



ROYAL DANISH DEFENCE COLLEGE

NDU-RDDC Joint Seminar

EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION

22 - 23 October 2019



Post Seminar Report

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Statements, facts and opinions given in the report are solely of the speakers and do not necessarily the official policy of the Government of Pakistan or NDU.



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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS	7
INAUGURAL SESSION	11
Introductory Remarks by Commodore Faiq Hussain, SI (M), Sponsor Director, ISSRA, NDU	12
Opening Remarks by Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg, Commandant RDDC, Denmark	14
Expert Remarks by Dr Michael Rubin, The American Enterprise Institute, USA	16
Opening Address by Major General Asif Ali, HI (M), Acting President NDU	18
SESSION-1: Role of Military to Military Cooperation in Promoting Regional Security	21
Appraisal from Afghanistan by Ambassador Dr Omar Zakhilwal, (Retired)	22
Appraisal from Pakistan by Lieutenant General Hidayat-ur-Rehman, HI (M), (Retired)	23
Appraisal from Iran by Ambassador Alireza Sheikh Attar, (Retired)	25
Expert Remarks by Professor Amin Saikal, Australian National University (ANU)	26
Interactive session	28

SESSION-2: Identifying Mechanisms for Reducing Civilian Casualties through Military Cooperation	31
Appraisal from Afghanistan by Mr Azizullah Omar	32
Appraisal from Pakistan by Lieutenant General Shaheen Mazhar Mahmood, HI (M)	34
Appraisal from Iran by Ambassador Ali Raza Bikdeli, (Retired)	36
Expert Remarks by Major Karsten Marrup, RDDC, Denmark	38
Interactive Session	39
SESSION-3: Exploring Opportunities for Establishing Exchange Programmes & Cooperation among Security Institutions in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran	43
Appraisal from Afghanistan by Mr Fazal Rabi Wardak	44
Appraisal from Pakistan by Brigadier Saeed Ullah	46
Appraisal from Iran by Mr Mohsen Roohisefat	48
Expert Remarks by Senior Colonel Ding Hao, China	49
Interactive Session	51
CLOSING SESSION	55
Address by His Excellency Rolf Holmboe, Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan	56
Closing Remarks by Mr Azizullah Omar, Afghan Head of Delegation	58
Closing Remarks by Ambassador Ali Reza Sheikh Attar, (Retired), Iranian Representative	59
Address by Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg, Commandant RDDC, Denmark	60
Address by the Chief Guest, Dr Shireen M. Mazari, Federal Minister for Human Rights, Pakistan	61
Vote of Thanks by Major General Asif Ali, HI (M), Acting President NDU	64
Annexure - I	67
Annexure - II	75
PICTURE GALLERY	79

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the security situation in Afghanistan remained uncertain and challenging, for Afghanistan itself, for neighbouring countries and the region in general. While the symptoms of this uncertainty are most clear in Afghanistan, its causes, effects and dynamics are not exclusively internal to Afghanistan but have trans-regional causes and consequences, principal among them the great trust deficit among countries. It seems to be an agreed-upon fact that the security challenges in Afghanistan cannot be solved unilaterally. It has been stated and re-stated on several occasions that an intention to initiate security cooperation exists in the region but means of exploiting this intention require a focus on specific steps in the near future. One of the key steps is to focus on military cooperation, as militaries play a vital role in developing an enabling environment for bringing in sustainable security solutions between regions. This underlines the importance of a strong working relationship between military professionals from Afghanistan-Pakistan and Afghanistan-Iran primarily and also among other key stakeholders in order to promote regional stability.

Indeed, this process of integration and cooperation solidify the understanding of mutual obligation and common interests in contemporary times. Thus, different regional organizations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), European Union (EU), North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), South Asian Association for Regional

Cooperation (SAARC) are few examples representing 'Community of States' in different regions of the world. It is indeed apt to say that regional cooperation may lead to transnational globalization encapsulating broader regional cooperation in multiple domains of mutual interest. In this context, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran make up a significant triangle, which shares quite a number of interests, ideals and cultural values. However, this triangle is greatly affected by the changing geopolitical & geo-economic interests marked by a shift of power centres from the West to the East with Afghanistan at the centre bearing the brunt. Of course, its neighbouring countries; Pakistan and Iran; have directly or indirectly been facing the spill over effects of instability there for quite some time now. This proximity by means of geography and similar historical and cultural ties compels these countries to forge ways aiming at developing peace and stability. There could be a number of ways to establish cooperation in economic, security and military domains in order to identify common problems and threats and evolving pertinent strategies to counter them subsequently. Within this, promoting security cooperation among Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran is integral and beneficial in dealing with broader security related challenges of the region that will help for developing a tangible working relationship within military professionals of these countries.

With this spirit, the fourth NDU-RDDC joint international seminar was held jointly by Institute for Strategic Studies Research and Analysis (ISSRA) and the Royal Danish

Defence College (RDDC) from 22-23 October 2019 at Pakistan's National Defence University (NDU) in Islamabad.

The title for this year's seminar was "Exploring Opportunities for Regional Security Cooperation" that sought to identify areas of security cooperation between the three neighbouring countries of the region. Hence, this year's academic activity focused on evolving a strong working relationship among military professionals from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran alongside facilitator i.e. Denmark (RDDC) enabling this process for promotion of regional peace and security.

This international seminar was attended by speakers and delegates from around the world including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Denmark, Australia, China and the United States of America. The platform for the seminar was embedded in the desire to provide an academic discourse on enhancing regional security/military cooperation and thereby promoting a strong working relationship among military professionals of the regional countries, which could be a potential avenue for promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan in particular and the region in general. To contribute with ideas on countering present challenges and identifying mechanisms for progress on regional security, scholars, diplomats, academics and practitioners attended the seminar and contributed with their insights on security, military cooperation and peace building measures.

The fourth joint NDU-RDDC seminar is yet another celebrated result of the shared vision of the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Fund (PSF), Danish Ministry of Defence,

Defence Command Denmark and the Pakistani Joint Staff Headquarters to engage in constructive activities for the benefit of this region. The PSF (Peace and Stabilization Fund), located at the Danish Ministry of Defence and the Joint Danish Defence Command, provided the financial resources for the conference and therefore RDDC and NDU would like to extend a vote of thanks to the PSF.

In addition, appreciation and commendation to the Danish Embassies in Kabul and Islamabad for their assistance in coordinating and providing advice related to bringing delegations from Afghanistan, Denmark and other countries to the seminar. Also, NDU and RDDC would like to thank the renowned intellectuals, academicians, scholars, policy makers, officials, diplomats, defence personnel and researchers who attended and contributed to the seminar. The untiring efforts made by the dedicated and committed team at the Internal Studies Branch (ISSRA) including Major Nadeem Murtaza, RF Abdul Rauf and Mr David Vestenskov, Director for the Centre for Stabilisation at RDDC, Denmark deserve appreciation for making this event exquisitely a success.

Grounded on the findings from the seminar, it was amply highlighted that all participating sides have pertinent experiences in dealing with security problems and each of them can learn a lot from others by working together towards regional reconciliation. From this perspective, dialogue and cooperation in multiple areas, especially within educational institutions of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran both military as well as civilian, offer opportunities for building a

foundation for more comprehensive security cooperation. For these perspectives to be productive, facilitation by Denmark is praiseworthy and this momentum must be continued unhindered as such collaborative projects are an important tool for developing solutions of improved security and peace within the region. Indeed, advancing peace and security by establishing forums for interaction among security institutions at tactical, operational and strategic level would lead to greater cooperation within regional countries. For that end, setting up centres of excellence in mutually beneficial areas for better military interaction on common security challenges will also help in boosting response mechanisms. In this context, it is important to emphasise that the seminar was held in October 2019, before the peace deal between the United States and the Afghan Taliban was signed in February 2020. Hence, there are several perspectives and developments in Afghanistan and the region that this

report does not include, which undoubtedly have an effect on the prospect for regional cooperation and the opportunities for promoting peace and stability. Nevertheless, the report presents several innovative perspectives that are highly relevant and potentially still can be used to increase military cooperation between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.

This post seminar report at hand comprises abridged summaries of various speeches and presentations given during the seminar. The chapters in the report have been organized in accordance with the seminar program. This academic activity has duly succeeded in bringing forth immediate common steps needed for promoting regional security cooperation while acknowledging the obstacles in this way, thus, emphasizing upon the need for greater political attention of the decision makers of the respective countries.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The seminar sought to improve military to military cooperation between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, as military institutions play a vital role in developing an enabling environment for bringing in sustainable security solutions to Afghanistan and the region. The overall objective for the three thematic sessions was to identify and develop specific, constructive and sustainable ideas on how to address common problems and to enhance mutual understanding that can promote a strong working relationship between the regional military institutions. Hence, the following three thematic topics were chosen for the seminar; 1) Role of Military to Military Cooperation in Promoting Regional Security, 2) Identifying Mechanisms for Reducing Civilian Casualties through Military Cooperation, and 3) Exploring Opportunities for Establishing Exchange Programmes and Cooperation among Security Institutions in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. The key findings and recommendations made during the three sessions of the seminar are summarized below.

Role of Military to Military Cooperation in Promoting Regional Security

The role of military to military cooperation and how it can contribute to improved regional security was the revolving topic of the seminar in general. It was highlighted that regional military cooperation should be based on joint training exercises, operations, information sharing teams and exchange programmes to train and specialize military personnel to counter common regional security

challenges. As these initiatives would depend on a good working relationship between the military institutions, the first step should be to focus on reducing mistrust by focusing areas of common grounds as this would lay the ground stones for the mechanisms of sound cooperation. In this context, the session emphasised that border management for eradicating drug trafficking, human trafficking, smuggling and unregulated movement across the border areas pose a common ground for all regional countries. Hence, the regional military institutions should seek to improve effective border surveillance initiatives by creating facilitation centres on the borders with intelligence-sharing system for coordinated operations as well as joint training programmes for the border security guards.

To enable the military institutions to benefit from each other's military expertise in relation to these aspects, will require a simultaneous effort on promoting the awareness about cultural, lingual and historical linkages shared by the countries. Thus, each regional country should allocate resources to teach about the regional commonalities as this would promote the understanding of the other party's way of thinking and reason behind actions in tense situations. If these aspects are promoted, it can make up the key components for improving the knowledge about the different dimensions of how regional security dynamics are perceived and how it can be applied positively in military to military cooperation. It was concluded that changing the region's narrative from competition to cooperation via people-to-

people contact along with exchange programmes for officers will pave the way for a strong, integrated and prosperous region with enduring peace and progress.

Identifying Mechanisms for Reducing Civilian Casualties through Military Cooperation

Moving toward more specific initiatives, it was emphasized that identifying ways and means to reduce civilian casualties in kinetic operations including air offensives would be in the interest of all. It was highlighted that reducing civilian casualties during offensive airstrikes and engaging targets accurately requires a systematic chain of action and command. The regional countries may consider implementing the Mission and Target Approval Authority (MTAA) protocol, which is used by the Royal Danish Air Force in kinetic operations. This protocol ensures that military action is utilized with target precision and protection of civilians because all airstrikes have to follow the decisions made by MTAA's red card holder, legal advisor and intelligence specialist after they have evaluated various aspects of the operational dynamics.

