

PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN : TOWARDS MUTUAL SECURITY STABILITY AND TRADE

INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC STUDIES, ISLAMABAD

NOVEMBER 12 – 13, 2010

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

BY

TANVIR AHMAD KHAN

Foreign Minister, Excellencies, Distinguished Participants from Afghanistan and Pakistan,
Ladies and Gentlemen

On my own behalf and on behalf of my colleagues at the Institute of Strategic Studies and our generous German collaborators, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung I welcome you to this memorable gathering of parliamentarians and intellectuals from Pakistan and the brotherly country, Afghanistan. They have come together for a free exchange of views and opinions on matters of vital concern to both the peoples for two days. It is a landmark event in the history of this institute that we hope would initiate a process of frequent consultations between the law-makers and opinion-formers of our two neighboring states faced with momentous issues that demand a deep mutually shared understanding. More than ever before, Pakistan and Afghanistan need an irrevocable commitment to concerted action to achieve peace, stability and progress in this troubled region.

We are greatly honored that the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Makhdoom Shah Mahmud Qureshi is with us this morning to inaugurate this conference built around themes dear to his heart and central to the foreign policy of the Government to which he belongs. The rapport that exists between President Zardari and President Karzai is a beacon of light that guides us in organizing this conference. Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gillani is expected to visit Kabul soon as part of the continuing summit-level meetings. Consultations Between the leaders acquire an added significance as the U.S-led coalition increasingly explores avenues leading to a better balance between the ongoing military campaign and productive political negotiations, a balance

needed to create the bedrock of a future architecture of peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan.

The international community has already signaled its desire for an eventual disengagement at least from active combat. What it has open is a rigid timeline for it. This prospect generates a whole range of differing scenarios and it is incumbent upon our two governments to work together for the realization of the vest of them in the shortest possible time. It will be a new dawn of hope and promise when peace breaks out in the length and breadth of Afghanistan and this ancient land that straddles the crossroads of history, can return to its great potential for prosperity for its own people as well as for the entire region. We, in Pakistan, know only too well that our own plans for development are linked in no small a measure to the opportunities for peaceful commerce of nations in our part of the world. Peace and stability in Afghanistan would open up pathways of progress that could transform lives in Central and South Asia.

The quest for friendly relations with Afghanistan enjoys a complete national consensus in Pakistan. For two major parties in the ruling coalition in Islamabad, the PPP and ANP, it is also a sacred legacy and, if I may say, a duty. It is also an important item on the unfinished agenda of late Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. I was serving in our embassy in Kabul when he came there in May 1976. The path-breaking talks that he held with President Sardar Muhammad Daoud launched a process of understanding that would have ensured a different history of the region if allowed to reach fruition. The visionary dialogue between the two leaders-both destined for martyrdom at the hands of internal enemies-was based on a concrete application of Panjshela, the Bandung principles of coexistence and cooperation to all the issues between the two countries. I have a vivid memory of the frisson produced by their conversations as they increasingly reflected-within a short span of forty eight hours-a new grasp not only of the old dictum that geography is destiny but also of the great responsibility of leading to their full promise two brotherly states divided by a border across which flow inexorable currents of shared religion, ethnicity and languages. Unfortunately, I also have a vivid recollection of images of horror that I saw from the roof top of my residence in Wazir Akbar Mena that was separated from the presidential palace only by a narrow side road.

It is not the occasion to go into details but let me say that Mr. Bhutto and Sardar Daoud brought to bear on our bilateral relations a strategic imagination that does not deny history but enables statesmen to transcend it to a point where the way forward becomes clear.

We stand at a juncture of time where history itself demands that we focus once again on the way forward. In the last few years there has been much talk outside our countries of a conflict in our part of the world that may last an entire generation. Neither Afghanistan nor Pakistan can afford instability and turbulence for much longer and all our energies must be directed to bringing to an end a period of turmoil that already spans three decades. This conference is dedicated to ideas and concepts that help attain that noble objective. History has always been written diversely by nations and by various interpreters of it within the same nation. What we have to ensure is that past tragedies are not re-enacted and that we move forward in the larger interest of our people and the region. And when we talk of the region, we exclude no state and no people.

This conference is not about rival historical narratives; we can do that another day. Today, it is structured on the basis of a relentless joint pursuit of peace and progress and I welcome our brothers from Afghanistan once again to join us in charting our common journey.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmud Qureshi,

I turn to you once again to thank you for finding time for us in the midst of exceptionally heavy demands on your schedule. I request you to kindly inaugurate the conference. What you say to us today will certainly guide us in our discussions. We may well be opening a new chapter today in creative interaction between the political and scholarly elites of the two countries.

ADDRESS

BY

SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI
(Foreign Minister)

Dr. Tanvir Ahmad Khan,
Chairman,
Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad

Ministers – Member of Parliament!

Excellencies!

Distinguished Guests!

Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is an honor to address this august gathering, at the Pakistan-Afghanistan Conference.

The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, and Konrad Adenauer Foundation of Germany, have undertaken a commendable joint venture.

An interaction of this nature, with our Afghan brothers, is timely. I extend a warm welcome to the honorable members of the delegation from Afghanistan, to their second home.

Afghanistan and Pakistan share bonds of culture, history, traditions and faith.

Our commonalities, in fact, go far beyond this.

We are, in President Karzai's words, like conjoined twins.

We share each other's joys and sorrows. We stand by each other through thick and thin.

