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Report – Webinar

“Emerging Global Military Trends and National Security: Challenges and Options”

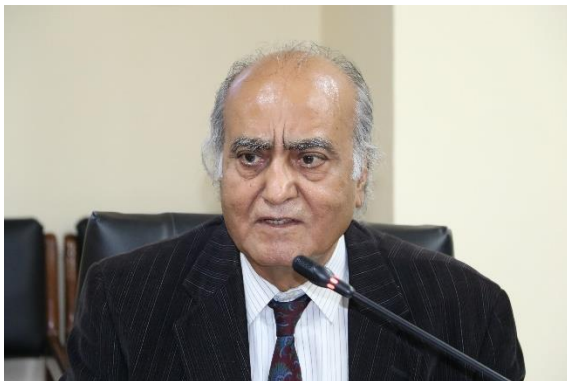
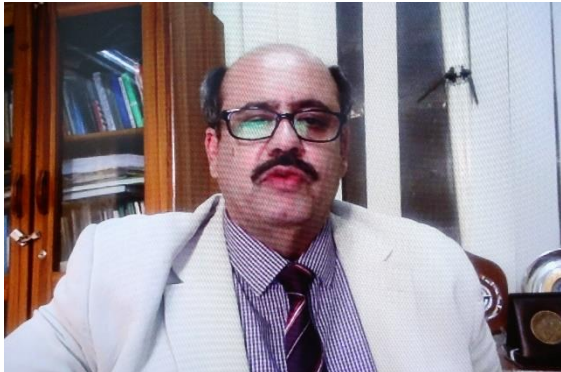
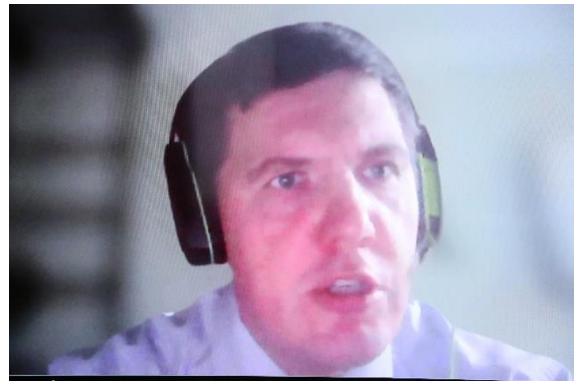
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Pictures of the Event



The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI) organised a webinar on “**Emerging Global Military Trends and National Security: Challenges and Options**” on **October 21, 2021**. Eminent speakers included Dr Asma Shakir Khawaja, HOD, Department of Strategic Studies, National Defence University (NDU), Dr Ivan V Danilin, Associate Professor, Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) Faaiz Amir, former Vice Chancellor Air University and Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Professor SPIR, Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU).

Introduction by Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC-ISSI

Malik Qasim Mustafa in his remarks said that a careful review of military spending trends reflects that all the major powers are involved in strategic competition and investing in their weapons and military modernisation programmes. Major states are engaged in a new arms race and spending more and more on modern and lethal weapons technologies. For example, citing the growing strategic competition with Russia and China, the US has made large scale arms purchases, spent on its nuclear weapons modernisation and military-related research and development programmes. Russia, as the fourth largest defence spender, has spent US\$61.7 billion on its military. Likewise, India, the third-largest military spender in the world wanted to modernise its armed forces and has concluded major defence deals with Russia, the US and Israel. Some major powers have already withdrawn from key international arms control treaties and norms and have shifted to warfighting doctrines and postures.

Welcome Remarks by Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry said that four main trends are apparent. There are incentives for an arms race, a multipolarity of powers where every power is guided by unilateralism and other powers react. The second trend is pre-emption versus deterrence. States build capabilities for pre-emption that has increased potential for conflict. Also, realpolitik has trumped all ethics. Last but not least, there is greater reliance on emerging technologies especially Artificial Intelligence. This will increase the gap between the haves and have-nots. Overall, he concluded that it looks like a grim picture.

Remarks by Dr Asma Shakir Khawaja

Dr Asma Shakir Khawaja shared her views on “Emerging Military Trends and Reconceptualisation of National Security.” She emphasised on non-traditional military trends in security. She said that the trend of information warfare which is increasingly sophisticated creates a fog of war. The second trend is the use of cyber technology as a tool of warfare that has the potential to shut down offensive and defensive systems and command and control systems. There has been an emphasis on work on nuclear proliferation and traditional threats. The national community is not working on cyber-attacks and how to detect and prevent them. She said that there is an issue of accountability because they cannot be attributed. It is, thus, problematic.

She talked about the proliferation of hypersonic missiles that have changed deterrence equations. It has made push button strategies more popular and increased the chances of escalation. She also said that emerging military trends are increasingly dangerous. The lack of transparency associated with some emerging military trends creates a fog of war. Countries like Pakistan have to match the pace of technology.

National security is not only about being able to persuade the adversary by force. Coercive methods of warfare have been replaced by soft methods. The military is only one aspect to ensure security. Non-state actors also pose threats now. The rapid development of technology has further complicated things. National security conceptualisation is multidimensional now – military and non-military, traditional and non-traditional.