Pakistan's strategy of defeating the menace of terrorism from the country could be of great importance for pertinent lessons to be emulated by the other regional countries. Clear, Hold, Build and Transfer are the major phases of this strategy that followed a "Drain the Swamp" approach aimed at limiting civilian casualties to the minimum in operations while conducting offensives against terrorists in populated areas. The strategy comprising 'Dialogue, Deterrence and Development' approach via

effectively engaging targets through dialogue alongside pre-empting through deterrence was adopted. After defeating the terrorists, emphasis was laid on setting up mechanisms and projects for development and infrastructure besides looking after those who had to leave their homes.

These approaches only can be implemented through military cooperation and interaction between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, where trilateral working groups in this domain should be established in order to enable the soldiers to take advantage of the expertise and experience for limiting collateral damage during security operations. If such initiatives are implemented, it would incur desired results for an improved security environment, where the working groups could be used to establish a 'Centre of Excellence' in each of the regional countries.

Exploring Opportunities for Establishing Exchange Programmes and Cooperation among Security Institutions in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran

Evolving and proposing tangible ways for promoting exchange programmes and establishing cooperative frameworks of collaboration among the regional security institutions are a clear prerequisite for promoting security cooperation. A number of military cooperation agreements has already been enlisted between the military institutions, such as the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS) and establishment of a hotline between the Iranian and Pakistani army to secure the common border area from terrorism and drug smuggling. To generate more regional military coop-

eration initiatives entails evolving trilateral collective paths and solutions, which should be built upon the conceptual framework of existing collaboration initiatives.

The regional countries should also establish trilateral committees to tackle interrelated problems, such as terrorism, narcotics, immigration and cybercrime, as these factors could lay ground stones for a solid structure for trilateral engagements, where sharing solutions instead of engaging in blame game and positive power-sum game instead of a zero-sum game can take place.

For military exchange programmes to be implemented, security cooperation in order to promote and support the resolution of the Afghan security issues will have far-reaching positive effects on the regional security. Initiating training programmes for military officers of the three countries via

regional dialogue forums will enhance a regional security matrix, where Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran will be able to send their military officers to different regional and international forums to discuss strategic, operational and tactical understanding vis-a-vis security issues.

The recommendations and areas of common ground for promoting military to military cooperation between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran were identified during the three sessions of the seminar.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Session 1: Role of Military to Military Cooperation in Promoting Regional Security

Recommendations:

- Evolve a mechanism for joint training exercises for border security forces within Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.
- Advance a trilateral intelligence & information sharing mechanism for coordinated efforts in combination with each of the countries' law enforcement agencies for terrorism-related threats, border smuggling and human trafficking.
- Establish a joint platform of military academies to train officers from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran to establish an effective cooperative mechanism for timely & pertinent communication at operational, tactical and strategic levels.
- Exchange programs for military officers in all three regional countries should be initiated for professional courses or workshops for mid-tier military officers and intelligence officers to improve the working relationship within the related quarters.

Session 2: Identifying Mechanisms for Reducing Civilian Casualties through Military Cooperation

Recommendations:

- Improve people-to-people contacts, civil society interaction and academic transaction in order to reduce mistrust and to establish sustainable working relationships.
- Engage and utilise the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS) for addressing off and on emerging security issues.
- Introduce the Mission and Target Approval Authority (MTAA) approach to all regional air force units to reduce civilian casualties during air operations.
- Establish 'Regional Centres of Excellence' in areas of common operational military fields as this would be a radical step for regional peace and cooperation.

Session 3: Exploring Opportunities for Establishing Exchange Programmes and Cooperation among Security Institutions in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran

Recommendations:

- Establish trilateral committees to tackle the four inter-related problems of terrorism, illegal border movement, smuggling and cybercrime by means of trilateral working groups & joint think tanks for exchanging views, military experiences, and training for command & staff courses.
- Establish military exchange programmes in order to promote military interaction within Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran to address common security challenges.
- Enhanced engagement within the three countries must lead to improving joint training facilities and military exercises.
- Establish forums like the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) to address mistrust and provide practical avenues for cooperation & engagement on bilateral as well as trilateral levels within the socio-economic domains.



DAY 1

Inaugural Session

INAUGURAL SESSION



Introductory Remarks by Commodore Faig Hussain, SI (M), Sponsor Director, ISSRA, NDU

The two-day international seminar was inaugurated with the recitation from the Holy Quran followed by introductory remarks of Sponsor Director, IS Branch, Commodore Faig Hussain, SI (M), who while thanking the guest speakers and delegates from around the world also chronicled the history of NDU-RDDC seminars that could be cited as success stories among regional cooperation initiatives.

At the outset the Sponsor Director warmly welcomed the foreign and local dignitaries who had travelled from different countries to participate in the seminar. While talking about regional cooperation being at the heart of the event, the Commodore regarded the NDU-RDDC joint ventures as a benchmark in regional cooperation and collaboration endeavours since 2014. It was highlighted that the



platform is embedded in the desire to facilitate and augment regional cooperation & integration among Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and our sincere friends from the Royal Danish Defence College, who had genuinely been promoting this cause all these years as honest facilitators for these processes. This continuation of seminars & conferences

signifies the importance of interaction among variety of mindsets representing host of views that eventually led to converging on mutually agreed upon mechanisms for regional cooperation and peace.

He shared with the audience a brief history of holding joint seminars, which can be cited as success stories that led to sharing experiences and deliberations on ideas with an academic approach on counter insurgency & counter terrorism, regional stability & peace building alongside promoting military exchange programs; thus providing the foundation on which a strong and highly constructive relationship has been established among Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Denmark.

The NDU-RDDC journey of joint seminars dates back to 2014, which was originally an endeavour initiated by Denmark as being part of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) fighting War on Terror in Afghanistan. Instability in Afghanistan, which was not only detrimental to the country itself but for the neighbouring countries as well, steered the regional and international forces to adapt and develop proactive strategies to counter the threat of terrorism and militancy through mutual cooperation and collaboration. With this disposition in sight, the first joint seminar titled “Regional Stability and lessons learned in Regional Peace Building” was held in 2014 with a two-fold focus: Firstly, what to be done to maintain peace and stability in Afghanistan after NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) troops' drawdown in 2014, and secondly how to build Afghanistan vis-a vis its economy, governance and adm-

inistration.

“Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Counterterrorism in Pakistan: Sharing Experiences” was the second joint seminar held in 2015. This seminar focused on multiple security challenges in Afghanistan with the objective of recommending means to counter insurgents and terrorists in a manner that supports the cogent strategy of creating peace through military means; simultaneously building it through close cooperation and coordination between military and civilian components in Afghanistan while keeping Pakistan's successful counterterrorism experience as a guideline. This conference culminated into a variety of initiatives recommended for sustainable peace building and trust building between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In 2017, “Carving out a Vision for a Brighter Tomorrow” the third joint seminar was held and studded with eminent speakers, practitioners and delegates from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Denmark. The event served as an academic platform on cultivating ground for security cooperation among regional countries while highlighting that close security/military cooperation would also promote better identification of common threats and development of operative strategies to counter these threats with a mutually beneficial approach.

The director similarly reiterated that the fourth seminar titled “Exploring Opportunities for Regional Security Cooperation” would serve as an extension to the theme of regional security cooperation & collaboration in the changing milieu of the region. Promoting security cooperation

among Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran is absolutely integral and beneficial in dealing with broader security-related challenges especially with a focus on reducing civilian casualties that will help in exploring ways and means for tangible working relationship within military professionals of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Denmark. Hence, this initiative is certainly imperative for sustainable regional security contributing to peace in the region and beyond.

Opening Remarks by Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg, Commandant RDDC, Denmark

The Commandant stated that Denmark's engagement in Afghanistan since 2002 has been consistent, however, changed several times initially from countering international terrorism to creating & facilitating initiatives for promoting security through sustainable solutions within the region by assisting dialogue between the regional countries. Stability in Afghanistan requires many things including support, goodwill and mutually-agreed cooperation from and within neighbouring countries.

The Commandant started his speech by welcoming the guests to the seminar at Pakistan's National Defence University and extended a warm welcome to all on behalf of RDDC. He expressed his desire for the presentations and discussions in the coming days to be enlightening and productive. While reiterating the resolve of RDDC for regional peace and cooperation especially in Afghanistan, the commandant said that Denmark had been engaged in Afghanistan; and the surrounding region since 2002 - initially with the objective of countering international terrorism. Since then, the



Danish engagement has changed several times. RDDC's approach through this engagement is to play its humble role in promoting security through sustainable solutions within the region by facilitating dialogue between the regional countries.

For several years, the RDDC has used research and cooperation as a platform for stabilization. By creating and strengthening institutional cooperation - for example between the military academies, universities, relevant ministries and think tanks in the region - it is believed that RDDC can create a dialogue on military and security related issues. Such dialogue can be the initial stepping-stone for improvement of bilateral ties and may provide an opportunity for cooperation between multiple states. In this manner, RDDC has developed a very strong relationship with Pakistan's NDU and this seminar will hopefully fortify RDDC's cooperation with NDU and at the same time improve the relationship with Afghan and Iranian institutions as well.

Bringing together different stakeholders is in all terms the starting point to identify

obstacles to stability where common solutions can be found and developed upon. This can only be advanced if the intellectual infrastructure needed for progress is given priority – and priority implies willingness to meet and more importantly willingness to meet in a constructive setting with a constructive mindset. Keeping this statement of purpose in mind, the present seminar's objective aptly focuses on the conflict in Afghanistan. Stability in Afghanistan requires many things, including support, goodwill and mutually-agreed cooperation from and within neighbouring countries. Afghanistan's key neighbours Pakistan and Iran, play an essential role in the development of Afghanistan. Both countries have legitimate interests in their own security amidst the shifting geopolitical trends in the region and both countries will benefit from a stable Afghanistan.

For this seminar to become a success requires honest perspectives, and it is therefore highly important that everybody communicate their ideas and aspirations for the region. Not communicating means uncertainty and uncertainty is the main fuel of continued conflict. For this to happen, the interests and red lines of both Afghanistan and Pakistan are to be taken into consideration in order to make any future initiative sustainable. At the same time, ensuring that neither Iran nor Pakistan will have their interest on security contested is vital in a future process of stabilization in Afghanistan and the region.

The Commandant expressed his firm conviction that the seminar would provide new insights and understandings – even on sensitive topics – as this is the foundation for

progress. This does not imply that one need to reach consensus on any future course of action, however, process must be initiated at the required forum. Responsibility of all the delegates, participants and speakers is to share oppositional views, address possible solutions and pass them on to each side's decision-making levels. For this to happen, respectful and patient interaction is the first step and developing personal relations across borders is the second step. Listening to diversified viewpoints and inputs on how the regional countries and stakeholders can support a process of stabilization in Afghanistan would be enlightening. Although, it is tempting to look for an efficient military strategy for many security-related problems, moving beyond this option is a need of the hour as history teaches us that neither the military nor civilian side can solve security challenges by themselves. There has to be strong civil-military relations for which conferences and interactions would serve tremendously. It is everyone's responsibility to identify paths of progression and though this role might seem very small compared to the overwhelming security challenges confronted by the region, it must not prevent us from trying. If we stop trying, it will only push possible solutions even farther away.

Therefore, the key is to find paths that can be followed in order to achieve an objective of promoting regional peace and reconciliation. Hence, the RDDC's main objective focuses on using research and scholarship as a possible area of establishing common ground in order to generate initiatives on stability. This cannot be achieved without scholars or without military officers and today's platform is a good mix of these key ingredients. Today's

interaction would not lead to immediate solutions to problems faced by the region but would keep the momentum going for interaction and discussions subsequently leading to solutions.

