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Report – Book Launch

““India’s Relations with Neighbours: Cooperation or Confrontation?””

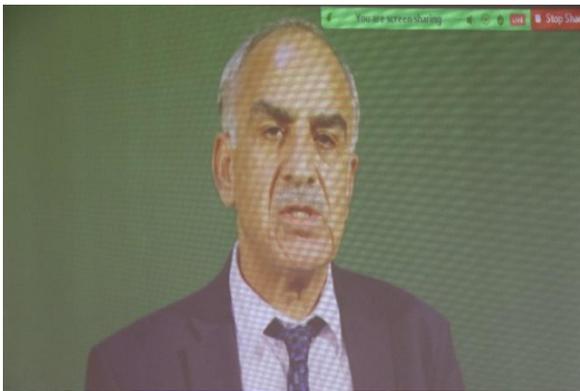
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PICTURES OF THE EVENT





The India Study Centre (ISC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized the launching ceremony of its flagship project, i.e., the Book Launch of “**India’s Relations with Neighbours: Cooperation or Confrontation?**” on August 13, 2021. The Chief Guest of the event was General Zubair Mahmood Hayat, NI(M) (Retd) former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. Other speakers included Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General, ISSI; Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, Vice Chancellor, University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad; Prof. Dr. Engr. Attaullah Shah, Vice Chancellor, Karakorum International University, Gilgit–Baltistan; and Prof. Dr. Masoom Yasinzai, Rector, International Islamic University, Islamabad.

Dr. Saif ur Rehman Malik, Director ISC, in his introductory remarks thanked the respectable Chief Guest General Zubair Mahmood Hyatt, and rest of the worthy speakers. Dr. Malik warmly welcomed all the distinguished guests at the book launch ceremony. Dr. Malik said that the ISC at ISSI, is the first think tank which focuses on India internally as well as externally and relating to all India-Pakistan relations. Dr. Malik argued that India has maintained an antagonistic posture towards the region and beyond, most importantly on the Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). He continued that in the short span of time since the establishment of ISC in February 2020, we have successfully organized a number of events in multiple formats in the stated domain to create awareness about the Hindutva-driven Modi’s policies and its implications. In the short term and long run, projecting national narrative, promotion of scholarships on the specified themes, while filling the literature gap in the existing body of knowledge, is also one of the prime objectives of this institute. He exclaimed that it is surprising to know that let alone Jawahar Lal Nehru University (India) produced over hundreds of PhDs on Pakistan, how many we did? He said that he will leave it as the food for thought for the higher seats of learning.

Dr. Malik said at the launch of today’s book “India’s Relations with Neighbours: Cooperation or Confrontation?” is the humble effort to be in line with the vision of Amb. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhary and reiterated that he firmly believed the chapters contributed by the worthy writers at home and abroad would be useful not only for academic circles but also for policy making institutions and common leaders as well. He expressed that he would like to avail this

opportunity in extending profound gratitude to Amb. Najam-ul-Din Sheikh (former foreign secretary) and former Air Chief Marshal Sohail Aman, NI (M) for the scholarly insight on the flaps of the book on a very short notice. Dr. Malik lauded his team who burnt their midnight oil to make this project a reality. He concluded his remarks with the quote of Sun Tzu in his famous book "The Art of War" that "If your enemy is secure at all points, be prepared for him; if he is in superior strength, evade him; if your opponent is temperamental, seek to irritate him; pretend to be weak, that he may grow arrogant; If he is taking his ease, give him no rest; if his forces are united, separate them; if sovereign and subject are in accord, put division between them; attack him where he is unprepared, appear where you are not expected."

In his welcome remarks **DG ISSI Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhary** paid tribute to the Chief Guest General Zubair Mahmood Hayat, and extended his gratitude to Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, Prof. Dr. Engr. Attaullah Shah, Prof. Dr. Masoom Yasinazi, and Dr. Saif Malik. He proudly stated that it was the third book of the year that the ISSI published. Amb. Chaudhary said that last year we identified our weaknesses and carried out a resolve that we must get into the books and such books will be published from this institute. The four centres started working full one year of research work and then we published the first book on the "The Covid Challenge" in March by our Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA). The second book was published on Pakistan-China relations entitled "Higher than Karakoram" by China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC). It marked to celebrate 70th anniversary of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations. Now, this is the third book. Surprisingly, tomorrow is 14th of August, Independence Day of Pakistan. We will celebrate this day at home, and we have been celebrating these days at the office for the last three years. On the other hand, the situation in Afghanistan has become worse. This book will remain very relevant because India has its iron in Afghan fire, and we know how much it hurts us. The DG ISSI argued that this book is not written with the purpose of one day, one week, one month, or one year, but this has added to the literature material that is available on India's attitude towards its neighbours. Many people said to me, who reads these books these days? This was a myopic view. Books survive as a source of knowledge and information for centuries. We never imagined the youth without books. He said I would like to share a few remarks about why we choose this title. We chose because we noticed that in the past few years the US tilt towards India in the context of its longer objectives to compete with