A recent testament to this relationship was the generous assistance, extended by Afghanistan, in the wake of floods.

Pakistanis are grateful for the support of our Afghan brethren.

Mr. Chairman,

The Afghans have suffered tremendously, from three decades of conflict in their country.

Owing to our unique relationship, Pakistan has suffered too, as a victim of the fallout of terrorism and militancy.

We have learned that Pakistan cannot isolate itself from Afghanistan. Our destinies are intertwined.

The experience of last three decades of conflict in Afghanistan also tells us, that poverty, illiteracy and lack of employment opportunities provide a fertile ground for the growth of terrorism and militancy.

In hindsight, we can say that instead of abandoning Afghanistan after the first Afghan war, the resources and energies of the international community should have gone into the socio-economic development of Afghanistan.

That did not happen; and now we all face the monster of militancy and terrorism.

This unfortunate, and dangerous, drift needs to be reversed.

The only choice we have, is to cooperate closely. Only then we can effectively counter and eliminate terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The democratic Government, in the last two and a half years, has transformed Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan.

It is a happy augury that our bilateral engagement, now, has become institutionalized. This government would like to see it further consolidated.

We are engaged with Afghanistan bilaterally, as well as through trilateral and quadrilateral mechanism; with the involvement of countries like Iran, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkey and the U.S.

One of the cardinal principles of our foreign policy is neutrality and non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs. We expect the regional countries to also follow this principle.

Pakistan respects Afghanistan's unity, Territorial integrity and sovereignty.

As citizens of a sovereign country, Afghans are masters of their own destiny.

It is for them to choose the contours, as well as the pace of the reconciliation process.

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan believes that the military action needs to be supplemented; simultaneously, by fast paced political and economic tracks.

We have extended our unequivocal support, to the Kabul process.

The London Conference, the Afghan Peace Jirga and the Kabul Conference, are important milestones on the road to reconciliation.

The recently held parliamentary elections in Afghanistan, have also paved the way for Afghan ownership of this ongoing political process.

We continue to believe in, the advocate, an indigenous, broad-based, all-inclusive, Afghan-owned and Afghan-led process of reconciliation and reintegration.

No mechanism engineered outside, and no solution imported from abroad, can work in Afghanistan.

As Afghanistan's neighbor, Pakistan will be ready to render all assistance to the Afghan government.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pakistan is contributing to Afghanistan's economic and social development, despite resource constraints.

We have undertaken reconstruction projects worth US\$ 320 million in Afghanistan.

I am glad to announce that one such project, Sir Syed Science Block in Nangarhar University, Jalaabad, has been completed; and is ready to be handed over the Afghan authorities.

Similar other projects are also reaching the completion stage.

Cooperation between our two countries, in the field of education, is vast.

Some 28,000 Afghans have graduated from Pakistani institutions, over the last three decades, while 6,000 Afghans are currently studying in Pakistan.

They are, in addition to the 500,000 children of Afghan refugees, studying in Pakistan.

Pakistan Prime Minister's scholarships scheme, which is already underway, will benefit 2,000 Afghan students, over a period of five years.

In the realm of economics, our bilateral trade of US\$ 2 billion, at present, is significant. We are committed to enhancing, it to US\$ 5 billion by 2015.

The signing last month, in Kabul, of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement is a landmark achievement. This will widen the horizon for trade and economic opportunities, for the two countries.

In this regard, the private sector can play a pivotal role, in exploiting out untapped potential, and elevating our commercial and economic cooperation to new heights.

Mr. Chairman!

Excellencies!

Pakistan continues to host some three million Afghan refugees.

We have looked after them to the best of our ability; and will continue to do so, till they are reabsorbed into the Afghan society.

These refugees are capable of contributing usefully, to the economic development of Afghanistan.

We should jointly seek the international community's assistance, in the return and rehabilitation of these refugees in Afghanistan.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The respective geographical locations of Pakistan and Afghanistan are complimentary, and mutually beneficial.

Afghanistan can act as a land bridge, between Pakistan and Central Asian Republics.

Pakistan, on its part, provides the shortest land route to the Sea for the landlocked Afghanistan, and Central Asian Republics.

Although, at this point in time, we are justifiably overwhelmed by the enormity of challenges confronting us.

We should not, however, overlook the tremendous economic opportunities available to us.

Imagine Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India energy initiative, CASA-2000 and modern rail and road links, materializing in the near future.

Imagine the benefits such projects, and others, will accrue to Pakistan, Afghanistan and other countries in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Pakistan is deeply committed to materialize these economic opportunities, into tangible benefits.

Pursuit of peace and development is our common goal. We should join hands to realize it.

In this lies the antidote to the maladies afflicting our region.

In this lies the hope for the welfare of our people, and our future generations.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish our brothers from Afghanistan a happy stay; and the deliberations of this conference a great success.

Thank you.

ADDRESS

BY

SHERRY REHMAN

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN AGENT OF STABILITY IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

Civil society can be a powerful voice and agent of change in making space for a new discourse in areas where governments fear to tread. The paradox of indigenous civil society is that it is strongest locally when internal governments are strong, and often emerge as powerful pluralities in negotiating reform agendas both within countries and outside them. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, despite internal conflict, civil society within these countries has not been successful in creating counter-narratives for bilateral change. Given that regional peace pivots on stable national entities, it is critical that civil society play a more pro-active role in advancing the cause of Pak_Afghan convergences, especially at a crucial moment of transition for the region.