Each of us present today, needs to contribute in his/her own manner and own capacity to make the event a success. Lending a sympathetic and patient ear to diverging viewpoints is at the heart of the Danish stabilization programmes. Hence, seeking facilitation to solutions as being silent alongside being vocal as well is very important. For example it is said in Denmark; "Speech is Silver, Silence is Golden." Keeping this proverb in view, one may say that today's seminar places all of us at the silver state. However, it could lead us to the golden level once we lend our ears to listen to each other's viewpoints thereby turning the silver to gold by sharing & evolving solutions for regional stability and security.

Expert Remarks by Dr Michael Allan Rubin, The American Enterprise Institute, USA

Dr Michael Rubin presented a potential scenario of Afghanistan post US troop withdrawal and what implications it would have for Pakistan and other neighbouring countries. While stating US engagement in Afghanistan for 18 years and given Taliban's past obstinacy, the US departure may create a vacuum for miscreants for intensification of terrorist activities against both Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Dr Michael Rubin opined that dialogue is always positive, but often when dialogue occurs, it occurs among like-minded officials, or it is narrowly tailored to



sometimes avoid the most controversial topics. The advantage of this seminar is that it addresses those issues directly with a congregation of people that he was very grateful to be part of, because, Americans do not often have opportunity to talk with such a diverse group of people.

When it comes to Afghanistan, inflection points arise, with most of the discussion occurring around security related issues. The history of Afghanistan illustrate that the country needs a great deal of external assistance. How is that assistance going to be provided? History also suggests that making pledges is far easier than following them through. Putting it bluntly, the United States is not simply withdrawing from Afghanistan. The relationship between the United States and Pakistan has always been troubled by the fact that when the United States needs Afghanistan, it wants to be the best friend of Pakistan. But when it feels that it no longer needs Pakistan, it is the first to leave the scene. So realistically, the partnerships that the United States has had with the region carry the potential to change not only the bilateral relations but

multilateral relations as well.

South Asia is one of the least economically integrated regions on Earth. This region was partitioned because there was a belief that people of this region could not live together. But then the hostilities also suggested that perhaps they could not live apart either. On the other hand, it has been decades since the world is watching such upheavals as it witnesses now in the Middle East. How would regional interests be balanced out with the interests of the United States? How would the US tensions with Iran impact the situation in Afghanistan? If Afghanistan is to succeed, it has to be able to have a developed economy. But its economic pursuits demand many things including protectionism inside the country along with neutralizing negative developments that impact its ability to develop economy to integrate it in a way that can provide a path other than hostility inside the country.

There is optimism regarding Afghan dialogue. Grounds for an interactive dialogue lay perhaps in Beijing, in Doha or elsewhere. Those efforts could be valuable, but the real task would be breaking through barriers and have dialogues between the major Afghan stakeholders inside Afghanistan itself.

Of course, the United States and Iran are not friends. They have been adversaries diplomatically for 40 years and that is not going to change anytime soon. But there could always be some degree of reconciliation. The United States has many power rivalries with China, Russia, Venezuela, Cuba and so forth. But the interesting thing about the Iran-US rivalry is

that despite the political, diplomatic and military competition, at least on the United States' side and among many on the Iranian side, the personal animosity does not exist, which normally characterizes other conflicts. And that is an important differentiation.

There are other issues that needed to be focused on from a security standpoint in Afghanistan. Namely: what does the rise of the Islamic State inside Afghanistan mean for the internal development? What security implications will Islamic State have not only for Afghanistan, but for Pakistan and Iran, or for any other neighbouring countries? In the active debate within Afghanistan, whether Afghanistan should be an Islamic Emirate or an Islamic Republic? There have been side proposals too which are voiced whether the Taliban are to be granted power over certain provinces, mostly in the east of Afghanistan. What would this indicate to other groups operating in Afghanistan? That could be analogous to the situation in Lebanon, where besides the national government, Hezbollah enjoys de facto state power. How would that work in Afghanistan and what would be its regional implications?

One of the major questions is, what has the Taliban learned after 18 years of fight? How far have they changed? Many people have different assessments to these questions. When the Taliban first rose to power in 1994, they were projecting themselves as a nationalist movement, but in 1995 they went into a headlock and held obstinate positions. With this history in mind, predictions about Taliban with regards to respecting regional and sectarian differences are quite difficult to make.

One cannot forecast whether the war in Afghanistan is beginning to end or is it merely the end of a beginning. History records illustrate that in the 1950s & 1960s, the cross-border movement was actually from Afghanistan into Pakistan, when activists were conducting operations across the border in a sense that undermined Pakistan's sovereignty. Could one expect a resurgence of that? Could one see, for example, terrorism from Afghanistan to become a policy against targets in Pakistan as the United States removes itself from Afghanistan? These pertinent questions need to be deliberated.

Opening Address by Major General Asif Ali, HI (M), Acting President NDU

The A/President of NDU commended NDU and RDDC for commencing dialogue on regional cooperation alongside drawing attention to challenges and subsequently deliberating on opportunities with a focus on regional security cooperation. This platform provides an opportunity for constructive discussions on regional peace and security.

The president expressed his gladness being amongst the gathering of esteemed scholars and practitioners both from home and abroad who had gathered for a cause of regional cooperation and collaboration. He presumed that the two-day long activity was without exception an intellectually rewarding exercise. This intellectual discourse being the fourth joint endeavour speaks high for the purpose of regional security and cooperation.

This NDU-RDDC joint initiative has in fact marked a timely and well-focused opportunity to segregate myths from realities with a three-fold focus: Efforts for



regional cooperation, drawing attention to challenges and deliberating on opportunities with a focus on regional security cooperation as is evident from the title of this year's seminar. This indeed brings us towards a simultaneous effort of rediscovering our strengths and weaknesses that come in the way. This initiative to bring viewpoints from Afghanistan, Denmark, Iran and Pakistan under one roof is indeed commendable.

This year's joint seminar truly underscores regional security cooperation in the region which is the critical core comprising Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran and security of which has regional and extra-regional geostrategic implications. Advancing relations within this core via a trilateral framework is the need of the hour. Furthermore, the changing global geostrategic and geo-economic trends, the shifting of power centres from the West to the East and the emerging security challenges necessitate devising strategies to counter such challenges that may hinder the road to peace and prosperity for the people of this region.

In this connection, with each having a unique set of dealing with security related challenges - Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Denmark - as a key NATO partner, can form and evolve guidelines for mutually beneficial security challenges. Hence, this conference is the right platform letting regional countries to join hands to address complex security challenges by forging regional security cooperation in a spirit of mutually beneficial cooperation and collaboration.

The world today is subject to intense 'Power Politics' and 'Shift of Power Axis'. In this game of 'survival of the fittest', our region remains in the limelight, owing to its geo-strategic and geo-political significance. In addition, the reminiscences of turbulent past and long-standing conflicts still haunt the region. It has been the quest by all of us to look beyond past and evolve a bright future for the people of the region. Forging consensus for this shared dream equally amounts to analyse regional dynamics with regard to the region's standing in the 'Asian Dawn' and position as a connector and conduit for its periphery. Hence, the engine for change rests in the notion of identifying arenas that bind us together and bring prosperity as a whole.

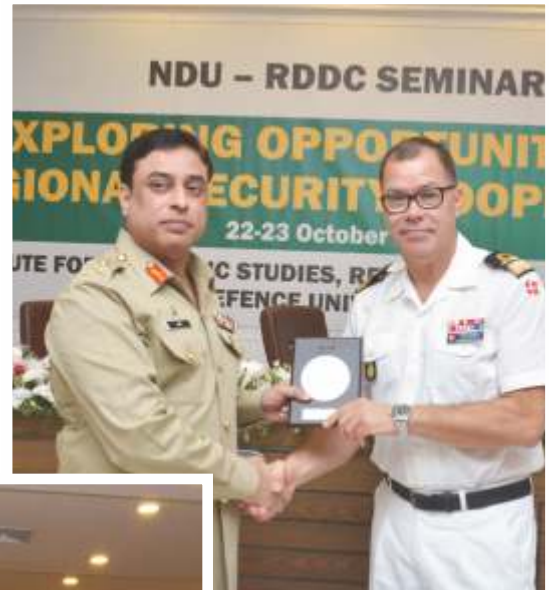
It is vital to analyse and synergize our strengths and collaborate against challenges. Key to this concept would be our efforts generated back home and making each other learn from our experiences. This will also be productive once the difficulties are highlighted, along with strategies leading our way to success.

Pakistan, in this scenario, is bestowed with a unique position. It is a 'Virtual Breathing Space' for the region. Its concerns

for peace and security in the region are well-placed and pronounced. It is Pakistan's full conviction that peace and stability is a prerequisite for sustained regional economic development. Similarly, Pakistan like any other responsible state remains concerned about all those designs aimed at sabotaging efforts of regional connectivity, particularly the CPEC, which has become a corner stone for extensive economic development & connectivity of the region and beyond.

It is Pakistan's firm belief that resolve for forging regional security cooperation necessitates synergized steps towards economic development as well. This is possible by generating efforts towards trans-regional connectivity and shunning doorways of mistrust between the regional countries. Hence, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran can act together as key drivers who could change the direction of present state of affairs towards a path of initiatives that can promote regional reconciliation; further leading way to establish well-structured security dialogue mechanisms that would further boost existing regional cooperation frameworks.

The president expressed his anxiousness to hearing thought provoking and practicable solutions from eminent scholars and military practitioners from home and abroad shedding light on ways and means helpful in propelling regional security cooperation. He wished all the guests an enjoyable and memorable stay in Islamabad, especially to the guests who had come from different corners of the world to participate at the event.





SESSION **1**

ROLE OF MILITARY TO MILITARY COOPERATION IN PROMOTING REGIONAL SECURITY



Introductory Remarks

The moderator of session 1, Lieutenant General Naeem Khalid Lodhi, HI (M), (Retired) in his initial remarks opined that military to military cooperation has impact on security environment. The military to military cooperation has many facets that impact directly or indirectly on the security matrix of the region and beyond. This constitutes military exercises, training courses and exchange programmes between two partner states. These military relations are dependent on the overall bilateral relations between the two states that demarcate the path of defence cooperation in the long run.

Appraisal from Afghanistan by Ambassador Dr Omar Zakhilwal, (Retired)

Ambassador Dr Omar Zakhilwal spoke about the existing mistrust between Afghanistan and Pakistan and underlined the need to address this issue first before any mutually beneficial mechanisms would be able to work. The

prevailing mistrust has existed for almost two-decades and no other arrangement except serious bilateral talks focusing on bilaterally beneficial solutions could pave the way to wipe out this mistrust. The positive note is that good will exists between the two sides and taking it to the next level through bilateral dialogue while respecting each other's sovereignty for mutually beneficial cooperation and peace is the necessary step for regional peace and stability.

For regional cooperation two things are important; one is establishing bilateral cooperation between states and second is addressing the mistrust. If two countries have mistrust between them, their bilateral ties cannot be effective and hence the whole idea of achieving regional cooperation becomes redundant. Building trust between two countries is a difficult task. In case of Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is evident that both countries share mistrust towards each other. Unless Pakistan and Afghanistan sort out their differences, regional cooperation does not seem to be happening.

