



**INSTITUTE OF
STRATEGIC STUDIES**

web: www.issi.org.pk
phone: +92-920-4423, 24
fax: +92-920-4658

Conference Report

Visit of the Delegation of the Communist Party of China (CPC) to ISSI

October 27, 2014

Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik, Senior Research Fellow, ISSI

A six-member delegation from the International Department of the Communist Party of China (ID-CPC) visited the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI) on October 24, 2014.

The delegation consisted the following members:

1. Dr. Luan Jianzhang, Deputy Director General, Research Office, ID-CPC, as head of the delegation
2. Mr. Yuan Ruidong, Director, Asian Bureau, ID-CPC
3. Mr. Zhang Yiji, Deputy Director, Research Office, ID-CPC
4. Mr. Wang Hongtao, Third Secretary, Research Office, ID-CPC
5. Ms. Chen Xuanbo, Intern Secretary, Asian Bureau, ID-CPC
6. Ms. Jin Yan, Interpreter, Asian Bureau, ID-CPC

The purpose of this visit was to exchange views on bilateral issues and regional situation influencing both countries' relations at present. The following topics came under discussion:

1. South Asian situation after American troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan
2. Pakistan's domestic and foreign policy
3. China-Pakistan Friendship
4. Any other issues of mutual concern

While chairing the session, Senior Research Fellow Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik warmly welcomed the delegation and said that it was an honor for him to receive this esteem delegation. He apprised them of the domestic political scenario in Pakistan after the May 2013 elections and the protest movements carried out by political parties against the PML (N) Government. He deplored that the Chinese President Xi Jinping could not visit Pakistan on 15-17 September (2014) because of the sit-in protests staged at Islamabad. He mentioned that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will visit the Peoples' Republic of China in the first week of November (2014) to meet with the Chinese leadership, to attend the Host-Partners Dialogue Session of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) to be held in Beijing, and to sign agreements worth US\$ 34 billion under the China-Pakistan Corridor (CPEC).

Dr Malik further stated that after the elections in Afghanistan, Pakistan is expected to share good neighborly relations with them. He also briefed the delegation about government strategy regarding terrorism. He said that initially negotiations with the Taliban were given a chance from February to June (2014). However, as these negotiations could not produce any tangible results, the military action *Zarb-e-Azb* was launched against terrorists in Waziristan, which has been quite successful in eliminating terrorist sanctuaries and networks. With regards to India, he said that massive violations of the ceasefire line at the Line of Control (LoC) have been perpetrated by them in the recent past, amounting to 206 violations so far. Pakistan raised this issue at the United Nations, which asked both India and Pakistan to negotiate among themselves. However, India turned down Pakistan's offer of negotiations. He reminded that the Kashmir dispute has been a pending humanitarian issue for a long while in the United Nations, which has passed over 16 resolutions to resolve it according to the aspirations of the Kashmiris, in light of their right to self-determination. India has been opposing the right to plebiscite, he told the delegation.

Senior Research Fellow Malik Qasim Mustafa gave a brief introduction of the Institute. Research Fellow Amina Khan apprised the delegation about the latest situation in Afghanistan and the post-US drawdown scenario. She spoke about the current state of affairs in Afghanistan and possible

implications that these could have on Pakistan. She also talked about the new political and security transition taking place in Afghanistan. Insurgency and opium trade are also a great challenge, which has not been stopped by coalition forces, she mentioned. The Pak-Afghan relations are marked by mistrust and continuous blame-games, she pointed out. Contiguous issues need to be addressed, especially cross-border issues. There is an increase in border incursions from Afghanistan. She said that terrorist activities launched inside Afghanistan especially Kunar and Nuristan Provinces is a security challenge for Pakistan, and an impediment to good relations between the two countries. Taliban use these provinces as sanctuaries. Border management of the Durand Line needs to be addressed. Pakistan proposes an Afghan-led peace process. Research Fellow Jumma Khan added that the national unity government in Afghanistan is the result of a deal between the two contenders being pressured by the United States. So, technically, it is not a national unity government and cannot run entirely smoothly, he pointed out. Mustafa added that to fight against the menace of terrorism, there is no way except fighting through a cooperative approach. He feared that terrorist groups might re-group and re-emerge in the future. A joint approach with China on countering terrorism is essential, he suggested.