China. This turned Modi to design its hegemony. As a result, we found that Mr. Modi is seen to be dictating terms to relatively smaller countries of South Asia like Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and even Nepal, which is highly dependent on India. For the last 20 years, India has been propagating that Pakistan supports the terrorist attacks that were held in India. On the other hand, the Dasu dam incident is planned and operated by Indian agents. We should need to know the actual image of India. Soon the real image of India is seen by the whole world. The second important thing is internal dynamics that are driven by Hindutva and Modi's ideology. Now, they are trying to create a Hindu state and no space for minorities. India is only for Hindus according to the ideology of Hindutva. Non-Hindus only live in India when they adopt Hindu values and culture. Now, this kind of philosophy is completely varied with the socio-economic framework that the world is involved in on how we should live in these circumstances. There are Indians who are worried, and they are writing about it because they can see the actual situation of Indian attitudes towards the non-Hindus. India has thrown morals, secularism, pluralism, and even democracy to the dustbin. One question is, why India is behaving in this manner, both internally and externally. I think that is food for thought on which we need to continue our work. We are victims of terrorism post 9/11. All institutes should work on it and bring the truth to light for the whole world.

The event was unique as it featured recorded video messages from the contributing authors. Among those **Prof. Dr. S. Gulden Aymen** from Turkey argued that "I would like to congratulate the authors of this book for their academic contributions, and I am looking forward to reading them all. I would like to congratulate and pay my thanks to Dr. Saif Malik, he is the Director of India Study Center and editor of this book for his enthusiasm, dedication, and hard work." She maintained that "I sincerely hope that this scholarly work will not only contribute to our understanding and illuminate the facts on the ground but also portray to reinspire Indian foreign policy makers to take action in order to change realities for a better and peaceful empire in future." **Prof. Dr. Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi** said that "for a very peaceful atmosphere and a good regional cooperation between the countries, brotherly friendly relations between the countries is the backbone of the region's development. The need of the time is cooperation, more regionalism, more connectivity, more people to people contacts rather than extremism." **Associate Prof. Dr. Inayat Kalim** said that "Southern Asia holds capabilities and attention that

play a crucial role initiating perceptions and misperceptions between India, Pakistan, and China triangle. The power asymmetry between India and Pakistan and growing power imbalance between India and China will continue to reinforce the enhancing security dilemma in the region that justifies Pakistan's partnership with China." **Maj. Gen. (R) Dr. Shahid Hashmat** said that "based on my experience as Pakistani high commissioner in Sri Lanka, I have contributed a chapter titled 'India-Sri Lanka Relations', and if India continues to pursue her hegemonic ambitions, the prospects of peace, stability, and economic progress in South-Asia and Indian Ocean are not very bright."

Dr. Sheikh Gh. Rasool Waleed argued that his chapter highlighted that the "Indian Hindutva nature is based on classical realism of Arthshastra. In this case, small neighbours have only two ways to deal with lethal hegemon." **Mr. Asad Ullah Khan** said that "India in its border engagements with China shows its intent to destabilize the region. However, a timely response is the only option and way forward in this regard." **Mr. Dost Muhammad Barrech** said that "my chapter deals with India's false flag operations. India carries out false flag operations with an aim of externalizing its internal problems, diverting the world's attention from its internal problems, and equating Pakistan with terrorism." **Ms. Misbah Mukhtar** said that "as far as the Indian role in quad is concerned, this is going to represent a new security dilemma in the region for an arms race." **Mr. Muhammad Ali Baig** articulated that "My chapter endorses every nation's rights in the global commons. And it endorses and investigates that why Indian Ocean is not India's Ocean."