Afghan civil society has grown in quantum leaps over the years, yet like any civil society, it remains hostage to fundamentals on the ground. Given that the lead agency in many Afghan organizations is internationally funded, or key components thereof, their agendas and project designs continue to be shaped by a donor-led impetus, as well as the exigency of operating under severely challenging security conditions. This means that while the material infrastructure of Afghan civil society is very apparent, it is unable to offer sustained accountability of government at the national level, nor is it able to articulate a strong, knowledge-led agenda on the ground. Given the asymmetry of government infrastructure between Afghanistan and Pakistan, civil society is fairly robust in Pakistan in offering a resistance narrative to the state, although it rarely pushes a viable alternative when deconstructing national security discourse. When reading into Afghanistan's case, the very clear opportunity that civil society in Pakistan envisages is the building 'order out of chaos' model of governance for Afghanistan in which a new political consensus can emerge in a post-military environment.

In both countries, civil society has been most effective in filling government deficits in the social sector, with particular yet token successes in gender affirmation, healthcare provision, capacity building and technical training. Most of these successes in Afghanistan, and to a much smaller extent in Pakistan, naturally have been in coordination with international aid agencies, which despite seminal work in the field, have brought with them, in many cases, their own high administrative overheads. At the same time, we do need to acknowledge the invaluable investments made by international donors in stabilizing structures where none threatened to exist.

WHAT CAN CIVIL SOCIETY DO TO EFFECT CHANGE

In a military theatre, stability operations are invariably led by, well, the military. In Afghanistan, civil society remains subordinate in many cases to donor advice, capacity constraints, international interventions, and security exigencies. In sharp contrast, despite low policy inputs in the formal decision-making apparatus, civil society in Pakistan has developed a strong voice in the vibrant and hyper-active media, where it aggressively contests state and government policy. It takes a lead in national political discourse, and is able to coordinate responses in the field in the face of natural disasters and in some cases, in post-conflict zones where rehabilitation of IDPs has been largely effective. Critiques of regional policy, political inclusion, international alliances, trade and taxation choices, as well as security sector reform are routine fare in the non-government narrative in Pakistan.

This is where the responsibility rests on Pakistani civil society to take the lead in shaping public opinion, in building bridges across borders and de-mystifying the politics of polarized nationalist identities. Yet we have been unable to outline more than a broad political outcome for Afghanistan, and part of this lack of clarity is linked to the dynamics of transition. Events such as this provide invaluable opportunities to explore common themes for sustained engagement, building institutions that invest in the advantages of geography and plural, heterogeneous, multi-ethnic societies. In an attempt to theorize a strategy for building democratic governance in Afghanistan, we need to avoid the pitfalls of exclusively putting the burden on local solutions. Local structures without obligations to some central core that recognizes universal fundamentals run the risk of degenerating into fiefdoms that privilege safety while surrendering a corpus of rights that many Afghans and Pakistanis have committed their Constitutions to upholding.

The politics of reversing extremism are different from the mechanics of countering terrorism, yet in some cases there is clear overlap, and civil society has the credibility, certainly in Pakistan to some extent, to make these projects into national stabilization agendas for both countries. Building public consensus for peace is a fundamental benchmark for success in transitional societies, and although Pakistan is at a different development trajectory, conflict, ethnic identities and common borders tie our two peoples together in bonds neither history nor human agency can break. Letting an opportunity lapse into a challenge must not be the norm, but the other way round. One of these principal opportunities that has lapsed into a challenge for both countries as they combat militants and insurgents is the porousness of what has become a virtually open border. While no state can completely secure the long and often treacherous territory that spans this border, it is crucial to manage this border together to leverage the gains of proximity and to sanitize the region of terrorists who use this open border to find sanctuary in the tribal badlands of either country. Checkpost bio-metrics and higher patrolling convergences will never eliminate the high-resource terrorist or millenarian bomber. But it will go a long way in making the military gains from costly anti-terror operations durable in the long and medium-term.

The many themes that can unite Pakistan and Afghan people are investments in trade, in local conflict-resolution models, in gender mainstreaming, in reconstruction challenges, in creating democratic institutions, promoting transparent governance, formal financial infrastructure, drug-and-violence free societies, and most importantly, building equities for sustained peace. Of course, this is easier theorized than done. It is productive to look for models that have re-shaped conflict into concord in other regions, but we have enough human resource and intellectual capital in both countries to create our own new strategic model.

Stated goals for both countries eventually position for a self-reliant Afghanistan that can live in peace with its neighbours, where international forces shape their exit in a manner that leaves locals with some capacity to secure vulnerable populations. So far, the US has been unable to

announce a clear way out where it is not caught between the politics of “cut and run” troop drawdowns and a sustained military engagement in Afghanistan. Both policies will imperil the future of Afghanistan as well as Pakistan. It is for us to suggest phased troop reductions in an atmosphere of political reconciliation and regional buy-in. It is building this enabling environment for peace to take hold, for whom to include on what terms, that still poses the gravest challenge for all those invested in non-military solutions that guard against an advance of the religious policing of society. Peace Committees are important building blocks, but they must be inclusive. President Karzai’s new initiatives to create institutional forums are important pointers to local roadmaps, yet they will have to invent some part of the wheel in negotiating with potential claimants to the state’s monopoly on the use of force. They will also face the obstacle of drawing red lines about terms of engagement and settlement, as well as who they negotiate those terms with. It is important to remember the experiences of Pakistan, where reconciliation and reintegration have not offered long-term gains for maintaining state writ when localized peace deals have allowed non-state actors to gain military momentum and opportunities to apportion territory.