Talking about Pakistan-China relations, Dr Malik said that the Sino-Pakistan relations are cordial and encapsulate a bond of friendship, ever since they were established some 65 years ago. He highlighted the glorious history of bilateralism between the two countries. With the sudden recognition of the Peoples Republic of China, Pakistan made an end to its relations with the Republic of China – Taiwan/ Formosa. Pakistan was the first Muslim, non-Communist country to accord such a status to the Peoples Republic of China. Pakistan categorically followed the 'One China' policy from the very beginning. Both Pakistan and the Peoples Republic of China made ambassadorial-level exchanges on 21 May 1951. He pointed out that the Cold War did not come in their way, and China was firmly convinced of Pakistan's position in the US-sponsored military pacts – SEATO and CENTO – in the 1950's. When both prime ministers met at Bandung, Indonesia in 1955, Premier Zhou Enlai was fully satisfied that Pakistan did not join these military pacts against China or to contain China. He said that the first diplomatic exchanges in 1956 reset the tone of future relations between the two countries. He also pointed out that in opening China to the West, Pakistan played the role of an honest broker in 1972, when US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger secretly visited Peking in 1972. This was a big breakthrough. He dispelled the misperception that Pakistan-China relations were developed at India's expense. He said that these relations were developed without Cold War considerations and without the question of India as a causal reference point. He told that after the Sino-Pakistani border agreement in 1963, relations were expedited. He informed that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif will visit Beijing to exchange views with the Chinese leadership in the first week of November (2014). He also highlighted the significance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Addressing the audience, Dr Luan Jianzhang greatly admired the remarks on China-Pakistan friendship made by Dr Malik, especially for categorically eliminating the misconception that these good neighbourly ties have come about due to Cold War considerations and the common threat of India. Dr Luan said that this shows how the China-Pakistan relationship has its own logic and is not the result of externalities. This relationship was built because both the peoples and two governments treated each other cordially and equally, he added. He reiterated that Pakistanis are their 'iron brothers', as this friendship emerged stronger from difficulties and challenges, he pointed out. He stated that because of the recent political atmosphere in Pakistan, President Xi Jinping could not visit Pakistan, but hopefully he will visit soon, as China attributes great importance to the neighbours' bilateral relations.

He stated that the two countries have to focus on regional terrorism, and that there is a need for a trilateral approach towards terrorism between China, Afghanistan and Pakistan. He acknowledged

in response to Dr Malik's question that China has duly noted the LoC violations made by India, and has great concern about war between the nuclear adversaries, India and Pakistan. China wishes to bring Pakistan and India on the negotiating table to help resolve their differences. He made it clear that China-India relations will not be improved at the cost of China-Pakistan relations. If China-India relations were improved, it would lead to a further strengthening of China-Pakistan relations and to contribute stability to South Asia, he added. Political maturity in Pakistan will lead to stable institutions, he pointed out.

Dr Luan highlighted the salient features of the 18th plenary session of CPC, as the theme of this session aimed at comprehensively promoting world peace. He said that China and Pakistan should focus on the subject of rule of law in China, and sought opinion from the audience in this matter. Responding to this question, Dr Malik stated that rule of law in China has promoted equal and balanced development across China and has also promoted peoples' participation in the Chinese socialist democracy. He added that Pakistan is confident of this aspect of Chinese governance, and also confident that rule of law would address periphery issues in Hong Kong, Tibet, and Uyghur in western China.

Replying to a question, Dr Luan said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor would increase employment in the border areas, as more Pakistanis would participate in the construction work under various projects. China would thus help improve the skills of the Pakistani labour force. Governments should cooperate on skill-training projects. Without skill improvement of the workers, building of infrastructure would be compromised. He asserted that he would inform his government to improve the skills training of workers for projects worth US \$34billion, and follow regulations for Chinese companies to undertake these projects. The number of Pakistani workers would increase in these projects from year to year. He assured that the Chinese companies will strike a balance between workers from both sides. Adding to this, Dr Malik said that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is mutually beneficial to both Pakistan and China, from Gwadar to Kunjerab, creating opportunities for over 3 billion people in the region. He stated that Pakistan is an integral part of China's policy of building economic corridors in Asia. Rejecting the notion raised in a question that China would benefit more than Pakistan in building the corridor, Dr Luan was of the opinion that the corridor is equally and mutually beneficial for both. The aim of the corridor is to strengthen economic cooperation between the two countries. Moreover, China wishes to improve Pakistan's economic infrastructure and create more local employment opportunities for the latter in a wider perspective, as China will invest. He was of the view that the corridor would benefit Pakistan in the long-run. He requested the audience to inform the Pakistani public about the benefits that this project could reap for them. He said that India has huge suspicion about this project, but China and Pakistan should put in greater effort to move the corridor initiative at a faster pace, in order to deliver more to Pakistan. We must be patient, though, to see the development stemming from these projects step by step, he added. He referred to the Chinese saying, 'Let's first build the nest for the chicken instead of eating eggs'.

Dr Luan concluded with an offer to all ISSI researchers to visit Beijing.

Thanking members of the delegation, Dr Malik concluded the session and presented a shield to Dr Luan as a token from the Institute.