

Seminar Report

Pakistan in the Era of Turbulent Diplomacy

The Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI) organized a Seminar on October 2, 2012, on Ambassador (Retd) Dr. Samiullah Koreshi's book entitled "*Pakistan in the Era of Turbulent Diplomacy*." The Seminar was chaired by Ambassador (Retd) Akram Zaki, former Secretary General Ministry of Foreign Affairs with comments by Admiral (Retd) Iftikhar A. Sirohey and a renowned writer, Dr Raja Ikram Azam.

The Chairman ISSI, Ambassador Gul Haneef, welcoming the speakers and the guests said in his welcome remarks that it was a great pleasure to launch a book on a subject of such a great importance to Pakistan.

Transcription of Ambassador Dr. Samiullah Koreshi Speech

Thank you for the privilege of holding this ceremony here. This hall has become a focal point of quality intellectual activities on international affairs. I also thank Ambassador Akram Zaki a distinguished career diplomat, former Secretary General of Foreign Affairs, former Ambassador to Washington and Beijing for presiding over this function. It is also an honor that Admiral Sirohey Former Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee has consented to join the speakers

This is my seventh book, all have been sold out.

This is perhaps the only book which has dealt with the problems for Pakistan and our region in this Era of Turbulence Diplomacy, as ground realities have drastically changed, aimed at redesigning this region. Accordingly we too have to see how what adjustments should be made in our foreign policy. .

This book has three main themes. First, a look back at our foreign policy from 1947 to 1977 and for a brief period later, to refute the totally incorrect accusation that Pakistan has always been subservient to the United States , meaning thereby so what difference does it make if we now become a play object for any superpower. But is this belief true. It seems that we pursued independent foreign policy in all those years, except during the brief interlude of the

Pacifists, because Pakistan's main concern in all those years was to safeguard "national interests first and foremost." A subservient foreign policy would be one in which a nation gives priority to foreign interests over national interests. I want to clarify that Independent foreign policy does not mean bellicose diplomacy. I heard an anchor person on a private TV channel commenting on the need for an Independent foreign policy as "Do you want to go to war with US". If this was true, then the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be named Ministry of Samurais or Karate champions.

Secondly, it deals with the era of turbulent diplomacy and its objectives. The driving force of this new policy is "Islamophobia", also named as "Islamic Terrorism" or just "Islamism", as a global threat. Its implications are redesigning the map of Muslim countries, reorganizing the UN by making India a Permanent Member of UNSC and excluding all and every Muslim country from the new Permanent Members of UNSC, making India the regional superpower and to make Pakistan accept India's supremacy, denying nuclear power to any Muslim country, etc. despite the fact that Pakistan's nuclear program is only its safety belt and not part of an aggressive plan.

Thirdly, matters which account for the strength or weakness of state structure of Pakistan itself, including, technology, ideology of the state, etc. discussed at Chapter VIII and IX.

Islamophobia emerged in the West much before the 9/11 Twin Tower Tragedy. To consider Islam as the new global threat to the West in place of Soviet Union and Communism started with the success of Imam Khomeini's Islamic Revolution against pro-US Shah of Iran and assassination of Sadat (in Egypt) which alarmed western countries and created a scare against rising Islamic assertion. NATO Secretary General said "the map of Europe has changed, what was significantly red on the map has disappeared. But the need for NATO has not in any way diminished because the red seems to have been taken over by the green." Even such soft spoken US Presidents as Nixon said in his book *Seize the Moment*, "Islam will become a new global monolithic enemy of the West ... will pose a major challenge to the West..", and Clinton said "in the long run Islam is the issue.."; Vice President Dan Quayle addressing the Naval Academy in 1990 said "Islamic fundamentalism is the same kind of threat as Nazism and communism" and top notch Arabic scholar as Bernard Lewis propounded scare against Islam in

his *Roots of Muslim Rage* said, “the struggle between the two rival systems Islam and Christianity (has continued) for the last thirteen hundred years”, and Samuel Huntington in his *Clash of Civilizations*, and other prestigious journals as *Economist*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, etc, wrote alarmist articles on “Islamic” civilization. This has revived what the papers have described as new “crusades” in the West. Its manifestation was the (US) war on Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and drone attacks on Pakistan’s tribal areas, and also execution of Saddam and Kaddafi. Now reports are that US is spreading its “fight against Islamic terrorism” to Africa. I do not wish to repeat such statements which inflame the existing relations more.

The recent manifestations of Islamophobia are burning of the Holy Quran by Pastor Terry Jones, printing blasphemous cartoons like in Denmark and the most recent American movie which caused havoc in the Muslim world and where Muslims live even in non-Muslim countries.