Prof. Dr. Masoom Yaseen Zai said that the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad is a prime institution that enlightens the masses with core issues in international relations through its research work. Today in this era of technological revolution where masses are being bombarded with a lot of unverified information through electronic print and social media, the publication of this comprehensive research work by researchers in the ISSI helps people to get the important and correct perspective. He stated that "I must say this book is an excellent endeavour by the ISSI to give us an insight on the present India's relations with its neighbours. India, which is the world's largest democracy, claims itself to be a secular state, meaning it will absorb all religions to protect the rights of all minorities. However, the RSS – staunch Hindu organization and main driving force behind ruling BJP does not believe in a secular India and is trying to make India a

Hindu dominant country with no acceptance for the minorities. He expressed that India has never accepted the state of Pakistan, nor it has given the right of self-determination to the people of Pakistan. He noted that India considers itself as a regional power, therefore dreams of dominating its neighbours, thereby considers Kashmir as its integral part. After dissolving Kashmir's special status, India went against UN's resolutions clearly showing its hegemonic design in the complete region. He added that Indian nexus with USA against CPEC in Pakistan is also working against Pakistan by creating instability. He said that BJP is in no mood of living peacefully with its neighbours and is trying its best to implement its nefarious designs by bringing instability in the region.

Prof. Dr. Kaleem Abbasi paid respects to General Zubair and other guests. He congratulated ISSI on the book launch ceremony. He said that it is an amazing book which gave a deep insight into the understanding of our neighbour India, its ambitions, and past records. The contents of the book contributed by the renowned scholars who are well versed with regional and contemporary issues, provided reliable and accurate information. It is actually a very beautiful collection of well-researched articles regarding strategic studies in the South Asian region. Dr. Abbasi said that a big congratulations goes to the team ISC for completing this book under the dynamic leadership of Amb. Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhary, DG ISSI. Ladies and gentlemen, the title of the book "India's relation with neighbours: cooperation and confrontation" attracts readers attention. This book provides comprehensive knowledge about India's relations with its neighbouring countries ranging from Bangladesh to Afghanistan and from China to Sri Lanka. By compiling this masterpiece based on rigorous scholarly research articles, the ISSI has contributed a lot not only for academia, military officials, and strategists but also for the students of history and IR. He said that the writers have successfully exposed the real face of India with its strategy of deception and confrontation.

He said that as reflected in the book, India uses Afghan land to support terrorist and separatist groups in Pakistan and wage a proxy war against this nation and county. Now its political dynamics particularly in Afghanistan have been changed to a greater extent. America and its allies particularly India, who invested heavily in Afghanistan have been defeated on the battlefield. India is involved in raising proxies against these countries, even Bangladesh is not an exception. Prof. Dr. Moonis writes in his article quoting the home minister of Bangladesh who

informed the country's parliament that at least 284 Bangladeshis were killed by Indian border security forces along the border in the last 10 years. India's research propagator citizenship amends the act and national register of citizens have also had a negative impact on Indo-Bangladesh relations. Dr Moonis has also discovered the major fault lines between India and Bangladesh. First, the sovereignty and identity of Bangladesh and second domestic politics of Bangladesh having contradictions in their perception about India and masses elite level. Another significant contribution of this book is made by Major Gen. Dr. Shahid, who presented an overview of India-Sri Lanka relations and political and commercial interests of India and China. He highlighted Indian connection and influence over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas that sought to establish an independent Tamil state and have fought a long civil war from 1983 to 2009 which resulted in the killing of over 80,000 people of Sri Lanka.

Prof. Dr. Abbasi said that the Chapter No. 6 of the book also fascinated me a lot. In this chapter Dr Sheikh Rasool Waleed drew a comparison of the Indian hegemonic approach and Modi's expansion in Kashmir. The comparison of Indian and Chinese approach to treat the neighbouring countries has also been drawn in a very concise and organized manner. He said that Dr. Saif ur Rehman Malik in his article has also exposed the RSS ideology based on violence and expansionism that posed serious dangers to the peace of the region. Other research articles of this book were also relevant to the latest developments in the region, particularly India-China conflict in Ladakh. Also, the Chapter No. 12 on Indian Maritime Narrative is worth reading and helpful for policymaking and academia. Prof. Dr. Abbasi said that it is indeed a great initiative of the India Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic studies Islamabad, to compile and publish this book and it will help in understanding regional dynamics in the context of Indian expansionism and its relationship with neighbouring countries. He declared India as the so-called champion of democracy, particularly under the Narendra Modi regime. India has committed a gross violation of human rights in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Prof. Dr. Abbasi said that PM Modi is a lifetime member of the BJP and the RSS. The political philosophy of RSS is based on the principle of Hindutva that means the supremacy of religious ethnic Hindu state and implementation of uncompromising Hindu principles. It is oppressive and extremist. It is the ideology of imposing the supremacy of Hindus over the followers of millions of people of other religions such as Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and Sikhs. Today in India,