There have been multiple forums to



address this issue, especially on the trilateral level. There have been trilateral settings within Pakistan-Afghanistan-Iran, China-Pakistan-Afghanistan, Turkey-Pakistan-Afghanistan etc. However, the truth is that both countries need to address their reservations directly and for that purpose a favourable environment should be created. Pakistan and Afghanistan are not just geographically linked but also culturally, historically and socially associated with each other. The mistrust between both countries has negative implications on both Afghanistan and Pakistan equally. As a result of the prevailing tensions both countries are missing opportunities for mutual growth and prosperity. Peace and stability in Afghanistan is in Pakistan's interest and there is realization on both sides to resolve their lingering issues. However, the bilateral ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan have not seen any major improvements so far.

Genuine cooperation and engagement between Pakistan and Afghanistan are keys to regional peace and security. Unfortunately, there has been lack of sustained

genuine dialogue and interaction between the two countries and in some instances, mismanagement of the relationship. Given the deep mistrust between two states on several outstanding issues, does the current engagement bring better results? The reality is little success in this regard so far. Addressing misperceptions is the first step towards improved bilateral relations before any trilateral dialogues or forums can be effective. However, a favourable environment has to be created first.

The solutions should come from within Afghanistan and Pakistan to improve the management of bilateral ties. There is also a requirement of broadening the discussions by making all stakeholders a part of it. There should be reassurances that both countries desire an amicable relationship in line with their national interest. Accordingly, both countries should be able to assure respect of each other's sovereignty. It should be Afghanistan's decision to design the policies towards other countries. Bilateral ties should be based on mutual respect - not out of favour or sympathy - to support peace and stability. Neither Afghanistan nor Pakistan should allow any third country to use their respective territories to be used against peace and stability of other. The relationship between Afghanistan and Pakistan is special and the bond should be strengthened by eliminating the mistrust. This will be a step forward for regional peace and cooperation.

Appraisal from Pakistan by Lieutenant General Hidayat-ur-Rehman, HI (M), (Retired)

Lieutenant General Hidayat-ur-Rehman, HI (M), (Retired) talked about border management as an area that needs to be taken into



consideration to eradicate drug trafficking, smuggling and un-regulated movement of population. Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran can evolve effective border surveillance mechanisms characterized by facilitation centres with common intelligence system for coordinated operations. Military cooperation is initiated by proposing measures for joint training of border security guards within the three neighbouring countries. Shared perspective of welfare of people, constructive approaches in security issues and unwavering political resolve for regional peace and cooperation could create a new positive chapter in South Asian history.

Regionalism is increasingly gaining currency in the contemporary world. The regional dimension implies that the problems such as civil war and terrorism etc. can be distinctly regional but once managed successfully can be transformed into regional public good eventually contributing to international public good. Therefore, all sorts of threats to regional public security can be effectively countered if a regional mechanism is in place. In this context, military to military cooperation in a regional framework can be an asset. It can

open multiple avenues for shared dividends. However, the larger international context invariably defines parameters for the regional cooperation.

The global strategic landscape is undergoing a profound transformation and our region presents a picture of tumult and is littered with drivers of war and conflicts. Pakistan's complex geo-political location and external environment do not allow it to withdraw into isolation by closing itself to the outside world. In fact, a lot of domestic problems are linked to the global and regional environment. In this context, a stable and peaceful Western border with Iran and Afghanistan is a fundamental imperative for Pakistan. In the British imperial system, the present-day Pakistan or Upper Indus valley was reduced to a strategic hedge for the British India's heartland. Thus, this region – far from its historical role as centre of commerce and culture – was merely seen as a frontier region important for defence of other parts of the sub-continent. However, today there is a growing consensus in the country to break from playing into great power rivalries or being sucked into an alliance system. This vision guides Pakistan's role as hub of regional connectivity.

Basic goodwill is a pre-requisite for the regional cooperation. Many issues between countries originate simply because of misperceptions and mismanagement of affairs. These misperceptions then cause mistrust and aggravate over time, if left unaddressed.

Most problems in any country originate from within and they are more insidious than outside threats. These problems are often posed to systems of a state that are

affected by lack of control inside the country. Closely associated with these issues is mismanagement of borders among states. Border management helps in controlling cross-border movement of unwanted elements. If not managed properly, it provides room for misunderstandings and mistrust within states, and this mistrust keeps building misperceptions. However, effective border management cannot be attained without a cooperative system between the regional states. A vibrant joint border control mechanism is, therefore, of utmost importance if the regional countries want to control and secure these areas properly.

Establishing facilitation centres along borders within a management system of an exclusive nature vis-à-vis Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran can be highly productive. It could prove to be an effective counter terrorism technique and will also help in curbing drug trafficking and smuggling - serious problems confronted by these countries due to poor border management. All three countries can share their capabilities and capacities for this task. They can offer their respective expertise, knowledge and training tips to each other and use this knowledge to develop mechanisms for information sharing and coordinated and joint border operations. Mutually relevant information sharing is the key to deal with common threats and developing shared responses and to build much needed trust for enhancing and diversifying ties. This mechanism can be further expanded by creating working groups at various levels and joint training exercises within neighbouring countries to promote military cooperation. Joint training and exercises help to develop mental

synchronization and mutual goodwill. Law enforcement agencies in this matter are also equally important and have a great potential to offer. Along with military cooperation and law enforcement agencies' participation, military cultural exchange programs and sport activities among the three regional countries can be very beneficial. Mutual cooperation with such bases and approaches should not be a choice but rather a strategic compulsion for all policy makers. Such mechanisms not only will erase mistrust but will also provide ample opportunities for the three countries to collectively address their problems which somehow are related. If countries want to progress and move forward towards a better future, shared perspective, constructive approaches and above all an unambiguous political resolve is the key to achieving the much-needed dividend of regional security and military-to-military cooperation.

Appraisal from Iran by Ambassador Alireza Sheikh Attar, (Retired)

Ambassador Alireza Sheikh Attar highlighted the pressures that the Islamic World is facing, which are opaque and multi-faceted in nature. Addressing challenges to security must include solutions encompassing not only military and security-centric measures but also religious, historical and cultural commonalities which are shared by Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. This would help in strengthening of civil societies, where the focus should be on promoting an indigenous democracy, raising the educational level among youth and increasing the level of economic interaction among the general population of the region, since these aspects could act as key components for a regional security strategy. Although ultimate



powers rest with governments, the collaborative projects for the establishment of security need to be implemented by the people of the region with the help of respective governments of all three countries.

The Islamic World in the past has never experienced pressure to lose its dignity and identity the way it is facing at present. In the current era, pressure, through disputes and civil wars among the Muslim nations and countries, has played the role of a major spoiler of security. Security, today, is therefore endangered due to military action via direct attacks or proxy wars, wide terrorist actions, creating social crisis due to feelings of economic or cultural discrimination and fostering the historical crises (ethnic and religious ones). Today's Islamic world is facing more challenges than ever before. The two regions that have faced most of the problems and challenges are Middle East and South Asia, including Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.

Apart from military and security actions, religion, culture and historical commonalities can help in addressing the

endangering security challenges. Inclusion of such non-kinetic measures will act as major obstacle against imposed proxy wars. Furthermore, states should work for formation of civil societies on the basis of indigenous democracy rooted in the history of societies, raising the level of education among the youth, create an elite class via regional cooperation, and increasing the level of economic interactions among the general population of the region.

Although, apparent powers rest with the governments, but collaborative ventures for the establishment of security is a non-governmental project that must be implemented by the people and supported by the governments. Without cooperation between the security and military forces of the regional countries, the objective goals of cooperation will not be achievable. Therefore, the countries in the region should build on trust between the security and military bodies in the region by redefining their national interests for the military and security commanders, inducing a common belief that the outside powers prefer insecurity instead of security for their own interests. Hence, security cannot be brought or begged from outside of the region and building trust between the security and military forces through collaboration to conduct joint training courses and dialogues at the tactical and strategic levels as well as the analysis of changing international scenario will help in promoting regional security.

Expert Remarks by Professor Amin Saikal, Australian National University (ANU)

Professor Amin Saikal underscored the cultural, lingual and historical linkages within Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. He also



proposed a number of tangible measures to address issues of violent extremism, drug trafficking, criminal groups' movements across borders and getting benefitted from each other's military expertise for ensuring a peaceful, economically thriving and stable region.

Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran are an extended land-mass of cultural, lingual and historical linkages and share common challenges. Therefore, these countries can devise regional mechanisms to counter the emerging challenges, which include:-

1) Violent Extremism. Some terrorist groups pose a serious security challenge to the security of the region and plan to reshape the domestic setting of their respective countries. These groups have taken up arms in the pursuit of minority rights or in the name of the perceived interpretation of Islam. These entities have no aim but to create chaos for un-specified objectives. This includes the Islamic State in Khorasan (IS-K) who is now active in Afghanistan and is causing massive civil and infrastructural damages. The IS-K has almost 2000 fighters who are answerable to

its leaders only and have been creating instability. Different measures, such as political, social and economic inclusiveness should be used to tackle this group. The national government has the right to contain them and reintegrate them into the national system. Since these groups are transnational in nature, intelligence and security cooperation between regional countries is a must in order to counter the threat emanating from them.

2) Drug Trafficking. Afghanistan is a largest poppy cultivator and opium exporter. Most of the drugs come from the Southern provinces bordering Iran and Pakistan. The total value of Afghanistan opium economy is more than US \$2.5 billion with more than 2 million addicts in the country. This has led to a thriving black market and has led to trans-regional drug problems with linkages to international criminal network. It could not be handled by one constituent state alone. Therefore, intra state security cooperation and intelligence sharing is required to tackle the thriving drug business.

3) Criminal Groups. These groups crisscross the shared border between the three countries and include not only drug traffickers but also goods smugglers. These groups are involved in the smuggling of contraband items. Resultantly, young people and especially young children and refugees are vulnerable to prostitution and other illegitimate activities from these groups. To combat the violent extremists and criminal groups effectively requires regional cooperative efforts based on close security, military, policing and intelligence coordination and cooperation.

4) Military Strengths. All three coun-

tries have different military and security postures and capabilities, therefore, it is not recommended to have a shared security model. However, they could have a joint set-up of a military security academy to train officers specializing in countering the challenges discussed. If the academy set-up is not possible in the foreseeable future, the three countries could have an exchange program for military officers for creating a better understanding of each other's problems. Afghanistan has the weakest security amongst the three and is incapable of guarding its borders; therefore, there is a need to establish a joint border guards' training program amongst the three countries. The joint forces should be trained to curtail the movement of criminals and smugglers. Minority groups such as Tajiks and Uzbeks have their own ethnic and religious identities. Some of them want autonomy and are strongly averse to military intervention. Individuals belonging to minority groups should be educated and trained to deal with the complex situations and help the authorities achieve a better understanding of the problems.

It needs to be borne in view that Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran are three fingers of the same hand and therefore, their individual prosperity depends on how closely they work with each other.

Interactive Session

In the brief interactive session, the participants and speakers deliberated upon a number of topics including the Durand Line, engagements and peace dialogue on Afghanistan, Indian influence in Afghanistan, use of Afghan territory against Pakistan,

commonalities between Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, trilateral security cooperation and the way forward.

The panel started off by discussing Afghanistan's claim over the Durand Line which has been an issue since Pakistan's inception and has affected policies on both sides. It was reiterated as non-issue or an issue having no solid base. It was reiterated that the best thing would be to respect the authority on both sides. If European countries can come together after centuries of infighting, why cannot this region's nations. Thus, if willingness and sense is in the halls, there is no questioning that such issues remain unresolved or unaddressed. There have been many types of engagements including military to military, intelligence to intelligence and non-diplomatic to non-diplomatic. However, what is needed is that all interactions should be genuinely aimed at improving the relationships of countries and not to please non-regional actors. It will have to be realised and not just stated in headlines. Genuine engagement would require focus not only on security and threat perceptions but equally on areas where non-governmental institutions can come forward and contribute to regional reconciliation initiatives, which include trade aspects, environmental issues, cultural projects, etc.