Civil society has brought authenticity to pivotal questions in Afghanistan that cannot be ignored in the frontlines of the copious international discourse on stabilizing Afghanistan. The Asia Foundation poll tells us that 83 % the Afghan people want non-military solutions. None of this is possible without a grand political bargain that excludes no ethnic group, safeguards the rights of women, resources and supports an economic development strategy, secures borders, encourages reconcilables without sacrificing rule of law models, and replaces the infrastructure of terrorism with the architecture of equity, better governance and democracy. At the same time, we should learn important lessons from the US experience in Afghanistan. No one can create democracy or government in any box, but if neutral protection is available to locals, they will stand up for retaining investments made by the international community in re-building the social sector, where local capacities can match at least a regional standard. However, while neutrality may lend itself to elegant theorizing at protected forums, in the field, where the level and timbre of state writ is highly variable, the very definition of neutrality often becomes subject to contests and dialogue-attribution. One man’s neutral may well become another woman’s enemy combatant.

Tough decisions will have to be made in both countries, and with the cooperation of neighbours, we can move forward in a series of bilateral CBMs designed locally, with an inclusive menu of engagement momentum-metrics. The one advantage we have working in our favour, and by us I mean civil society, is that despite multiple layers of policy that our states direct at each other, at this moment in history, we can make very obvious common cause. And that is, for once, let us grab the paradox of hope offered by cliché and conflict: that a stable and secure region is in the best interests of all players. Both our governments seek political coalitions and the politics of consensus as the road to stability within our respective borders. Let us reinforce both the borders and the road to a new regional equation for bilateral outreach.

Sherry Rehman is President of Jinnah Institute, Former Federal Minister for Information, and Member of the National Security Committee of Parliament.

ADDRESS
BY
SIMBAL KHAN

The Quest for Peace and Security: the Regional Context

Introduction

All through its long and varied history, Afghanistan due to its unique geo political attributes, has had a profound impact on developments within the countries of South and Central Asian region. The cycle of foreign military interventions and war in Afghanistan, that started almost 30 years ago, has had a transformative impact on the whole region. However, the inherent complexity of regional geopolitics manifests itself most critically in the unique relationship between Afghanistan and its Eastern neighbour, Pakistan. President Karzai, was referring to these undeniable linkages when he stated in March 2010, that "Pakistan is a twin brother....we are conjoined twins, there's no separation."

The 'conjoined' nature of our borders has meant that the current phase of military intervention and war in Afghanistan, which began in 2001, has also been transformative for Pakistan. The Pakistani Government and people are keenly awaiting a resolution to the ten year war which has had a cataclysmic impact on peace and security inside Pakistan. Pakistan has lost more than 35,000 civilians and more than 3000 armed forces personnel. These civilian and military losses have been incurred in an enduring struggle against terrorists and insurgent groups who oppose the Pakistan government's support to the Coalition's war effort in Afghanistan.

However, just as Pakistan has had most to loose from the ongoing war on its Western borders, it clearly stands to gain the most from durable Peace in Afghanistan. Outside Afghanistan itself, there is no other regional or international actor, who has more to gain from the end of war and

conflict in Afghanistan. This conviction guides Pakistan's unequivocal commitment to supporting efforts for Peace and stability in Afghanistan. For this reason we remain intensely focused on understanding how the Coalition strategies unfold over the coming critical years.

For the past few years there is a general acknowledgement by all stakeholders, that the US led war in Afghanistan is not proceeding well. The war effort and reconstruction of Afghanistan's infrastructure has been under resourced and under funded. The distraction provided by the Iraq war had shifted US attention and focus away from stabilizing the war devastated country and providing a peace dividend for the people of Afghanistan. It was against this backdrop that Pakistan welcomed the renewed focus on Afghanistan which came with President Obama's new administration. This renewed focus and the change in policies has presented certain opportunities for peace but also confronts all stakeholders with certain challenges:

The three specific areas of focus in this context are:

- 1. The process of Peace building and reconciliation**
- 2. US/NATO Military strategies and their impact on the peace process**
- 3. The Regional context**

1. The process of Peace building and Reconciliation

In the last 10 months of the year 2010 we have seen a new momentum for peace building in Afghanistan. There is a greater willingness to explore political strategies such as reconciliation and reintegration of the insurgent groups. This momentum took on a more defined structure this summer when we saw the formation of the High Council for Peace which has been tasked to begin a process of negotiation with the Taliban and other allied groups. Pakistan has whole heartedly welcomed the formation of the council and has been consistent in supporting all Afghan led peace initiatives. The recent Asia foundation poll which suggests that 83% of Afghan support efforts to find a negotiated settlement, only reinforce the need for expediting efforts for peace.

There are expectations that once the new parliament is sworn in, more concrete progress will be made by the Council for Peace. There is also hope that once the process gets underway the distinct differentiation between reintegration versus reconciliation will become irrelevant. It is vitally important that this time round the process of political negotiations must be structured to be broad and inclusive of all the Afghan groups which are party to the conflict. Any attempts at excluding certain groups from the peace process at this juncture will only result in missed opportunities and prolong the conflict.

