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Report – In-House

“Celebration of Pakistan’s Independence Day”

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The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) celebrated the Independence Day of Pakistan with zest and fervor on August 14, 2020. The celebration was attended by the research faculty of the institute.

The event was moderated by Mr. Najam Rafique, Director Research, ISSI. During his remarks, he stated that a majority of the people of Pakistan have forgotten the dire circumstances in which its founding members struggled to achieve freedom. Today, individual self-interests have made us neglect the desire for collective progress of our nation. May Allah grant us with that power, which make us strive like our founders did. Unless we at an individual level do not change ourselves, we will not be able to change the state of our nation, he said.

While addressing the research faculty, Director General ISSI, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry stated that Pakistan is not the name of brick and mortar. It is very important that we as Pakistanis should possess two thing i.e. self-confidence and self-respect. We should seek guidance from the life of our beloved Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) who was born an orphan, lost his mother at a very young age, raised by his grandfather and later on also faced multiple challenges from his tribe which also included social isolation of three years. This is what Pakistan is also facing and the life of our Prophet should be the guiding light for us. The tough days faced by Pakistan will not last forever. We have seen good times and will see them again. As our national poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal stated:

منراد کے ہاتھوں میں ہے قوم کی تقدیر
ہرگز نہ ہے تہمت جسے ترک کا تارا

So, if individuals start to working on their own, it will develop into a critical mass of individuals then the nation will rise beyond the horizon. We as individuals are responsible and answerable for our work. Instead of bashing our own country, we need to work for the development of our country. It will only happen when each and everyone in his/her own little sphere of interest perform their very best. Pakistan has become an over-analyzed country. I don't think we should go in that direction. There is no respite in victimhood. Pakistan has come a long way. The situation of our fellow Muslims in other parts of the world is in front of us, whether it is the Indian occupied Kashmir, Palestine, Syria or Libya. The Syrian refugees are now heavily dependent on the mercy of other countries and their hardships are beyond measure. For us

Pakistanis, that is not the case as we live in an independent state and we should value and cherish this independence.

Chairman BOG, ISSI, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood stated that the Institute has a long history of celebrating international days and days of prominence. However, this is the first time that the Independence Day of Pakistan is being celebrated and it is a very welcome step and the credit goes to the Director General. Today is a day to celebrate the sacrifices and efforts of our founding founders and how their political struggle carved Pakistan. One has to appreciate the vision and how the two-nation theory even hold valid today. The Muslims living in India under the supremacist and suppressive regime of Modi are passing through a difficult time and are under tremendous hardships.

The times and conditions don't remain the same for individuals and nation states. Pakistan is no exception. In the early days after independence, Pakistan had to face with a lot of inherent problems and we also had to fight wars with India. The loss of East Pakistan was a big blow to Pakistan. The important thing is that Pakistan has faced all these circumstances and it is the resilience of Pakistani nation that has helped Pakistan cope with all these problems. I firmly believe that Pakistan has come to stay as a sovereign independent state provided we adhere to the principles underplayed for the creation of the country i.e. a democratic and tolerant society.

From Arms Control and Disarmament Center (ACDC), Research Fellow Ms. Ghazala Jalil in her remarks stated that, today we celebrate the 73rd Independence Day. As we move forward, it is important to remember how Muslims fought to get independence under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. It is equally important to acknowledge the sacrifices that our forefathers made with their blood to secure a homeland for us where we enjoy freedom today. Those sacrifices demand that we nurture and secure Pakistan with the rules that were conveyed to us by our Quaid – Unity, Faith, and Discipline.

Ask the people who do not have freedom like the Kashmiris and Palestinians, the value of their own independent homeland where they can live free of oppression. We must cherish and value our homeland where we can live without fear and oppression. As Pakistan gets stronger politically and economically, I believe we are close as ever to achieve the goal of a Kashmir free of Indian occupation and oppression.

In relation to Pakistan's security, beside the utter determination to survive as a nation, the defining element is our nuclear capability. It is a matter of pride that Pakistan developed the capability despite limited resources and sanctions. It provides deterrence against any aggression towards Pakistan. It is noteworthy that there has not been a general war between India and Pakistan since the latter developed the capability in the 1980s. Today, Pakistan has a robust nuclear program comprised of a triad of nuclear forces. We are proud of our nuclear capability that ensures deterrence against a conventionally superior India. On this Independence Day, we can be sure that we are very capable of defending our home land at sea, in air and on land.

Pakistan has come a long way in the 73 years since it was created, but there is still a long way to go. We must invest in Pakistan's economic and technological development, we must invest in health and education. Let us all play our role in making Pakistan great. It is up to each Pakistani to make sure our homeland is nurtured, developed and kept safe for millennia to come.

I will end with a tribute to Muhammad Ali Jinnah with this quote by Stanley Wolpert in Jinnah of Pakistan, "Few individuals significantly alter the course of history. Fewer still modify the map of the world. Hardly anyone can be credited with creating a nation-state. Mohammad Ali Jinnah did all three."

On behalf of the Center for Middle East and Africa (CMEA), Research Associate Ms. Areeba Arif in her remarks stated that as a Pakistani Kashmiri, I would like to begin with Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's historic words about Kashmir, and I quote, "Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan." These words by our nation's founder provide a sense of perseverance to Kashmiris on both sides of the border. Today, as we celebrate the 73rd year of independence of Pakistan, we are also painfully aware of the suffering of our oppressed brothers and sisters in Indian occupied Kashmir. But even in these difficult times, every year the brave people of Kashmir raise the flag of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on August 14th in commemoration of the hard-earned independence of our country. This valiant act is a confirmation of our fraternal bond with the people of Kashmir. Once again, I extend my heartiest congratulations to everyone and pray that very soon, a new and independent dawn rises on the foothills of the beautiful valley of Kashmir.