In response to questions about Indian influence in Afghanistan and use of Afghan territory against Pakistan after 2001, the Afghan speaker opined that in Pakistan, there is too much fixation with India's role in Afghanistan and sometimes it is exaggerated. He further stated that millions of Afghans have lived, educated, worked and have families and friends in Pakistan.

They have such connections with Pakistan that India could only dream of. The Afghan speaker added that Pakistan should not look at Afghanistan through an Indian prism as Afghanistan has its own identity and policy for the region. Moreover, Afghanistan will not allow its territory to be used against Pakistan or India. On the other hand, Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace & Stability (APAPPS) provides a comprehensive and structured framework for institutional engagement in diverse areas of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Hence, APAPPS should be implemented in true letter and spirit.

Due to similar historical and cultural backgrounds of three countries, Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, should focus on commonalities instead of emphasizing on disagreements. Iran had eight years long war with Iraq, but after the fall of Saddam Hussain Iran's relations with Iraq are improving drastically and it can be termed as 'an exceptional relationship'. Therefore, it is advisable not to exaggerate the problems within the three neighbouring countries. Establishing a joint military/police academy for these countries will be a big step, since there are so many things that need to be achieved before such an initiative could take place effectively. Therefore, the need is to start with small steps and initiatives. For example, exchange programmes between regional security personnel can improve the level of trust and potentially lead to establishing a full-fledged institution for such programmes. The initial steps may also include short courses, seminars or workshops for mid-tier officers of the three regional countries.

Cultural and historical relations among the three countries are extremely important and provide a golden opportunity for promotion of regional security, but the question is how this important core of the region can utilize this opportunity for the benefit of the people of the region.

Wrap-Up by Moderator, Lieutenant General Naeem Khalid Lodhi, HI (M), (Retired)

While wrapping up, the moderator opined that there is a lot of room for military to military cooperation that may also improve political and economic environment of the region rather than enhancing the overall security of the region. For this, states should overlap the perceptions to resolve the bilateral issues which can further lead to military to military cooperation or any other cooperation like political, economic etc. He emphasized that we must show acumen and intellect to open genuine dialogue for the purpose of resolution of issues rather than hardening and expressing own stances that we normally do. Even though it is assumed that certain non-state actors and other external influences have the potential to sabotage any peace and conciliation effort, but the loopholes lie within states and their intentions. While thanking the guest speakers for providing an academically rich discourse, the moderator hoped that the fruits of intellectually stimulating interaction be translated into better relations among regional countries for a bright future.





SESSION 2

IDENTIFYING MECHANISMS FOR REDUCING CIVILIAN CASUALTIES THROUGH MILITARY COOPERATION



Introductory Remarks

Mr David Vestenskov, the moderator of session 2, highlighted the need to underline & identify mechanisms for reducing civilian casualties in war torn areas of the region through military cooperation. The first and foremost is the realization that talks, seminars & conferences do matter in resolving issues. However, unfriendly diplomatic relations have consequences and civilian population is eventually to bear the brunt of these consequences. Hence, developing diplomatic relations need to cultivate a process first in order to provide mutually workable solutions and policy options for politicians and diplomats to work on them further. NDU-RDDC have been jointly conducting seminars for the past few years by focusing on regional cooperation and specifically evolving consensus among regional countries on approaches and initiatives for peace

and stability in Afghanistan and the surrounding region. Stability in the region can only be improved by building bilateral and trilateral relations within Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.

Appraisal from Afghanistan by Mr Azizullah Omar

Mr Azizullah Omar underlined the need for regional countries to identify mechanism for reducing civilian casualties in conflict-ridden areas especially in Afghanistan. He underscored the need for collaborative measures for building mutual trust among regional countries in order to ensure a collected effort by Afghanistan and its neighbours to defeat transnational terrorism and reduce civilian casualties

Armed conflict, now a days, is often being fought in populated area where civilians are at the heightened risk of death,



injury and displacement. Such conflicts do pose operational challenges for armed actors necessitating a shift in policies, training and tactics both prior to and during the conflict in order to properly prevent exclusive damage to civilians and civilian objects. Harm in populated area can be caused by intentionally targeting of civilians or civilian objects or incidentally due to an attack on legitimate military object. The danger is compound when armed actors employ explosive weapons with the wide area effect such as bombs and rockets typically intended for open battle fields. Illustrative of this issue is impartial evidence from Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen which reflect widespread death, injury, displacement and damage to essential infrastructure – the civilians depend upon.

Recent practices and policies of multilateral forces have shown that when civilian protection is prioritized as a key strategy, actors can take actions to limit the war and civilian harm in the populated area. Through the adaption of these policies, protection of civilians during operations

and imposing limits on the use of certain weapons become strategic priority and not just a concern about adhering to international humanitarian law. The results were seen in Afghanistan. International humanitarian law or the law of armed conflict prescribes important rules for protection of civilians. A commander must assess on the base of information available to him or her before launching an attack, the means and method and whether all feasible precautions have been taken in to minimize civilian harm.

Lethal employment of military weapons in a populous area has its spill over effect and unforeseen consequences on the civilian population. In 2001, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) urged the international community to ban the use of some lethal explosives that have wide-ranging impact in areas of conflict. In Afghanistan this has been a big problem and is highlighted in many UN reports.

In January 2019, National Security Advisor of Afghanistan has visited several countries (China, India, Saudi Arabia and UAE) to discuss the prospect for the peace process, counterterrorism and bilateral and multilateral ties. The aim was to establish a roadmap for peace to prosper in the region. The trans-national global threat – terrorism – requires global and regional cooperation and sincere efforts to overcome this challenge. No single state can tackle this challenge alone. An effective counterterrorism strategy needs to be devised to deny safe heavens to terrorists, dismantle and target their operational capabilities.

Regarding curtailing civilian casualties, the Afghan government has a policy of decreasing civilian casualties. The Afghan

government is continuously working to increase the capacity building of the Afghan Security Forces. There are training programs aimed at equipping the armed forces with methods and strategies to reduce civilian casualties as much as possible, such as international humanitarian law.

There is a need to enhance regional economic cooperation to bring peace and prosperity in the region. It can be achieved by building mutual trust and collected effort by all parties in the region as no single state can achieve this goal on its own. Hence, the existing global environment requires extensive efforts to secure peace as it poses great threat to the security of region.

Appraisal from Pakistan by Lieutenant General Shaheen Mazhar Mahmood, HI (M)

Lieutenant General Shaheen Mazhar Mahmood enlisted Pakistan's counter terrorism strategy and how it successfully has defeated the menace of terrorism within its borders with a wholesome plan of Clear, Hold, Build and Transfer. The Pakistani military followed "Drain the Swamp" approach by having political ownership and national consensus for its operations for clearing the areas off terrorists.

Pakistan by means of its geographical location faces numerous challenges. It geographically lies in a turbulent region. Pakistan's military was initially trained and equipped for conventional warfare but the war on terror required a different approach, skill set and hardware. Pakistani Army despite limited resources overcame this challenge over time.

The Pakistan Army does not use firepower indiscriminately because it has



conducted a number of operations on its lands in populated areas. Reducing civilian casualties and infrastructure damage was a limiting factor in all operations. Such conflicts pose numerous risks to the civilian population inhabiting the area ranging from physiological trauma from displacement to the destruction of entire social structure. Several other social evils such as diseases, hunger, famine, loss of life, injuries and destruction of property which are the most widespread risks faced by the populations. The population especially the youth becomes vulnerable to exploitation by criminals, extremists and terrorists as anti-state sentiments and anti-state narratives are created.

Pakistan made a number of policy decisions for going into these operations. The first being no foreign boots on ground i.e. no foreign military's presence on its ground and Pakistan army is to be solely responsible for the operations within its territory. Similarly, Pakistan military will not participate in any operation on foreign land. However, the foreign assistance would only be restricted to capacity

building of security forces, training and intelligence sharing only. These policy decisions were one of the major differences between what happened in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria because an army operating within its own country has no time limitation. Therefore, one should be very careful in order to avoid harm to its own civilian population.

A 'whole of nation' approach was adopted, which included political ownership and national consensus. It followed a multipronged strategy that focused on the following three elements: dialogue, deterrence, development. Dialogue process was started prior to all the operations. Deterrence was created just to deter and bring the people back to the dialogue table. Development initiatives were undertaken after the operations. Another part of the strategy was that Pakistan conducted operations as per its own environment and did not accept any pressure from outside to operate in its own area. Proportionate use of fire power was the guiding principle for hard core military operations. We did not solely rely on the technical intelligence. Operations are not to be launched till confirmation by human resources. Getting an accurate picture of the area of operation prior to any operation remains one of the guiding principles. Pakistan adopted 'Drain the Swamp Strategy' which entailed moving out the civilian population, isolating the terrorists and then eliminating them.

Operations conducted by Pakistan Army were divided into various phases; starting from operational and logistics' build-up alongside an intelligence collection plan and establishment of TDP

(Temporarily Displaced Personnel) camps. Second, the domination and strangulation of the area of operation, making sure that minimum number of terrorists escape when population moves out. Moving ahead with inhabiting the TDP camps where registration and equipping them with basic amenities of life was the third step. The fourth stage aims at conducting hard core clearance operations and after clearance the objective is to hold and rebuild, simultaneously with repatriation of TDPs to follow. Lastly is the draw down stage, where the army is in a draw down stage and there has been major reduction in all districts where operations were undertaken; police and judiciary are running affairs.

Pakistan has conducted fifteen major operations since February 2007 and paid a heavy price in terms of human loss; till July 2019, 4500 army personnel have embraced martyrdom while 16400 have been injured; the civilian martyrs have been more than 20,000 while more than 32000 have been injured. However, the number of civilian casualties has decreased significantly. The civilian population that had to move out before any military operation cost Pakistan a huge social and economic loss. However, most of these areas have been reconstructed and the TDP Secretariat has called back the civilians to their native areas once the operations were complete. 97% of TDPs have been rehabilitated and only 3% are left as areas to be cleared from mines, unexploded munitions etc. while demining and disarming efforts is on-going.

In its fight against terrorism, Pakistan took many development initiatives that denoted an approach of sustaining peace through development. It focused on

programmes such as youth employment, de-radicalization of ex-militants, youth training etc. The focus of development has been on education, health, communication infrastructure and socio-economic development. Many friendly countries especially UAE, KSA and Qatar have supported the reconstruction and rehabilitation both technically as well as financially. A number of schools, cadet colleges and health facilities have been created alongside construction of major and small roads. Besides all these efforts and success, residual threat still remains in sleeper cells for which intelligence-based operations are being launched. There is still a risk of infiltrators coming from across the border. Mines, IEDs (Improvised Explosive Device) and UXOs (Unexploded Ordnance) remain a major threat, and, Pakistan has taken a number of steps for the rehabilitation of UXO victims by providing them with emergency evacuation and subsequent treatment along with long term medical support in all military hospitals of the country.

Pakistan firmly believes that every country and its armed forces is responsible for operation within their own territory. However, there is a long way for coordination with other countries especially with Afghanistan and Iran. Several coordination efforts have been initiated with the Afghanistan government such as the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS), border meetings, establishment of DGMOs (Director General Military Operations) hotlines, liaison officers patrolling and flag meetings etc. With Iran, Pakistan has recently initiated intelligence sharing and evolved a joint patrolling mechanism on the

border. With its selfless sacrifices and prudent and cooperative policy decisions, Pakistan has successfully managed peace and security not only within the country but on its borders too.