However, the objectives of the new military strategy do not necessarily correspond with the goals set by the High Council for Peace. In fact the US/NATO military tactics are likely to create a new dynamic at the local level by creating and empowering new actors and transforming the old ones. There is a distinct possibility that these security strategies actually make peace building even more difficult in the future.

2. US/NATO Military strategies and their impact on the prospects of Peace

The failure of military led strategies to stabilize and provide security in Afghanistan has led to the application of a confusing array of strategies, most of them inspired by operational tactics used on the Iraq war front. Currently, under the command of Gen. Petraeus, a number of new strategies are being employed, two of which merit special scrutiny.

- In the first instance, we find that the earlier Counterinsurgency goals of “Winning hearts and Minds” and “protecting the population” are being quickly replaced by new metrics of success. These new benchmarks are focused on; ‘the number of mid level Taliban commanders killed and captured’; number of successful Special Forces operations and night raids; quantity and quality of Ammunition used and bombs dropped on Taliban positions etc... Although General Petraeus and McCrystal both have conceded that NATO/ISAF will never be able to kill or capture its way to victory, the logic of the current military strategy still seeks to “degrade” and arrest the momentum of the Taliban before they are brought to the negotiating table.

This strategy is fraught with contradictions and clearly goes against the objectives set by the High Council for Peace. It is likely that the killing of the mid level commanders will bring forward younger fighters more committed to the fight and less inclined to negotiations. There are also concerns that the decapitation of mid level Taliban commanders might lead to the atomization of the insurgency into smaller groups with more radical leadership. Less vertically managed, such groups are more likely to align themselves with trans-national terrorist networks.

- Secondly, the setting up of Militias and now the ALP or Afghan Local Police is also a central tenet of the coalition's strategy against the Taliban. In their latest version a Local Police Force is being set up in various districts to compensate the lack of regular Afghan Police forces in remote rural areas. In the First phase 10,000 such local police is being enlisted to support security in areas which have been cleared by the military operations. The ALP is being set up under the command of the Afghan Ministry of Interior. However earlier such attempts and different versions of the program such as: Afghanistan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP), Afghan Public Protection Program (AP3), Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF), Community Defence Initiative (CDI), and Local Defence Initiatives, were abandoned due to their adverse fall out on local security. In the Asia foundation Poll mentioned earlier, 80% of Afghans regarded local security actors as a security threat and preferred the National Police force. Many International NGOs such as the International Red cross has claimed that the proliferation of local security actors has made it more difficult for them to operate in remote areas as it is difficult to negotiate guarantees of safety from multiple actors. General Petraeus plans to enlist 30,000 such local police. Although all stakeholders realize the need for providing local security, however the provision of security must remain the primary task of the rapidly expanding Afghan National Security Forces, the ANP and the ANA. They have shown remarkable expansion in the past year. There should be more focus on their further development than on empowering parallel security actors. Such a proliferation of armed security actors is likely to add another layer to the on going conflict. By creating new local armed groups and Militias whose power is invested in the status quo, chances of peace and reconciliation among the Afghan government and insurgent groups might be further diminished.

3. The Regional Context

In March 2009 when president Obama presented the draft of a new US policy, he underlined the importance of seeking regional solutions for the stabilization of the situation in Afghanistan. However, the escalation of military operations in Afghanistan is liable to allow for narrowly delimited and strictly moderated levels of Regional engagement only. The space for regional input exists as long as these interventions by regional states resonate with the larger objectives that have been outlined in the new US/NATO strategy for Afghanistan. Moreover, the intensity in military operations continues to create new challenges for regional states.

The pressure on US/NATO to show tangible military success against the Taliban has led to increased kinetic operations within South and Eastern Afghanistan. The trans-border nature of the insurgency means that there is a direct spill over affect of instability and insecurity in Pakistan North Western borders. Pakistan recently responded to this broadening of the war into its territory by temporarily closing the NATO transit route through Torkham. In the North of Afghanistan, the Taliban have retaliated to pressure in the South and East by increasing their activities and attacks on the weakly defended Northern Afghanistan where security has deteriorated recently and has increased the vulnerability of the borders of the Central Asian states and Russia to both militants and drug mafias. China also remains concerned with the continuing security slide in Afghanistan.

The regional countries have long indicated the need to enhance the role of regional countries in the stabilization of Afghanistan. However there are certain fundamental problems which have dogged almost all regional initiatives and reduced their impact.

- One of the main stumbling blocks is the absence of any regional multilateral platforms. This lack of a multilateral platform means that regional countries, including its direct neighbors, engage with Afghanistan either bilaterally or through the trilateral framework, where the regional input is moderated by the primary extra regional actor-US/NATO.

This lack of a multilateral platform has thwarted regional efforts to construct broad understandings regarding the end state in Afghanistan.

- Another factor which has complicated the regional picture has been the Indian role in Afghanistan and its impact on Pakistan's security. The growing Indian influence on the new Afghan Government and mounting evidence of Indian activities on Pakistan's borders had added to Pakistan's scepticism and insecurity. However greater sensitivity to Pakistan's security concerns vis a via India shown by the Afghan government in recent years, have done much to address Pakistan's reservation in this regard. It is important that both India and Pakistan moderate their regional ambitions and competition to assure the long term stabilization of Afghanistan. In the absence of an operational multilateral platform to moderate competing regional interests, Regional inputs in Afghanistan will continue to flow through bilateral channels. With or without a regional platform what we are likely to see are various smaller intersecting initiatives among the regional states to coordinate actions and to moderate their competition and interests. Thee transit trade agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan and the quad lateral initiative which includes Russia, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan are testament to the fact that even in the absence of a broad multilateral forum regional countries are cooperating to enhance ties and build infrastructural links. We are likely to see more such initiatives and generally a higher level of motivation to coordinate positions on Afghanistan among regional countries.