It will be recalled that till the early 80s there was no anti-Americanism in the Muslim World. It was perhaps the Gulf War which gave rise to the Jihadists, and Bin Laden’s Al-Qaeda. Of course Jihadists were first set up by the West against the Soviets in Afghanistan.

As an aside, it may be said that there has been some noble exceptions in the West of building bridges of understanding with the Muslims as of Prince Charles, of the British Royalty. In his long lecture on ‘Islam & the West’ at Oxford University on 27 October, 1993, he spoke of the current prejudices against Islam in the West. Another person is the writer Karen Armstrong who uses her pen with great responsibility. Yet the message of such objective personalities had no affect on the wave of Islamophobia.

The era of turbulent diplomacy raised its head with the weakening of the Soviet Union due to the Afghan War. It emboldened US to go to the Gulf War; USSR did not retaliate, but after Soviet’s defeat in Afghanistan, when Gorbachev dismantling the Soviet Union in 1992, started the era of US-NATO military diplomacy for recreation of the map of the Muslim world. The old two super Power security system was beneficial to the Third World, as US was check-mated by the other superpower, USSR. The two superpower system provided security to such regional powers as Pakistan and to the oil rich Middle East. One of the pretexts for operation against Iraq was that Saddam had developed extraordinary weapons of mass destruction. Now it

is known that this claim was not true. The real purpose was to eliminate Saddam who was executed through a so-called trial. In most recent times, it has been the proxy civil war in Libya and execution of Kaddafi.

US plans to restructure hierarchy of powers globally in three tiers: First of course the existing Five Permanent Members of the Security Council, the second tier of contemplated five new permanent members of the UN Security Council – with India among them and the third tier consisting of all other countries including all and every Muslim country, Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia etc. who would be relegated to the bottom. So virtually the ‘have nots’ will be all Muslim countries with no voice in UN Security Council decisions.

US plans are to build India as a regional superpower, and is behind the quick attempts to create Pakistan’s friendly relations with India without settling Kashmir and Indus Waters dispute, and for Pakistan to accept India’s hegemony. Make India a military power from Malacca to Aden; and, make it a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Indications surface in prestigious professional journals for decimation of Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia etc. US wishes and aims to deny Pakistan its nuclear deterrence. This explains why from time to time US comes out with stories of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons likely to fall into the hands of terrorists, who are imagined to take them to US for its destruction, carry them thousands of miles away passing through customs and intelligence checks of many countries en route..

Further, US with its NATO allies wish to restructure Muslim societies according to their specifications. It does not understand that Islam is not just religious rituals but a complete code of conduct, culture and civilization. If there is any similarity between Pakistan’s religiosity in their social system it is similar to Latin American Catholic Christianity, to which the latter are attached, yet this does not pit them against other religious groups. This is why Latin Americans produced leaders like Fidel Castro, Hugo Chavez and even Che Guevara which are respected names among Muslims. Muslims do not want to be confrontationists; they want peaceful co-existence, yet the manner in which the new crusade (was) thrust on them and the manner in which it is breeding hatred which feeds terrorism need to be understood. Drone attacks are part of this arrogance of power.

It may be stated that conquest of Muslims or washing their society of their cultural values – of about 1.5 billion Muslims- is an impossible dream. It will lead to havoc in the regions inhabited by Muslims. Coexistence is the only sensible policy, not the conquest, nor attempting to rebuild Muslim societies. Mao's philosophy "let (a) hundred flowers (blossom)" will be more sensible policy. War on Islamic culture and values will risk global turmoil. Coexistence with, not conquest of Muslims is the sensible course for the West.

Many were happy at the end of the war in Afghanistan on the demise of the Soviet Union in 1992, but now they realize that the two superpower system was beneficial to the Third World as US was check-mated by the other superpower, the USSR and its allies. Little did the Third World realize what a security protection the two superpower system provided.

Will the turbulent diplomacy succeed? It remains to be seen. Pakistan is no small country, it is a regional power. It does not need to depend on aid. After all, quite a few countries took aid, developed and returned the loans and are now classified as Asian tigers. So did Brazil. We too can get rid of aid. It only needs a committed leadership. Pakistan's strategic location and influence over Muslim peoples in the world makes it a pivotal country in the region. It is suggested that this is done in modern days by creating or joining like-minded groupings. Now attempts are being made for new combinations to reduce the threats of the turbulent diplomacy; Hopes are now pinned on the rise of China and its affects on inducting a new equation in our region economic and power balance and Russia adopting a wider out look to balance the threat to the countries of this region. Moreover, Europe and the US are embroiled in economic troubles, China and Russia are trying to seek new friends and if the Middle Eastern and Asian countries conduct their bilateral trade in local currency, the hold of dollar might end. Pakistan should shift its policy in step with time and join this new trend. However, these days no country far less a regional country can stand alone. It is necessary to be associated with a group of like-minded countries. Russia has indicated it wants to start a new look on relations with Pakistan. We should avail of this possibility

Will World Powers use of brute force succeed? Perhaps not. Afghanistan should have taught them a lesson that use of brute force has limitations, (lest) the lesson from Korea and Vietnam Wars has been forgotten.