Appraisal from Iran by Ambassador Ali Raza Bikdeli, (Retired)

Ambassador Ali Raza Bikdeli shed light on "Neighbourhood Policy as the key to Regional Security Accomplishment." The commonalities of culture and history within Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran as potent building stones are likely to prove as converging factors for regional cooperation and collaboration. He shared his thoughts on regional integrity, historical premise of regional cooperation, commonalities in region and the impact of extra regional powers on regional integration and convergence. The way forward lies in increasing transit trade capacity among Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan to act as a bridge between the East and the West. Besides military, police and security forces of three countries should work together to attain regional peace. In the meanwhile, any foreign occupation / military presence in the region should end in order to pave the way for initiation of neighbourhood-based policies to take root that is likely to change relational paradigm among regional countries significantly.

Ambassador Ali Raza started his talk by thanking the organizers and anticipated that the endeavour will help in promoting regional cooperation and integration as Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran are deliberating here at one forum. The solution of political, economic and security problems confronting the South Asian region lies in one important but forgotten factor 'The Neighbourhood'. The regional countries have many commonalities including culture and history, if taken into consideration these

can act as converging factors.



In historical perspective there are evidences of extensive inter-regional cooperation, however, for past two centuries, the colonisation distorted this cooperation. The speaker also highlighted the concept of neighbour and neighbourhood and added that lack of neighbourhood is the reason of problems between neighbours. The importance of neighbourhood in Holy Quran, culture and international relations was self-explanatory. Highlighting the value of neighbourhood in international relations, it was quoted that hegemonic powers are completely aware of the existence and importance of neighbourhood bonds. However, they have always misused this capability as a balancing tool in the region rather than supporting expediency of peace, prosperity and development of the region. The British policy for integrating Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan against Ex-Soviet Union in 1930s - CENTO (Central Treaty Organization) and RCD (Regional Co-operation for Development) are some examples to this tendency. Moreover, formation of ECO

(Economic Cooperation Organization) was the first step towards neighbourhood based on economic regional cooperation within Iran, Pakistan and Turkey that played a key role, where Afghanistan also was a key member. However, lack of support from international organizations and societies and deficiency of belief in regional integration acted as hindering factors in the way of achieving its goals.

There are regional problems that have emerged from 'Big Game Competition' in the first half of the 20th century. The will of cordial relations in the region has been overshadowed by regional issues that emerged as a result of extra regional powers' involvement for the sake of their own hegemonic designs. Destruction of peace has been induced in region by these powers under the umbrella of protecting so called "Human Rights." Libya, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan are stark examples in this regard. Mutual respect for neighbourhood policy is bound to rise above contentious issues and promote multi-layered and multipurpose cooperation. Being neighbours, regional countries have many common challenges like water and environment problems, human and drugs trafficking and migration issues. Talking about the most significant regional issue i.e. Afghanistan, it was added that the world has been struggling for years to find solution to Afghanistan's problems or at least find solution for less damages to children, women and other civilians. Afghanistan's issues came out as a result of foreign interference as the US denied resolving the problems through cooperation and went for direct confrontation in 2001. The peace and stability in the region is an internal phenomenon and demands

solution of domestic issues with wisdom and patience without foreign involvement.

Presenting the way forward, it was proposed that Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan should increase their transit trade capacity to act as a bridge between the East and the West. Besides military, police and security forces of three countries should work together to attain regional peace. Above all, any foreign occupation and military presence in the region should end. Promoting neighbourhood based policies among regional countries is likely to change their relational paradigm with one another

Expert Remarks by Major Karsten Marrup, RDDC, Denmark.

Major Karsten Marrup presented his expert remarks on “The Use of Kinetic Air Strikes and the Problem of Civilian Casualties” based on his experiences as a senior Air Battle Manager of the Royal Danish Air Force. He addressed how Denmark tackled the issue of civilian casualties in international operations by using the US Air Force mechanism for Collateral Damage Estimation (CDE) that brought considerable reduction in civilian casualties in kinetic operations. The same may be used to address mounting civil casualties in Afghanistan.

Major Karsten Marrup referred to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)'s serious concern over rising level of civilian harm as a result of aerial operations especially those conducted in support of Afghan forces on the ground and strikes on civilian structures since 2014. According to the UNAMA, 83% of civilian casualties have been attributed to aerial operations conducted by international military forces, 9% by the Afghan Air Force and the remaining 8% by

undetermined Pro Government Forces.



While underlining the Danish strategy in international combat operations to reduce civilian casualties, it was informed that the United States have developed a model that is being used in international operations for assessment of collateral damage and has brought down the number of civilian casualties during air operations. This model is defined as Collateral Damage Estimation (CDE) comprising stages of target validation, target size assessment, weapon assessment, refined target assessment and casualty assessment. To follow this chain of action for air strikes results in reducing civilian casualties during operations.

He further highlighted difference in strategies between planned and rapid attacks. The model necessitates the pre-attack evaluations to minimize the damage in case of planned attacks and assurance of target's precision in case of rapid attacks. This model actually approved all Danish engagements ever since 1999; in Afghanistan (2002) and Libya (2011).

While articulating Denmark's air strike

strategy in operations, it was informed that the country gets approval of its Mission and Target Approval Authority (MTAA) before initiating any air strike. Denmark as part of various international forces ensures military action is utilized in extreme case with target's precision and civilians' protection. The decision makers in this regard are trained in Denmark, who take decisions after evaluating various aspects of the conflict and operational dynamics. Following MTAA's line of action that includes red card holder, legal advisor and intelligence specialist before any air strike is a must.

Presenting the way forward it was opined that the Afghan Air Force and Pakistan Air Force should work together to find out ways for civilians' protection during military operations and air offensives. Afghan Forces can take lead from Pakistan's experience of using military & airpower effectively during its anti-terrorism campaign. Furthermore, Afghan Air Force should synchronize itself with ground forces to reduce collateral damage. Finally, it was recommended that the regional countries may establish a 'Centre of Excellence' in Pakistan on 'how to use air power and at the same time reduce collateral damage' and a 'Centre of Excellence' in Afghanistan on 'how to conduct counter insurgency.'

Interactive Session

During the session various questions were asked in relation to the use of technology to reduce casualties, regulating border crossing points effectively, establishing markets along the Pak-Afghan border, designing of human/ aerial/ technical intelligence, timeline for targeting

from red card holder to legal advisor, role of aerial strikes, kinetic/non-kinetic use of power to avoid casualties and lessons learnt from Pakistan Army during its 'War on Terror.'

While answering the above mentioned questions, it was highlighted that new technology has provided a precision that hits its aim. Thus, the world is progressing in technological means applied in modern warfare for weapon enhancement and accurate acquisition of target. There is a need to evaluate target from long distance; whether it will be hit by a missile or a bomb and that the target engagement must be precise to avoid indiscriminate loss and casualties. Its surveillance should also be done with available military means to avoid casualties that at times occur due to incorrect information. On the other hand, the most technologically advanced country of the world – the United States – has not escaped from causing huge casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan mainly by means of drone attacks – a technologically advanced weapon used to kill from a distance.

While discussing the border markets proposal, it was highlighted that joint custom windows, common industrial zones along borders and using national currencies among countries are need of the hour to improve the prospect for regional trade in the border areas. Such measures can be executed on the basis of having positive outlook towards neighbouring countries. In this approach, one country is dependent on its neighbours for mutual and common behaviours as one can change friends not neighbours. For people across the borders, trade and business are key elements for improving the local economy. Trends of

trade and trust based on neighbourhood spirit would not only reduce regional mistrust but will also foster open door trade policy for the partnering countries. Countries of the region have to work together and evolve policies to serve this end because a great potential exists in South Asian region; garnering commitment to tap into this potential must be a priority for the regional countries. It was further added that Afghanistan and Tajikistan are enjoying the existence of common border markets, which are open five days a week and resultantly, both countries are gaining positive outcome through this free trade-market.

Institutions can be built on common grounds to attain economic benefits for the people and partners can collaborate to resolve issues. Through such institutions, individuals from different countries can come together and develop a bond to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings. It was told that Pakistan has expressed willingness to the idea of establishing border markets along its Western border. The Prime Minister of Pakistan has also given approval for border markets adjacent to all crossing points on the Pak-Afghan border, which will be established subsequently. Alongside, fencing the Pak-Afghan border is yet another step for improving security situation on both sides.

Ensuring reducing civil casualties during combat offensives, it was reiterated that targeting pods installed in military aircraft are used precisely by pilots not only to find targets but to destroy them judiciously while using technology to gain vital information and assessment of the target. Such operations are the most difficult to execute where the chances of reducing

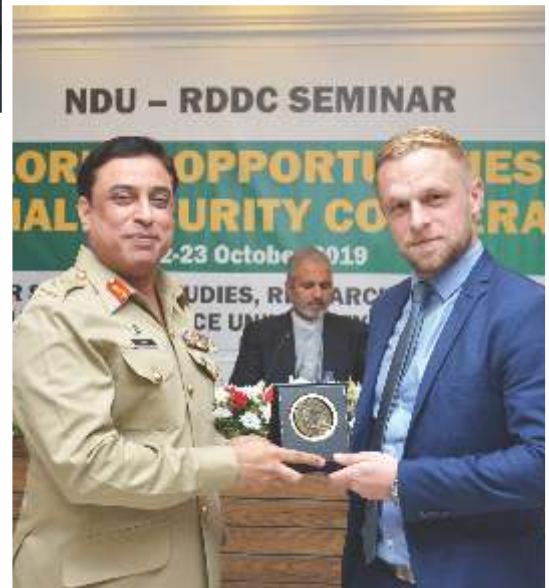
civilian casualties are slim. There are usually seventy-two hours at disposal to plan access to the attack on the target and in case of dynamic target the time slot gets limited. The intended attack can possibly be done by using less fire power with accuracy as the pilot is required to work really fast, hence, it is recommended that minimum of fire power is to be used in operations involving populated targets. In the field of technical and aerial intelligence, the red card holder has an access to specialized targets. Both human and technical intelligence have to work together like hands in gloves; one cannot be relied upon at the cost of other.

It was added that the accuracy of air strike by Pakistan Air Force during operations can be gauged from Mr. Ali Musa Gillani who talked about his kidnapping ordeal in one of his interview after his release, where he described how the aerial attacks were taking place with accurate precision around a hideout where he was imprisoned in Shawal Valley, Pakistan. It was equally acknowledged that human intelligence is more reliable as compared to the technical intelligence in aerial combat operations. Pakistan will not be involved kinetically in any other country. However, in relation to non-kinetic approach, Pakistan has offered military training, capacity building and mutually agreed intelligence sharing to Afghanistan. Finally, there is an ever-increasing need for devising a policy for reducing civilian casualties during kinetic operations and establishing economic corridors under the framework of good neighbourhood policy among the three key neighbouring countries of Asia which would contribute to a safer and peaceful region.

Wrap-Up by Moderator Mr David Vestenskov, RDDC, Denmark

The moderator concluded that there is consensus among the regional actors to reduce civil casualties in offensive operations, but it is important to remember that Afghanistan does have to consolidate those security processes that are already in place. Precursor to these measures is to initiate joint training and support programmes for Afghanistan, and Pakistan's support in this regard is absolutely important. The ideal thing would be to reinvigorate the spirit of neighbourhood in order to share education and military experiences with one another.