In the end, it is important not to magnify the divergent perspectives of the regional countries. As far as Peace in Afghanistan is concerned there is a general consensus among the neighbouring states, that this is the only Great Game in which all the players can be winners. And we must all play to win.

SUMMING-UP ADDRESS

BY

ROSS MASOOD HUSSAIN

It is now time to bring the proceedings of this Bilateral Conference on “Pakistan – Afghanistan : Towards Mutual Security, Stability and Trade” to a close. As your Rapporteur, it gives me great pleasure to present herewith a summarized version of a report on the deliberations of the Conference.

Several learned papers (10 to be precise) have been presented by a galaxy of academics, research scholars, intellectuals and policy practitioners who have been assembled here through the joint efforts of the organizers – the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung of Germany and the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad. A distinguished audience has been continuously in attendance through the three Working Sessions of this two-day meeting, in addition to the Inaugural and Concluding sessions, and has exhibited a sustained intellectual interest in this topical and vital issue through a series of lively question-answer Open Floor discussions that followed the presentation of papers. Indeed, the subject of the Conference generated so much enthusiasm and debate that the chairmen of Working Sessions were tempted to make learned comments based on their inside knowledge or personal experience. From this point of view, the Conference has been a resounding success, and my heartiest FELICITATIONS ARE DUE TO Dr. Tanvir Ahmad Khan, Chairman and Director General, Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad and to Dr. Babak Khalatbari, Resident Representative for Pakistan and Afghanistan, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, without whose close collaboration this event would not have been possible.

The Inaugural Address by the Chief Guest from Pakistan, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, and the Inaugural Remarks by the Chief Guest from Afghanistan, Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai, Presidential Advisor on Home Security, and the Inaugural Remarks by the Chief Guest from Germany, H.E. Dr. Michael Koch, German Ambassador to Pakistan, set the tone and the tenor of the Conference. The papers presented at the conference revealed a wide variety of perceptions about the Pakistan – Afghanistan relationship. Perceptions are important in the sense that perceptions set goals and reflect the agendas of the future. They need to be related to the realities of the day and not spring from assumptions that are either faulty or wishful. Precisely for this reason, it is deemed essential that perceptions shed their rigidity and remain flexible, as this ensures that any gap between perception and reality would not reach menacing proportions, and could still be handled by political means without the need of coercive diplomacy. I am happy to report that the papers read at this Conference and the comments thereon followed this line of approach : they took stock of options and objectives, discarded the clichés of the past, looked forward to a brighter future, and

helped set and reset (each according to his or her own lights) the priorities of the Pakistan – Afghanistan relationship. Given their unfortunate history of troubled relations, this in itself is no mean achievement.

The theme of the Conference was neatly structured into three sub-themes, namely, Security, Stability and Trade. Each topical and each vital to the Pakistan – Afghanistan relationship. One full Working Session and one Group Session was allotted to each of the three sub-themes, with the latter charged with thus ranged over a wide spectrum of issues. From an assessment of the current security situation and the role of UN/ISAF/NATO to the quest for peace, security and stability in the face of militancy (Al Qaeda, Taliban, other Jihadi groups) that domestic and regional factors in the stabilization process to supervision and guidance of the High Council for Peace ; and from the role of education and civil society as an agent of stability in Pakistan and Afghanistan to the prospects for trade, with special emphasis on the recently concluded Transit Trade Agreement.

The papers and comments thereon also covered a broad spectrum of opinions. Ranging at one extreme to frustration and concerns about how militancy, terrorism, illicit trade in narcotics and arms trafficking had made the Pakistan – Afghanistan border and extremely complicated problem to handle and the cataclysmic impact of the Afghan insurgency on peace and security in Pakistan and the region to the other extreme of loud incantations of pious hopes and intentions of a reinforced bilateral dialogue and enhanced coordination between the two sister states that are customs and traditions and, today, face common enemies and common challenges. In between, the learned participants offered all kinds of recipes for reducing the “trust deficit” and strengthening the fraternal relationship.

The general sense of the Conference could be summed up in the following propositions:

1. That, the military option alone is not the answer for achieving stability and security in Afghanistan.
2. That there is a need “to reach out to the people” through a long-range commitment to developing the capacity for state and nation building and through a process of reconciliation and reintegration.
3. That reconciliation would necessarily involve resort to negotiations with the right people at the right time and with the right approach.
4. That the 16-point agenda of the now established High Council of Peace provides the necessary guidelines for the pursuance of the reconciliation process.
5. That there is a growing realization in the region that Pakistan has a special role to play in the reconciliation process.
6. That economic integration and a sane border management policy (based on ground realities) are the keys to developing a close and cordial relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan.
7. That the concept of “strategic depth” should not be construed as being a license to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan but rather understood simply as Pakistan’s desire for friendly government in Kabul.