around 200 million Muslims, 30 million Christians, and other minorities are treated as second-class citizens. He said that on August 5, 2019, India deprived people of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir of their special right to education, employment, acquisition of property, and permanent residence which had been protected under Article 35A. He said that the mass killings of Kashmiri people have not stopped, they have only intensified. He argued that the Indian government has once again been exposed by pressurizing certain international players coming to Muzaffarabad to participate in the Kashmir Premier League and the Indian media has launched venomous propaganda against it. International cricketers have been invited to play matches under the Kashmir premier league with the slogan of “play with freedom” but India is pressurizing the players to start away from the sports event in Muzaffarabad. This shows that India cannot even tolerate games like cricket organized in the region. In closing, I recommend to all book lovers to have this book as a valuable addition to their libraries. This book will significantly help in understanding strategic studies, to bring peace in the region by resolving outstanding issues in Jammu and Kashmir without which peace in the region cannot be guaranteed.

Prof. Dr. Engr. Attaullah Shah said that it is really an honour for me to have my comments on the book launch ceremony of the book edited and compiled by Dr. Saif Malik on the topic “India's Relations with Neighbours: Cooperation or Confrontation?” I believe that the Indian philosophy which is more dominated by the RSS and the Hindutva concept in the last two decades has been highly hegemonic and confrontationist. This book has taken a really holistic view of the present scenario. Unfortunately, India has been claiming to be one of the largest democracies in the world, but in fact it has been one of the worst kind of hegemonic and bureaucratic kind of the government. If we look just at the history of the last three decades, India has been actively involved in the confrontations with the neighbours like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and even China and Sri Lanka. We remember that in 1962 a war was fought between India and China and very recently the Ladakh event in which once again China and India had a conflict. It is very important that all the nations of this region must be very responsible, and they should believe in peaceful coexistence. The book, which is written by highly experienced authors, teachers, and researchers in the international relations field, has given a very broader view that now India has been entangled with the different nations and the different kinds of

confrontation. Now, it is very unfortunate that India being one of the largest countries in the world has become the proponent of the very fundamentalist belief of the Hindutva ideology. It believes in Greater India, and they don't have any space for the rest of the world. This book, I think, has revealed the real face of India which is based on confrontation with the neighbouring countries. In Pakistan, if we look just four to five decades even from the start India has been highly interfering in the internal affairs of Pakistan and they imposed three to four wars on us. In the recent episode of Balakot, we could also see that they crossed the territories of Pakistan, and we are appreciating the response of the Pakistan military and Air force and they have downed their air crafts.

This book, I think, which is edited by Dr. Malik and written by very experienced scholars of international relations, has given the holistic view of all these confrontations. At the end of the day, we come to know that India has the philosophy of expansionism, confrontation, and conflicts. This has been revealed by details in this book. So, I believe that the book has rightly described that India has to respect other nations and it has to live with cooperation and collaboration with other countries. At the same time, the book has also focused on how the foreign policies of the Indian neighbouring countries are required to be reframed in view of the very important developments taking place in India. In recent years, we could see the Kashmir occupation and changing the disputed sides of Kashmir is really challenging. The very bad treatment of the minorities is another example of how India has been very cruel to its own citizens. Now this gives a very clear and alarming situation to the world that India is only creating a Hindu-based society in which there is no room for minorities. So, I believe this book has given a very broader view of this conflicting attitude of India and for all the other nations who are neighbouring to India. It is very important that they should reframe their foreign policies and they should respond to this very hegemonic and cruel attitude of India. Now, I think the book is really a deep effort and insight into this alarming issue which can ultimately lead to destabilizing the region's peace and integrity. The sovereignty of all the nations in the region is very important, if India is not behaving then we have to respond in the same way, the rest of the countries of the region have to formulate their policies which can persuade India to alter its policies.