Interaction itself is a necessary component that should be encouraged occasionally between military personnel and military organizations of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Moreover, the idea of establishing a Centre of Excellence as Centre of Knowledge may be materialized; collaborating for a six months or one year training program for military officers of all the three countries thereby generating regular interaction and experience sharing for regional security and peace.





DAY **2** SESSION **3**

EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ESTABLISHING EXCHANGE PROGRAMMES AND COOPERATION AMONG SECURITY INSTITUTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND IRAN



Introductory Remarks

Professor Amin Saikal, the moderator of session 3, said that certain suggestions for security cooperation among the three Islamic republics of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran have been made during this seminar. Some of them are beyond achievable but set the direction for long term actions between the three countries. These can help in building a dynamic neighbourhood not only for the collective security but also for neighbourly relations since these three countries are perhaps not comfortable with one another on regional issues. The relationship between the civil societies of these countries needs serious evaluation. Civil society plays a critical role in socio-economic development as well as monitoring the political direction of a state and making a constructive contribution to the overall wellbeing for their societies. Moreover, the relationship between different security institutions also needs to be explored.

Appraisal from Afghanistan by Mr Fazal Rabi Wardak

Mr Fazal Rabi Wardak while shedding light on commonality of cultural, social and ethnic strands within Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran emphasized the importance of cooperation and collaboration for a bright future for the future generations of the region. Failing would lead to poverty, insecure and unstable economy and rising levels of unemployment for all. Hence, changing the region's history from hatred to love, war to peaceful co-existence and competition to cooperation via people-to-people contact, media & civil society engagements along with exchange programs for students would pave the way for a strong, integrated and prosperous region with lasting peace and progress for all.

Cooperation within security forces is fundamental for the socio-economic and



political development among countries of the region especially Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. Taking advantage of the shared history along with cultural linkages and religious similarities, the countries should strive to cooperate with each other to attain a bigger objective. To achieve these objectives, the need of the hour is to change the history of hatred to love, destruction to rehabilitation and fate of war to fate of peace.

However, there is lack of positive connectivity and cooperation despite commonalities and shared values existing among regional countries. The blame for absence of regional connectivity and cooperation among the three countries lies with state and political figures. The key to address the challenges is regional cooperation at all levels and stages. Cooperation among all entities especially the security institutions could help bring security, peace, stability and prosperity to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.

Synergy among the security institutions can be achieved by identifying the opportunities available and develop strategies and solutions to capitalize on

them. Without regional cooperation the countries of the region especially Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran would remain desperate in all aspects with regards to insecure & poor economy and poverty ridden with high levels of unemployment. It is essential that every country take certain pre-steps to build required synergy among security institutions by introducing trust and confidence building measures. If these measures build on people-to-people contact thorough proper channels, engagements of media and civil societies of the countries along with providing exposure programs it can help the civil society to become more connected and educated about the challenges, the issues and opportunities existing. Business community of the three countries needs to start connecting for jointly eradicating unemployment, build economy and work on the opportunities available.

Establishing security and military cooperation between the three countries is the need of the hour. A certain level of cooperation is present but more needs to be done in order to respond to different threats damaging their systems and people. To bring security institutions together a number of opportunities are available like organizing and conducting researches, conferences, seminars and workshops. These initiatives should seek to identify the root causes for mistrust and misperceptions, jointly work on practical strategies for establishment of information sharing mechanisms among security institutions of the three countries, joint programs, trainings and exposure visits to fully understand the expectations on all sides. Regular meetings between security institutions especially around borders and

joint military patrols to avoid miscommunication in order to jointly address and mitigate common risks and threats are essential for improved security. Training and motivating youth on positive thinking since they are the future of the countries; will have positive outcomes for the long-term perspective. Training to act on facts and not assumptions is another very important aspect that needs to be worked on.

In a nutshell, with sincere dedication, strong motivation and honest political will, cooperation among the three countries can be achieved and will thrive to build a secure, stable, and prosperous neighbourhood for the coming generations of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.

Appraisal from Pakistan by Brigadier Saeed Ullah

Brigadier Saeed Ullah talked about what role the foreign military collaboration branch at Joint Staff Headquarters, Rawalpindi was playing in formulating and implementing policies of defence cooperation with foreign countries in concurrence with all relevant ministries of Pakistan. While highlighting Pakistan's noteworthy contributions in world peace keeping missions around the globe, he enlisted country's prominent contributions for peace and security of Afghanistan and Iran as well. Initiation of defence cooperation with Afghanistan is being materialized via training of Afghan Armed forces personnel in military training institutions of Pakistan and exchange of visiting dignitaries from the armed forces. Defence cooperation measures focusing on Iran include consolidation of existing border security mechanism by establishing a hotline between the two armies. More needs to be done in the face of common goal of mutual peace and progress of the region, which

is shared by these important countries of South-West Asia correspondingly.



Pakistan Military has a global diplomatic footprint that is turning into a multi-faceted force, which includes defence diplomacy, peacekeeping, international education and defence cooperation. It is the most engaged military in the world in terms of military cooperation. Pakistan has become the first non-western army to have a platoon commander each at Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, UK and Australia. Peace keeping is a long tradition of Pakistan alongside being the largest contributor in training and provisions of security personnel to the United Nations. Currently Pakistan military is engaged with 77 countries at various levels and has signed quite a number of MoUs and protocol agreements related to defence and academic cooperation around the world.

Defence cooperation among countries is dependent on a host of factors; most importantly are the level of trust and political harmony between the countries

and convergence of political and military approach towards issue of terrorism and security.

Afghanistan has been plagued by war for many decades. The conflict has involved many state and non-state actors. The impacts of conflict on the respective country and its people are enormous yet despite deaths and destruction peace and stability is achievable. Importance of Afghanistan as being connector of various sub-regions and for Pakistan cannot be denied. As both neighbouring countries' peace and prosperity is interlinked and dependent on each other. Pakistan has no parallel when it comes to efforts for bringing peace and normalcy in conflict-stricken Afghanistan. Pakistan is committed to expand co-operation with Afghanistan for peace & security, health, education and people-to-people contacts.

Pakistan has extended certain positive gestures to Afghanistan for cooperation and improving state-to-state relations via provision of transit trade facility to Afghanistan without restriction for 70 years. Pakistan has provided home to 2.7 million refugees for over 30 years, more than 50,000 Afghans educated in Pakistan are working in Afghanistan alongside extending 6000 scholarships to Afghan students are few contributions to mention.

With regards to security cooperation, for both countries regional security cooperation is critical enabler for each other's security. There are three major issues that are critical for a sustainable security mechanism with Afghanistan: effective management of porous border, honourable return of Afghan refugees and monitoring ungoverned terrains on Pak-Afghan border

areas. A number of developments have taken place in the security domain, which include drafting of a MoU in defence cooperation and training of Afghan forces personnel in Pakistan military institutes. So far 118 Afghan Armed forces personnel have been trained in Pakistan, but there would have been more if Afghanistan had availed more vacancies, as only 10% of the vacancies have been availed.

Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS) is a comprehensive initiative consisting of five working groups namely politico-diplomatic; intelligence; economic; refugees; and military coordination working group. Furthermore, proper utilisation of Tripartite Joint Operation Centre (TJOC) can also help in coordinating military to military affairs between Afghanistan, Pakistan and the Resolute Support Mission in Kabul. Full and honest implementation of such programmes can achieve peace, stability and development of both the countries.

With respect to Iran, Pakistan enjoys cordial relations since its independence. Iran being the first country to recognize Pakistan and following suit, Pakistan was the first one recognizing the Iranian government after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Pakistan and Iran's defence co-operation was at its peak in the 70s with joint exercises being the routine. However, current defence relations are focused on training and bilateral visits. However, the post Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) developments, various international sanctions' have so far prohibited practicing extensive military cooperation between Pakistan and Iran.

Nevertheless, an acceptable pace is maintained within the norms of these sanctions. Furthering defence cooperation also entails strengthening existing border security mechanism that saw a positive leap in 2017, when a hotline was established between the Army Head Quarters of both countries to improve border management. Both countries pledged to deny use of border by terrorists to foment trouble in either of the countries. Remaining cognizant of hurdles both countries need to explore opportunities available for further cooperation at different levels.

The recent visit of PM Imran Khan with the intention of playing an active role to ease tensions between KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Iran is yet another testimony of Pakistan's desire for maintaining peace in the world and facilitating peace initiatives in its neighbourhood as well. Also, military diplomacy should continue paving way for improving interstate relations as well as military cooperation. The route to defeat organized criminals, armed terrorists and political and religious extremists along the border areas lies in enhanced cooperation, trust building measures and respecting each other's sovereignty.

Appraisal from Iran by Mr Mohsen Roohisefat

Mr Mohsen Roohisefat shared his views on 'Establishing Security and Military Cooperation within Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran'. He notified that it is right time to evolve trilateral collective paths and solutions for the future prosperity. For this end, building up on the conceptual framework of the historical background of the three countries may lead to consolidation by listening and negotiating with each other instead of arguing, avoiding

preconception to one another's aims & programs and adapting the approach of positive sum game instead of zero sum game should be the benchmarks. In addition, establishing trilateral committees to tackle four interrelated problems of our region such as terrorism, narcotics, illegal immigration and cybercrime would be beneficial for a prosperous and peaceful region.



The speaker started off by notifying the critical situation of the region and emphasized that it is right time to find new collective paths and solutions for the future prosperity. To start off, a favourable environment where trust, effective communication, respect for each other prevails and agreed comprehensive programme to avoid misunderstandings were identified as fundamental ingredients for regional countries methodological approach towards regional cooperation. Taking lead from Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan's shared historical background and leading towards trilateral frameworks of action for addressing common threats and extracting dividends from common benefits could be a fruitful strategy. While signifying the importance of conceptual

framework for cooperation, it was opined that such framework would create an atmosphere of cooperation to concentrate on mutual interests of the three countries. The framework will help in devising trilateral working groups of experts that may help in establishing joint think tanks on security issues for pertinent exchange of views, military experiences' exchanges, training for armed forces personnel & staff courses and visiting army delegations to each other's countries are noteworthy to mention. Besides, adopting a methodological approach for understanding each other's point of view based on two fundamental principles; listening carefully to the other side before negotiating instead of arguing over the issues and promotion of 'positive-sum game instead of zero-sum game.'

Transnational threats prevailing in the region include narco-trafficking, extremism, terrorism and organized crimes. Narco-trafficking being the most dangerous curse has put the future generations at stake. The solution of this problem lies in cooperation and joint actions instead of blame game. While discussing terrorism and extremism, it was added that it was the mutual responsibility of all regional countries to counter these threats because social and economic achievements were not possible when shadows of terrorism loom large. Besides, illegal immigration and organized crimes were equally worrisome for the three countries that could be tackled by trilateral cooperation amongst the border forces of each country.

Way forward lies in establishing framework of interaction by means of trilateral committees for strategic

cooperation. Above all, establishment of trilateral think tanks and committees would provide interactive platforms to scholars, intellectuals and armed forces with ample opportunities for joint plan of action to address common problems and extract common benefits.

Expert Remarks by Senior Colonel Ding Hao, Institute of Foreign Military Studies of the Academy of Military Sciences, China

Senior Colonel Ding Hao discussed 'the Existing Defence Cooperation between China and Pakistan' and was followed by some concrete and tangible suggestions/proposals for boosting military exchange/ cooperation within security institutes of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.