8. That both Pakistan and Afghanistan need to ensure that their soil is not used by any power, regional or extra-regional, for destabilization operations in the other.
9. That both Pakistan and Afghanistan should, as a matter of deliberate state policy, enhance their cooperation in all fields, including and in particular bilateral trade, transit trade, services, agriculture, information, industry, energy and water issues, education, health and culture and at least but not the least
10. That both Pakistan and Afghanistan must not just forget but must bury the bitter past and work for a better tomorrow; a stable and prosperous Pakistan is a guarantee for stable and prosperous Afghanistan and vice versa.

How does the Conference see the future of the Pakistan – Afghanistan relationship? It is the general sense of the Conference that, despite several difficulties (and these are formidable), the future is promising. Since the relationship has often oscillated between friendship and hostility, there is an imperative need for the restoration of a balance in this seemingly love-hate relationship. It is the youth in both countries that are best fitted to do this; the youth are the leaders of tomorrow and they have not witnessed the rigors of Soviet occupation nor felt the miseries of living in refugee camps. What is required is a strategic vision with several components. Speaker after speaker listed these, and felt that it is essential for both Pakistan and Afghanistan to put their act together, to muster the political will to forge solidarity (in the face of extraneous influences and pressures to the contrary), and (most importantly) that there is no states whose top leaders and the learned speakers at this Conference have described as “conjoined twins”. Both should refrain from the “blame game” which only sows the seeds of discord in the relationship.

It is the general sense of the Conference that, given political will for realistic bilateralism, security cooperation and economic collaboration, the Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship, like the proverbial phoenix, has the immense distrust and take its rightful place in the world comity of nations. Given the grit, the courage and the determination shall for the greater glory of flag and country. The scholars and policy practitioners assembled here wish them well and God-speed in their nations-building endeavours. It is to the achievement of this laudable and cherished objective of creating amity, goodwill, faith and understanding between the peoples of Pakistan and Afghanistan that this Conference is dedicated.

Thank you.

Pakistan-Afghanistan: The Conjoined Twins

By Ambassador Mohammad Sadiq

While addressing the media in Islamabad on 11 March 2010, President Hamid Karzai very aptly said Pakistan and Afghanistan were conjoined twins. The remarks were not new but they hit the headlines, showing that nature of relations between the two countries continued to baffle many.

Mark Twain, the great American writer, had famously said Johann Sebastian Bach's music was better than it sounded. If Twain were around today, he would have pronounced Pak-Afghan relationship 'better than portrayed.'

Some 52,000 Afghans crossed border with Pakistan everyday in 2009 for business, jobs, medical treatment, education and to visit relatives. This was a significant increase over a year ago when 44,000 Afghans traversed the border daily. More visitors now undertake documented travel between the two countries by obtaining visas or visit permits.

Our Missions in Afghanistan have geared up to issue quarter of a million multiple entry visas to Afghan nationals during 2010. Pakistan issues more visas to Afghans than the rest of the world combined. Pakistan does not charge any visa fee from Afghan passport holders.

Contrary to the craftily promoted perception that Afghans of only one ethnicity are welcomed in Pakistan, one finds people from all over Afghanistan in Pakistani cities. Our consular records show that visas issued to Afghan nationals closely represent the ethnic composition of the population.

Despite occasional ups and downs at certain levels, the overall bilateral relations remained remarkably frequent and cordial. This explains the continued presence of over three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan for last 30 years. At one point, over 5.5 million Afghans were living in Pakistan. 37 percent of the refugees who voluntarily repatriate to Afghanistan are back in Pakistan within weeks.

In last thirty years, Afghans of all ethnicities and of political views had taken refuge in Pakistan: whether it was mass exodus against the Soviet occupation or flight from atrocities of a decade long internecine war. They looked at Pakistan as a place where they could find safety, at least temporarily, for their families.

The world hurriedly left Afghanistan after the Soviet withdrawal. The unfortunate events of 9/11 have reengaged the world in Afghanistan but still little attention is paid to the honourable return of refugees to their homes. The international community's attitude towards Afghan refugees is rather callous. Just one example: they were disenfranchised in the last Presidential elections because the international community claimed that it was short of funds!

Due to Pakistan's longstanding policy on educating Afghan nationals, some 28,000 Afghans had attended Pakistani universities and colleges in last three decades. Today, 6,000 Afghan

students are enrolled in Pakistan's colleges and universities. This represents about 60 percent of all Afghans studying in institutions of higher education abroad. In addition, about half a million Afghan refugee children attend schools in Pakistan .

To facilitate the capacity building efforts of other donors, Pakistan also encourages third party sponsorship of training of Afghan students and officials in its institutions. Under this policy, over five hundred Afghan nationals attended courses in the field of agriculture from a few weeks duration to postgraduate degrees in the Agriculture University of Peshawar alone. Scores were trained in other professions ranging from medicine to civil aviation.

Over the years, Afghan students in Pakistan have mostly been allowed the same opportunities and treatment which are extended to our own nationals. A whole generation of Afghans is thus educated, and now gainfully employed, inside Afghanistan or abroad.

Most successful professionals in today's Afghan society had studied in Pakistan. They dominate the work place not only in government offices, international organizations and NGOs but also as professionals, businessmen, and skilled and semi-skilled workers.

And more proudly, Afghan graduates from Pakistani universities are paid significantly higher salaries than graduates from any other neighbouring country.