This study has been made with a great sense of responsibility as mistakes in judging the intentions of major powers can be very dangerous.

Earlier Dr. Ikram Azam, Admiral Iftikhar A. Sirohey and Ambassador Akram Zaki, presented their remarks on Dr. Koreshi's book, "*Pakistan in the Era of Turbulent Diplomacy*."

Dr. Ikram Azam was of the view that Dr. Koreshi's book is incisively insightful and Islamically-Pakistanically futuristic in its manifest and message. It is not just panoramic in its sweep; it is also encyclopaedic in its existential ambience and global outreach. In just nine wide-ranging chapters, it covers the whole wide range of its subject in depth. That, starting from an overview of Pakistan's Foreign policy; 1947-1977 and 1999, to the Gulf War: Towards the Turbulent Era, through Islamophobia Islamists vs Neo-Crusaders: India's bid for Hegemony and Kashmir's Solution: Nuclear Controversy: Revising the UN Charter: Foreign Aid; Purchasing Price? to the concluding chapter; Matters Affecting National Power-comprising Baluchistan-which is of critical concern to Pakistan's immediate future and must be mainstreamed into Pakistani patriotic national politics. Dr Ikram said that Pakistani politics has suffered for long from 'the triple P syndrome: Personalism – Partisanism - Provincialism/Parochialism. And the salvation lies in the fourth P: Pakistani Patriotism and Nationalism. Dr. Ikram further said that the most peaceful answer to the rising tide of Islamophobia: Muslim World bashing and Muslim baiting under the new 20th – 21st century western international imperialism – corporate capitalism –colonialism as hegemonic globalism and globalization, is Islamic geo-sociological regionalism and geopolitical, geo-economic and geostrategic regionalization enlisting the activist support of China, Russia, the global peace movement and the FIMS - the Muslim and non-Muslim Friends of Islam, the Muslim World and Muslims.

Admiral Iftikhar A. Sirohey, in his remarks on Dr. Koreshi's book believed that he speaks with authority and conviction in his book. He briefly covered the jealousy of creation of Pakistan, Ali brother's struggle related to creation of Pakistan, creation of All-India Muslim League etc. He also covered Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan's visit to the US and Pakistan's role in the freedom of other Muslim countries. Admiral Sirohey said that Dr. Koreshi's book has clarified many ill-conceived ideas of the early events. He said the book states that Pakistan played its rightful place in the world till 1977. The disintegration of the USSR and substituting

Islam for Communism as the global threat have been analyzed from the statements and writings of the most respected scholars and leaders like Nixon and Clinton.

Ambassador Akram Zaki in his concluding remarks on Dr. Koreshi's book, said that it's a unique book, analyzing and explaining the foreign policy of Pakistan and current diplomatic challenges faced by this country in the fast changing and turbulent world. He portrayed very briefly the period of crusade as well as the three Perspectives of Muslim Movements. He said that Ambassador Koreshi has luminously explained that Quaid-i-Azam and Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan had laid the foundation of an independent foreign policy. Ambassador Zaki said that Dr. Koreshi also paid tribute to General Ayub Khan who after becoming President, reverted to an independent foreign policy of the Founding Fathers. He developed close relations with China and started economic and political cooperation with the USSR. Ambassador Zaki was of the view that Dr Koreshi in his book has very candidly and openly blamed General Musharruf for ignoring Pakistan's national interests and making Pakistan's foreign policy totally subservient to US wishes with disastrous consequences for the country's security, national cohesion, and economic well-being. He said the book makes a very good analysis of threats, challenges and problems faced by Pakistan and other Muslim nations since the collapse of the USSR. According to Ambassador Zaki, this book is a very valuable contribution to the study of global issues and current challenges faced by Pakistan.

In the end, the Chairman ISSI, Ambassador Hanif Gul, thanked Ambassador Dr. Samiullah Koreshi for his enlightening presentation and other guests for their valuable remarks on the book.

--- *Prepared by*
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