

# Report

## Visit of Japanese Delegation

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**THE INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC STUDIES,  
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A three member delegation from Japan visited the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI) on February 27, 2013, for a discussion on a wide range of regional issues. The participants included Major Tomotaka Sakamoto, Ground Self Defence Force; Mr. Ryotaro Fujita, Directorate for Assessment, Defence Intelligence Headquarters and Mr. Ken Asaka, Japanese Embassy. In his welcome remarks, the Chairman of the Institute, Ambassador (Retd) Gul Haneef said he was very pleased to receive guests from Japan as both the countries enjoyed a cordial and trouble free relationship.

Maj. Sakamoto said that he and his colleagues felt lucky to be visiting ISSI. The purpose of their visit was to know the ground realities in this region particularly with regard to Afghanistan and Pakistan. He said that the government of Japan had been providing financial support to these two countries and therefore, it was important for Japan to keep a close eye on the developments taking place. He said that the international community had announced the exit strategy from Afghanistan. However, foreign intervention by neighbouring countries like Iran, Pakistan, India and Central Asian countries had amplified internal conflict. Afghan situation was a source of concern for the world and the neighbouring countries and it was realised in the "Istanbul Conference" of November 2011.

Regarding situation in Pakistan and Pakistan's relations with the United States, Maj. Sakamoto made a reference to Adm. Mike Mullen's statement to the Congress that he made in 2011 that he knew for sure that ISI helped Haqqani network which attacked the US Embassy. Later Secretary Clinton visited Pakistan and promised to start US-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue. Then came the Salala incident which forced Pakistan to close NATO supply routes. Ultimately, both the countries decided to reconcile and Pakistan allowed NATO convoys to pass through its territory. British Prime Minister Cameron encouraged both Pakistan and Afghanistan to make progress in the peace process between the militants and the Karzai regime. These meetings were attended not only by civilian leaders but also by military leaders.

With regard to Pakistan's relations with India, Maj. Sakamoto was of the view that Pakistan's current problems were the result of some past mistakes. Briefly discussing the problems Pakistan faced at the time of partition, Maj. Sakamoto said that during Soviet intervention, Pakistan supported Mujahedeen from 1979 to 1989, but later they were used against India with the aim to "bleed India". Pakistan also developed nuclear weapons in response to India's arsenal. These developments in the long run proved counterproductive for Pakistan as now Pakistan had to deal with groups like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi.

Maj. Sakamoto also mentioned about the recent visit by US Ambassador to ISSI where he announced that US would not repeat past

mistakes. He concluded his remarks by saying that the international community was committed to this region and the government of Japan would work closely to prevent failure or devastation in this region.

Mr. Ghani Jafar, Editor, ISSI said that most of the Pakistanis were sceptical about future prospects of relations with the US. In past, US had used Pakistan for its own strategic objectives in the region and after achieving those objectives did not hesitate to abandon Pakistan.

Ms. Shamsa Nawaz, Research Fellow, ISSI highlighted the American “Asia Pivot” policy and wondered how would the US deal with this region in general and Pakistan in particular as India was being highlighted as a linchpin in the region. Ms. Amna Khan, Research Fellow, ISSI mentioned border security, Taliban bases in the border region and issue of refugees as some of the problems of Afghanistan with a direct bearing on regional countries.

Mr. Najam Rafique, Director Americas, ISSI said that US would not withdraw its troops from Afghanistan altogether as it was still considering the number of troops to be left behind. US presence in this region would be for a long time to come. He said that there were lots of problems in this region like relationship between India and Pakistan, Iran’s nuclear programme which was of much worry to the US along with growing influence of China. Talking about the ‘US Pivot’ policy, he said the term itself smacked of hubris as it considered that the Asia-Pacific countries

would look towards US for solution to all their problems. He was of the view that the Afghan National Army and the Police were not capable enough to look after the security situation in Afghanistan especially after the withdrawal of the international forces. He also highlighted Pakistan's concern regarding the role of India in Afghanistan.

Air. Cdre (Retd) Ghulam Mujaddid, Senior Research Fellow, ISSI while referring to the "Asia Pivot" policy said that if there was a pivot in this region, it was Pakistan. Adm. Mike Mullen talked about ISI's support to Haqqani network but then perhaps ISI must also be possessing proofs that established CIA's support to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan. US had announced that its forces would leave Afghanistan in 2014. This could not be termed as exit strategy as exit strategy was a plan of action that could be put in place physically. There was a need to rebuild and re stretch the Afghan society which could not be done by the Afghan National Army. He said that Indo-US nuclear deal of 2005 was very unnerving for Pakistan and increased its security concerns manifold. Pakistan expected that given the importance of strategic balance in the region, this policy would be even handed. But this did not happen.

Dr. Ahmad Rashid, Senior Research Fellow, ISSI highlighted the role played by Japan regarding Indo-US nuclear treaty. He said that initially Japan opposed the signing of this treaty as it believed that nuclear weapons should not be possessed or proliferated. When India conducted its first nuclear test in 1964, Japan levelled sanctions against India. On Afghanistan and South

Asia, Dr. Rashid was of the view that Japan's policy towards this region was very much influenced by Japan-US relations. If US were uncomfortable with Pakistan's nuclear programme then Japan also expressed its concerns. Similarly, when the US was busy in war in Afghanistan then Japan also helped Pakistan to play an important role in Afghan war and when US turned its eyes from Afghanistan and levelled number of economic sanctions, Japan also introduced certain conditions with the aid package. When Pakistan conducted its first nuclear test, Japan was the first one to cut off aid assistance to Pakistan. Japan wished both India and Pakistan to come under the umbrella of non-proliferation regimes like NPT and CTBT. Pakistan had made it clear that if India dismantled its nuclear programme then Pakistan would also follow. Since 1960s, Pakistan had also been expressing its desire to create a nuclear weapons free zone in South Asia. India, due to its competition with China never wanted to dismantle its programme. When Indo-US treaty was being signed, Japan condemned it by saying that the country which was not a party to NPT should not sign this kind of treaty with the US. But later, at the IAEA meeting, Japan helped other 46 countries of nuclear supplier group to pass the guideline giving exemption to India. Further, the talks between Japan and India on provision of nuclear power plants were also a source of concern for Pakistan.

Chairman, ISSI informed the Japanese guest regarding the government of Pakistan's decision to grant "most favoured Nation" to India. Mr. SAKAMOTO said that the US should not interfere in the affairs of regional countries. Sovereignty of other countries must be respected. He

also appreciated Pakistan's role in the war against terror and admitted that Japan must follow a straight forward foreign policy for a more stable and prosperous future in this region. With these remarks, meeting came to its end. Chairman ISSI thanked Japanese guest for visiting and interacting with the researchers at ISSI. This, he hoped would go a long way in bringing Pakistan and Japan further closer to each other.

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