Pakistan is further providing 2,000 fully funded graduate and post-graduate scholarships to Afghan students in its institutions of higher learning over the next four years. The placements are being made in ten different fields from medicine to IT to agriculture. The first batch of the students under this programme had already left for Pakistan early this year.

Providing consistent and across the board education and capacity building opportunities is Pakistan's greatest gift to the people of Afghanistan and it is considered so innate that it is hardly mentioned in any discourse in Kabul.

Another important area where Pakistan has been of unlimited help to the people of Afghanistan is healthcare. Afghans are provided free medical care in Pakistan 's government hospitals, a facility available to our own nationals.

Over 90 percent of Afghans who seek medical treatment abroad visit Pakistan . Most of the Afghan patients opt for free treatment at government or philanthropic healthcare facilities. Moneyed Afghan patients are welcomed by many countries but for their less fortunate compatriots only Pakistan has kept its doors opened.

Just a few examples of the effects of this facility: 40 percent of patients in Peshawar 's major government hospitals and 11 percent patients in tertiary hospitals all over Pakhtunkhwa province are Afghans; over 50 percent patients in major government hospitals in Quetta are Afghan nationals; and two Pakistani philanthropic hospitals perform free eye surgeries on about 30,000 Afghans every year.

Since 2001, Pakistan has also played an active, but unpublicised, role in Afghanistan's reconstruction and providing humanitarian assistance. Following are some of the major assistance projects which Pakistan had completed, or about to complete:

- A state of the art Allama Iqbal Faculty at Kabul University is completed.

- As a separate project, the Government of Pakistan is furnishing the Iqbal Faculty building.
- The building of Sir Syed Science Faculty Block is near completion in Nangarhar University, Jalalabad.
- The structure of Liaqat Ali Khan Engineering Faculty in Balkh University, Mazar-e-Sharif is almost complete.
- Rehman Baba High School in Kabul was completed, where 1200 students are currently enrolled.
- As another project on the same campus, hostel for 1000 students is under construction.
- Donated buses for the students of Kabul University .
- A sprawling Jinnah Hospital Complex with ten towers is under construction in Kabul . It will provide the most modern health facility in the country.
- Civil work on Nishter Kidney Hospital in Jalalabad is completed. Afghan doctors, paramedics and technicians to run this facility are also trained in Pakistan .
- A 200 bed Naib Aminullah Khan Logari Hospital is under construction in Logar.
- Donated mobile field hospitals and ambulances to several provinces.
- Construction of Torkham-Jalalabad Road in eastern Afghanistan is completed.
- On request of the Afghan Government, Pakistan has undertaken to convert Torkham-Jalalabad road in a dual carriage highway. About 60 percent work is already completed on this project.
- Built three intra-city roads in Jalalabad.
- Provided earth-moving and road building machinery to various provinces.
- Donated fifty buses for public transportation.
- Provided cash assistance to the Afghan Government.
- Distributed food packages to the needy and school supplies to students in large numbers.

Several other major projects, including two Eye Hospitals , Limb Centre at Badakhshan, two Nuclear Medical Centres in Kabul and Jalalabad, are in the pipeline.

Pakistan has committed US\$330 million for reconstruction and assistance projects in Afghanistan . However, every dollar spent by Pakistan has more effect when it is compared with a dollar spent by other donors. Our foreign assistance accounting system does not add establishment, oversight and inspection costs to the projects. If expenditure in these heads is charged to the projects, our committed amount would easily increase by another 50 percent.

Pakistan was also instrumental in facilitating the take off of several industries in Afghanistan after 2001. For example:

- State-owned National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) was the first foreign bank to operate in Afghanistan after 9/11. Two private Pakistani banks followed NBP to Afghanistan . The emerging banking sector of Afghanistan was heavily depended on Pakistan 's human resource in its initial phase.
- The telecommunication industry of Afghanistan drew Pakistani manpower, or Afghans trained in Pakistan , in its nascent stage.
- State-owned Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) pioneered the opening of Afghanistan to international air traffic. It was the first foreign airline to start operations to Kabul after 9/11. Ariana Afghan Airlines uses Pakistan 's civil aviation training facilities.

Robust trade and economic interaction is another important feature of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations. Pakistan is the largest trading partner of Afghanistan while Afghanistan is Pakistan 's third largest export market.

Pakistan has provided transit trade facility to Afghanistan for decades without any reciprocity. The two countries are presently engaged in negotiating an improved Transit Trade Agreement to further facilitate Afghan transit trade through Pakistan .

To enhance Kabul 's connectivity to the world, Pakistan plans to improve its road links and develop rail connections with Afghanistan.

A sad casualty of foreign occupation and long civil war was the performing art tradition of Afghanistan . Pakistan was instrumental in preserving some of this tradition: many performing artists took refuge, or grew professionally, during their stay in Pakistani cities. Today, a large number of Afghan artists have close links, and wide following, in Pakistan.

Pakistan is pursuing a close, friendly and cooperative relationship with Afghanistan . A peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan is in Pakistan's national interest while war and instability in Afghanistan is detrimental to our prosperity and stability. Contrary hypothesis promoted so assiduously by certain quarters is disingenuous.

The unique relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan - which is rooted in common religion, culture, tradition, history and values - is not just a relationship between two states or governments. It is way beyond this. It is between the two peoples and societies. Pakistan-Afghanistan relationship is unmatched in spirit, level of interaction and variety of interface by relationship between any other two nations.

(The author is Pakistan 's Ambassador to Afghanistan)