the concerns raised during the course of discussions, she expressed her thanks to the Institute of Strategic Studies for providing them the opportunity to interact with the Pakistani academia and other participants.

One of the participant said that perhaps APPKG can help Pakistan in identifying ways to highlighting this issue internationally.

Another participant said that the actual issue is the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. Human right violations are taking place only because India is refusing to give Kashmiri people their fundamental right of self-determination. This fact need to be conveyed to the international community.

Another guest commented that Pakistan need to show its determination regarding the Kashmir issue to the international community, otherwise the latter will continue to take Pakistan for granted. Another guest also agreed and said that symbolically, Pakistan took a number of steps but there is a need to take concrete steps also. Since Britain enjoys close relations with the US, Pakistan should convince Britain that it should ask the US to use its influence over India to resolve the issue according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

It was said that national interests of both India and Pakistan are linked to Kashmir. Two conflicting definitions on one single issue has been the main barrier to the resolution of the dispute. Today, both nations have come to a point where they cannot withdraw from their stated position. Musharraf's four-point formula was a good effort. It was suggested that Pakistan needs to pursue a more aggressive policy. India is committing crimes against humanity and therefore, a case can be filed against Modi in International Court of Justice.

The growing 'saffronization' in India also came under discussion. It was said that the way this ideology looks at India is worrisome and is also linked to the Kashmir issue. What is happening in India is actually a legislative terror. There is a criminal silence on the part of US and international community. The protracted curfew has brought Kashmiris of all shades of opinion on one page. Apprehensions regarding another conventional war between India and Pakistan which might cross the nuclear threshold, were also expressed. Such a scenario would be catastrophic for the entire world. It was said that Pakistan made a mistake by stating that war is not an option immediately after the August 5 actions by India.

PICTURES OF THE EVENT