Remarks by Dr Ivan V Danilin

Dr Ivan V Danilin shared his views on “Weaponisation of Commercial High-tech Trade: A New Realm of Geopolitical Conflicts.” He said that digital technology presently is 4-5 per cent of global GDP. The civilian high-tech sector has the ability to affect the security of a state. It is important to know that the globalisation of the digital sector and structure is a matter of regional and global security and features prominently in the policies of states. High technology markets conflicts are now real. The US sanctioned 5G technology developed by China. There are trade and economic wars among major powers. There is rising securitisation of technology. China and the US digital markets are a zero-sum game. There is a competition where the adversary state is

prevented from gaining dominance. He said that we cannot afford to get into the digital arms race.

Presentation by Air Vice Marshal (Retd.) Faaiz Amir

Air Vice-Marshal (Retd.) Faaiz Amir shared his views on “Emerging Military Trends and Future of Warfare.” He said that interstate and intrastate conflicts show a decline. However, the space between war and peace is not empty. He further said that the lines between foreign and domestic, national and international wars have been blurred. Disruptive technologies are having an impact on warfare. Future warfare will use speed, information warfare and Artificial Intelligence. Thus, the decision-making process in warfare will require greater speed. Kinetics engagements will be less and will depend on the capacity of a state, prevalence of democracy, ethnicity and economic growth as well as military capacity. Modern warfare is more on the lines of hybrid warfare.

Remarks by Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal

Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal expressed his views on “Military Modernisation and National Security: Options for Pakistan.” He said that military security is the ability of a nation to defend itself. National security today is affected by technological advancements like hypersonic missiles, biotechnology, development in the cyber domain and elements like a revolution in military affairs. He also said that military modernisation is about more than hardware, it is about organisational reforms, command and control and doctrines. Pakistan armed forces have been going through up-gradation. Pakistan has to keep in mind the adversary’s capabilities. India has been working on integrated offensive and defensive systems. India had invested in offensive and defensive missile capability as well as hypersonic missiles with the help of the US and Israel.

Talking about the options for Pakistan, he said that there is a need to modernise and be competent in air, land, sea, space, cyberspace and Artificial Intelligence. Pakistan needs to reduce its military forces pragmatically and intelligently. Pakistan needs to invest in technologies like hypersonic missiles, cruise and ballistic missiles, cybersecurity, IA, area-denial capabilities and space capabilities. He emphasised the need to work with China and attract new partners like Russia to keep pace with the Indian modernisation.

Questions and Answers

Q: The notion and the ability to destroy adversary through dominance in weaponry has been debunked. One of the greatest powers like the US was defeated by the Taliban. So the human element cannot be disregarded. It is difficult to keep pace with technological developments.

A: The US did dissipate the Taliban in 2002; they could have walked away with the victory. Thus, the human element in warfare is important. However, technological innovation is also focused on the human element. Civilisation is being changed as a result of technology.

Q: How to control and manage cyber technology and cyber threats that have the potential to impact peace and security?

A: There is a lot of uncertainty in the cyber domain. Pakistan needs to work on a national cyber policy and develop a comprehensive framework to assess threats in the cyber domain and how to counter them.

Q: It has been rightly highlighted the ongoing global tech competition between China and the US. Keeping in view the recent growing tech cooperation among Quad Countries (Japan, India, the US and Australia), where do you see India in this landscape? What is the Russian position on this growing Indian Tech engagement with the US?

A: There is the race to dominate in emerging technologies. Russia and China have somewhat cooperated in the domain of emerging technologies. However, there is an unclear understanding of the steps to do this.

Q: India is acquiring knowledge and expertise as well as technologies in emerging tech via Israel, Russia US etc. Which states can Pakistan engage to opt for acquiring progress in emerging technologies? What reforms are needed to promote STEM education, which will play a major role in building the human resources of the country?

A: Pakistan is far behind in the space domain. Pakistan needs to work on it. It is the need of the hour. India has a missile defence system. Pakistan does not have a missile defence system. What is important is the credibility of threat and threat of credible first use. Pakistan needs not to be in

an arms race with India since India is in the race with China. Thus, an arms race is not viable for Pakistan.

Q: What would be the impact of hypersonic weapons on nuclear deterrence and conduct of future warfare? Would they bring stability or just promote yet more arms races.

A: Hypersonic missiles will reduce time and space for response and decision making. So deterrence stability is at stake. Technological development is at supersonic speed. In India and Pakistan theatre, hypersonic missiles are not needed but India is still pursuing them. They are ultimately destabilising.

Q: It is evident from what Dr Jaspal said that Indian nuclear modernisation and its persistent quest to acquire escalation dominance strategy against Pakistan is in contrast to India's declaratory nuclear policies. Pakistan never gave credence to Indian NFU policy. However, what else can Pakistan do to make sure that the strategic balance is not hampered?

A: Pakistan cannot indulge in an arms race with India. Pakistan needs to maintain credible deterrence. In addition, Pakistan has to match the pace of technology to maintain its deterrence posture against India.

Concluding Remarks by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG ISSI

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood concluded by saying that new technologies are causing concerns in the civil and military domain. It also has an impact on issues of deterrence and conduct of warfare. As Russian President, Vladimir Putin, said, "Whoever dominated in IA would control the world." These technologies have changed the character of the battlefield. On one hand, these technologies have benefits but on the other hand, they are also disruptive. They are leading to arms races. He emphasised the need to develop regulations to control emerging new technologies through international cooperation.