He said that I appreciate the hard work of the editor Dr. Malik and all the authors who have been very instrumental to reveal and reflect a very negative face of India which in fact it is. What we would like to see is the outcome of this book in the policymaking circles, they should understand these dynamics and try to bring India to the normal thinking and their expansionist and confrontationist policies must be disembarked, it may be stopped further.

The **Chief Guest of the event General Zubair Mahmood Hayat** said that I am thankful to ISSI for inviting me to this book launch ceremony. I am also delighted because this book is launched by the India Study Centre and focuses on India's relations. I am a member of the board of Governors of the National Defence University, and I realized that we have no specific place or institute where we understand our biggest neighbour in totality. We need to develop the ability to generate our narrative rather than responding to the narrative of others. This was the deficiency of institutions, but not only institutions, may I say it's a deficiency of the state. I had personally spoken to a couple of prime ministers and at least one president about the need to have such a centre. Therefore, I am delighted that there is now a centre called India Study Centre. This is an excellent start of ISC by launching the book with the title **"India's Relations with Neighbours: Cooperation or Confrontation?"** India is a state that is only 75 years old. Before that you never had India, you had British India, Hindustan under the Great Mughals, and Delhi Sultanate. From the very beginning, this new state called India is not peaceful itself.

Yesterday, I was watching a cricket match between India and England. The Indian supporters were carrying placards which read Bharat Army. So, this card identifies the spectator as a military man. We are dealing with a new mutation of Bharat which is driven by Hindutva and since we have been an immediate neighbour of India for 74 years, we have a deep understanding and a deep feeling of what it means to be living with them. I spare you the history, but what we have seen in 74 years and as you can see in this book as well the four different domains of the Indian state. (1) It is a revisionist state. You see in the political map of India what happened to Kashmir, Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Sikkim, etc, just after the Independence Act of 1947. It is evident that India has been eating up territory around its peripheries and I had shown this map to the chiefs of defence staff in the western world. I asked them if they had lived with such a neighbour that has not only eaten up 7 territories that I had just spoken about and claims more territory including inside Pakistan and more specifically the Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-

Baltistan, but also in other parts including in Myanmar and China. (2) It is a hegemonic state. I don't believe that India will either be bound with confrontation and cooperation. This is also the same dilemma between China and the US whether to cooperate and confront. (3) India is a state that sponsors terrorism. Before 1971, who created the camps for the Mukti Bahini from 1965 to 1971? Who trained the Mukti Buhini? Who gave them arms? So, this India's face of terrorism has been hidden because of the great narrative that they had been able to craft. (4) It is a supporter of hate. Now, why is the India Study Centre and these books are vital is because we need to understand, as I said, not only the character of the state which ultimately evolved but also need to understand the nature of the state. Let me give you two things. (1) Vande-Mataram is still an official song of the Indian state. Vande-Mataram was considered an unofficial anthem of the Indian state from 1947 to 1950. (2) India is the only nation in the world that has national symbols of Reptile and King Cobra and many more.

In this way, you can see from this book how India is trying to impose a new normal. India wants to project itself as a net security provider of the region. Every single aspect that will come in the way of cooperation to see its death. India is also very aggressive with its immediate neighbours, for example Bhutan enjoys no sovereignty and cannot form independent foreign policy. They never import a single pistol without clearance from India. In Myanmar, India claims boundaries of more than 400 kilometres. In the context of Nepal, I would say that Nepal is not a land-lock country, but India locked. In Sri Lanka, they have played games and also supported the insurgency. India also imposed pressure on Sri Lanka to not to purchase JF-17 *Thunder* fighter aircrafts from Pakistan. In the case of Pakistan, India constructed fences for more than thousands of kilometres. Two jargons which are used in this book; first, surgical strike which is an Indian concept and a coined term. The second is treating Afghanistan as a neighbour of India. Afghanistan is not a neighbour of India, but Pakistan is. But India is trying to develop its influence in Afghanistan.

Finally, General Zubair concluded with some suggestions that we need to write books and share these books with all over the world. He said that I had visited 46 countries and I could only see three books which were written by Pakistani scholars. So, we need to write hundreds or thousands of books which should be sent to all over the world.

The event was attended by policy makers, journalists, academicians, and people from all walks of life. It was concluded with the firm determination of making South Asia a better place to live and promoting peace and stability in the region and beyond.