From China-Pakistan Study Center (CPSC), Research Associate Ali Haider Saleem stated that independence is a great blessing of Almighty Allah. He has granted us the right to live

respectfully and honorably. As we have grown up in an independent country, we understand very little about the insult of being governed by a foreign power.

Every year, Independence Day reminds us of the difficult and long struggle for freedom that the Muslims of the Sub-continent undertook for the dream of a country where they were free from persecution and oppression. Our elders sacrificed their lands, their possessions and their lives for the privilege of self-determination.

Leaders like Quaid-e-Azam, Allama Iqbal and Liaquat Ali Khan have been our true heroes who chose not to kneel down to the demands and conspiracies of British and Hindu dominance. This day serves as a reminder to follow our Quaid's motto of "Unity, Faith, and Discipline" and make Pakistan a prosperous country free of all kinds of prejudice, oppression, and exploitation and revive our belief in the glorious principles of justice and fair play.

We should not forget that the fight for freedom is not over yet for the Muslims of the Sub-continent. Let us pray for the people of IoK who are echoing their voices for freedom from Indian oppression. My dear colleagues, we are responsible for the development and progress of our nation. The country although constrained with resources spends huge amount of common man's money, only to expect that institutions like ours will contribute towards the progress of its people.

We should be grateful for the opportunity granted to us and strive to raise our country's flag higher. In February 1948, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in a broadcast to the people of the USA outlined the following goals of Pakistan's foreign policy:

"We believe in the principle of honesty and fair play in national and international dealings and are prepared to make our utmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed peoples of the world."

We need to take guidance from our founder and be proud of working at an institute which is dedicated towards promoting his vision. May Allah keep showering his blessings upon us?

From the India Study Center (ISC), Research Fellow Ms. Mahwish Hafeez stated that she chose to speak on this topic because it's a fact that we, who were born in an independent country and had this blessing called Azadi, we often fail to appreciate its true value. Freedom is hard to get and to understand its true worth, we need to look at people who are not as lucky as we are. And for that, we don't have to go to some far off place as the plight of Indian Muslims today is quite an eye opener.

Imagine the horror of a person and pain of his loved ones who is targeted by a mob in a broad daylight for any perceived crime only because he is a Muslim. Imagine the anxiety of a person who fears that he would be declared a foreigner and would end up in a detention centre for the rest of his life only because he is a Muslim. Imagine the pain of a person who has fallen sick to a virus that was never heard of before and the hospitals deny him admission because of his religion. Imagine the dismay of a person who reads a banner outside neighborhoods in big cities or villages that he is not allowed to enter because he is a Muslim. Such is the state of affairs in India and today, prominent Indian leaders like Shashi Tharoor and Farooq Abdullah are on record saying that after all, Jinnah was right.

No matter how hard India tries to portray itself as a secular democratic country, the fact is contrary to this claim. This myth of a secular country was busted the day Gandhi was assassinated for being soft towards minorities particularly Muslims. This myth was busted the day Kashmir was occupied against the wishes of its people. This myth was busted the day centuries old Babri Mosque was vandalized and then again recently when the court ruling allowed a temple to be built at its place. It was busted the day a senior BJP leader said that India is already a Hindu Rashtra and we all know what a Hindu Rashtra means.

Today, as we are celebrating 73rd Independence Day, let us pay tribute and remember all the sacrifices given for the freedom and existence of this beloved land. Let us pledge that we will not let any harm come to this country. Let's be thankful to Allah for Pakistan.

Mr. Abid Hussain, Librarian of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad in his comments stated that I would like to congratulate the Institute for organizing this event. He said that Pakistan should improve its soft power abroad as it has the world largest ambulance network, the second largest salt mine Khewra, the world largest man-made forest Changa Manga in Lahore,

K2, the second-highest mountain on Earth, and best manufacturing of sports goods and surgical instruments in the world. Pakistan stands first in academic awards for short documentary. It is a country with two noble laureates Malala Yousafzai and Abdus Salam, and the first Muslim country with nuclear power. Undoubtedly, Pakistan is having countless heroes in the past and present as well from whom we can take inspiration. We need to make movies on our national heroes. We need to employ media to build a better image in the minds of foreign public. Fine arts, literature, national heritage and culture are the best mediums to project positive image of Pakistan.

Living in an age of globalization, public diplomacy can play its role more effectively after the social media came into existence. We have to depict our traditions, customs, and beliefs in a manner that will attract the foreigners towards Pakistan through this medium.

Pakistan is rich in the natural beauty and is blessed with captivating views, beautiful mountains, lakes, cascades and many more things. Pakistan is also rich in its heritage, culture and history. But unfortunately, we are unable to show this to the rest of the world. Investing in foreign public can also be one of the beneficial elements for effective public diplomacy in Pakistan. Pakistan needs to invest in the foreign youth and for that, Pakistan's economy should be strong. Pakistan also needs to give educational aid to the youth of other countries so that they act as ambassadors for the country.

In conclusion, the Director General and Director China Study Center Dr. Talat Shabbir recited beautiful poetic verses that reflected hope and vision for Pakistan and how a bright future awaits the country.

PICTURES OF THE EVENT