Pakistan and China have historical ties in every domain of cooperation; however, the relations are constantly strengthening in terms of strategic cooperation and high-level military and security cooperation. In this regard, the strategic communication mechanism has been established to develop coordination and communication at government and military levels in traditional and non-traditional security areas. The first step in this regard was the establishment of consultative mechanism against terrorism. In the aftermath of 9/11 terrorists' attacks, China and Pakistan decided to strengthen counter terrorism cooperation in 2001. Therefore, a ministerial counter terrorism consultative mechanism and hotline has been established between Ministry of Public Security of China and the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Pakistan to share anti-terrorist information on international and regional counter terrorism. Later on, in 2006 the two countries approved and formally adopted

an agreement on bilateral cooperation in combating terrorist forces.

The second step was the consultative mechanism of defence and security cooperation between the two militaries. Within this context, Chief of Joint Staff Department of Central military Commission leads the Chinese side and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee heads the Pakistani side. The basic purpose of this initiative is to exchange views on international and regional security along with discussion on bilateral military cooperation. There has been 12 bilateral sessions under the Defence and Security Cooperation Mechanism, which has helped and developed a channel of communication and deepened practical military cooperation. This bilateral military engagement since its initiation from 2003 has culminated into joint training mechanism of armies, navies and air forces. The training mechanisms have been developed into an important system to test fighting capabilities and promoting the mutual trusts as well as maintaining regional security and stability.

Regarding the Naval domain, it was told that Chinese and Pakistani Navies conduct regular joint naval exercises in the Arabian Sea. The aim is to enable the two sides to learn from each other's experiences in traditional and non-traditional areas. Furthermore, both Armies hold joint military exercises to combat traditional and non-traditional threats. Both countries are conducting series of joint exercises named as 'Warrior'; the latest being Warrior VI was held in January 2019. The exercise 'Warrior VI' was held at the National Counter Terrorism Training Centre of Pakistan for

further enhancing joint anti-terrorism capabilities of the two militaries. Furthermore, both countries' Air Forces underwent exercise 'Eagle-VIII' in August 2019 in North West China to improve combat ability and share bilateral experiences.

The third step was establishment of exchange and cooperation mechanism for colleges and universities' exchange programmes. In this regard, Chinese and Pakistani military academies have developed cooperating mechanism to promote bilateral understanding and trust. China's International Defence College of National Defence University, Army Command College, Army, Naval and Air Force Engineering Universities provide trainings for Pakistan Military Officers. Pakistan's National Defence University and Command and Staff College Quetta also provide training to Chinese Military Officers every year.

For growing military exchange programmes within Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan for regional security, it was proposed that working together and cooperating with one another to promote and support resolution of the Afghan security issues will have far-reaching effects on the regional security. For this end, establishing security coordination mechanism among the three countries is necessary; Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and other regional organizations' significance are vital. Alongside, initiating training programmes among regional countries is important to foster regional dialogue forums for the military officers in order to enhance regional security understanding. Finally, Pakistan,

Iran and Afghanistan must send their military Officers to different regional and international forums like 'Beijing Xiangshan Forum' so that constructive communication and understanding may be developed among them.

Interactive Session

A number of issues were highlighted during the interactive session in the form of questions as well as comments. The foremost issue stressed was on Pakistan-Afghanistan vacillating relations and how it can be improved while keeping in view the spoilers' manoeuvrings in this regard.

It was argued that the use of Afghanistan's territory by Indian agencies to create unrest in Pakistan has caused a great deal of inconvenience for both Pakistan and Afghanistan and has a negative impact on the prospect of mending bilateral ties. Nevertheless, it was stated that both Afghanistan and Pakistan should not let the historical past nor other countries' actions be a spoiler for improved bilateral security cooperation, rather both countries should learn from history and focus on the present. There is scope for synergy among all government departments of both states especially security institutions. Pakistan and Afghanistan are neighbours and that is a geographical fact that cannot be changed. Therefore, there is no other way except for both countries to resolve their matters and have peaceful coexistence with each other by devoting their energies for the good of their respective people.

Closely associated with the discussion is the need for trilateral cooperation within Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran; cooperation whether on bilateral or trilateral level must

be based on common threats and mutual interests. There are identical concerns related to border security and terrorism for all three countries. This is what binds Pakistan Afghanistan and Iran with one another in addition to their geographical proximity. For mutual threats, synchronized and collective response is the way forward. However, the resolution of issues and building trust on bilateral level is the most important and initial step towards successful trilateral frameworks of engagement.

On the question on enhanced military cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan and also on the trilateral level among Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, the panellists elaborated that security has become a multi-dimensional concept and is not just limited to military domain. There are problems being faced in economic, social and cultural domains of these countries as well. Therefore, in addition to trilateral military cooperation and engagements among military institutions, there is an equal need of introducing non-military institutions to economic, social and cultural cooperative mechanisms too. European Union (EU) is a classic example where cooperation among states started from the Coal and Steel agreement and has since have a stabilising effect on security on the continent. Thus, cooperation and engagement in other areas could serve as an initial step before military engagements take place.

Additionally, mobility has some specific functions to perform while making amendments for bilateral and trilateral ties among states. It allows people of the respective states to be part of each other's

societies and perform their human activities in different areas. This naturally alleviates mistrust among people on multiple levels. However, no effort could bring result if powers in the region will keep on dismantling all the peace initiatives among the three states in the name of security politics. The South-West Asia has become volatile by the arms race being pursued within different states. All armies play roles for the sovereignty of their nation states, and in light of intense competition and growing mistrust, any given army would protect its respective country at all cost.

In military domain, increasing number of training courses and exercises can enhance engagement within the three regional states, where better understanding of each other can dwell. Moreover, task forces should be set up to discuss issues and concerns, as this could lead to joint cooperation culminating into a detailed and comprehensive framework for collaborative working.

Present regional organizations can also play a huge role in mending ties and also serve as a viable platform for discussions. Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in this regard can play a pivotal role. The organization actively works in different fields like agriculture, industry and commerce, however, the focus should also be on military and security issues. With economic ties, military ties should also be encouraged under such institutions. Similar institutions like ECO should also address the issues of mistrust and provide avenues for cooperation on bilateral and trilateral level. Ties between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran demand time sustained dialogue and implementation of strategies and plans.

Moreover, Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) can help make the environment favourable for the states to further enhance their ties. This will eventually fix the regional trust disorder and make enough room for improved regional cooperation and collaboration.

Wrap-Up by Moderator Professor Amin Saikal, ANU

The moderator appreciated the informative discussion and welcomed the proposed ideas floated during the discussion for establishing exchange programs within Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran's security institutions. Such initiatives owe a great deal to the resources at hand. Working together to this end must be the resolve of all who have contributed for the regional security and peace.







CLOSING SESSION

CLOSING SESSION

Closing Address by His Excellency Rolf Holmboe, Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan

Danish Ambassador Rolf Holmboe's closing remarks presented a way ahead in balancing regional security cooperation. His remarks were a sensible mix of historical chronicles and his personal experiences around the world as a Military Officer, which were tagged to the present conflict-ridden scenario of South Asia. While highlighting how the Cold War allies developed a working and cooperative mechanism under Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and EU's transformation from the European Coal and Steel Union into the present EU, he advanced solid arguments on prospects of peace, stability and development in one of the most populous sub-regions of Asia. Afghanistan's security and stability could be achieved by linking it to CPEC.



Ambassador Rolf Holmboe spoke highly of the NDU-RDDC joint seminar that has put forth constructive deliberations on

multiple facets of security cooperation among regional players before presenting a way ahead in balancing regional security cooperation. Over the years, the NDU-RDDC platform has been enabling practitioners and scholars to exchange views - cooperating and diverging - that in itself is an acknowledgment of positive mindsets dedicated towards regional cooperation.

Amongst diversified viewpoints, it is equally significant to share one's experiences, which one gathers by virtue of being at a position that exposes a person to real life issues. Sharing such hands-on experiences provides more credence to knowledge than bookish theories and perspectives. It is equally weighty to consider that sometimes one cannot expect any other output from the talks than talks itself. Nevertheless, the people participating in talks and discussions will increase a greater understanding of issues and leave venue with higher level of knowledge for establishing cooperative structures. For providing such venue, the NDU deserves appreciation for being host to the joint seminars with RDDC, which has been an important platform for knowledge sharing endeavours.

Denmark is a small country; it has no interest in the South-West Asian region other than finding and facilitating solutions to various problems by confronting it; coming out of the spiral of conflict and poverty that has held the region back for a very long time. Intentions are there to turn it into a developing region, bring down barriers & misperceptions and enhancing

cooperation on security matters for the greater benefit of the region and its people.

While detailing his experiences as a Military Officer Conventional Forces in the European Treaty, Ambassador Rolf Holmboe chronicled the Treaty's history as it was negotiated and concluded during the last years of the Cold War and established comprehensive limits on key categories of conventional military equipment in Europe. Also, the Treaty allowed inspections to be carried out by NATO and WARSAW Pact countries, where they were allowed to inspect each other's military bases. After more than 600 such inspections had taken place, it was easily noticeable that the level of suspicion and mistrust had become negligible. With time and after a number of visits, it was visible that considerable trust had been developed and cooperative atmosphere was built between the once warring sides of the Cold War Era.

Ambassador Rolf Holmboe also shared his memoirs as being a UN military officer in 1980's. During his stationing in Lebanon; there were a lot of preparations of what became later known as the 1990 Treaty. There had been attempts by three groups in the country in finding solutions to their long-fought civil-war. It ended up with creation of some check and balances and established cooperation among these groupings in the country. Again in 2013, the situation in Lebanon was quite volatile as a result of spill over from the Syrian Civil War. Certain Shia and Sunni groups were involved in attempts to create a conflict. It seemed as if Lebanon was at the brink of a war until the leaders of different factions of the country started talking to each other to find concrete solutions, which led to

stabilization.

Even in an environment of mistrust one can work for betterment and progress. In this regard, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) – later known as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) created in Europe when the Cold War was at its peak deserves a mention. It is a soft structural mechanism, which was established between the Warsaw Pact countries and the NATO countries. It worked on framework of confidence building; economic cooperation and mutual understanding among member countries. Hence, in situations where things got out of hands, organizations like CSCE led to enduring benefits as seen in the past.

Responding to the view of prioritising economic security more than security stabilization, it was reiterated that one cannot forget that security stabilization provides the basis for economic co-operation. Coming from one of the world's most integrated region i.e. Scandinavia and looking presently into the least cooperative region of the world –South-West Asia - one can see enough benefits in trying to enhance cooperation in this region. After Second World War, the Europe witnessed an era of understanding amongst the world leaders. This understanding triggered after the establishment of the Coal and Steel Union, which is the present European Union. However, the security component came much later to it but it was mainly the economic considerations that brought the once warring countries together.

Considering the dynamics of the South Asian region, if Afghanistan is connected to CPEC - a corridor that will allow Afghanistan to gain benefits by linking it

with other markets of Central Asia - it may change the regional dynamics significantly. This can also open up economic cooperation of Afghanistan with other countries including India under such initiatives. Through mutually benefitting cooperation, countries in the region can become economically prosperous as their populace would witness socio-economic improvement. The doors of opportunities are out there, it is upon the policy makers, and up to the forums like today's joint seminar to provide the thinking and input into how to achieve this goal of progress and peace. Denmark despite being a small country will continue to be part of any cooperative initiatives in creating avenues leading to stabilization of South-West Asian region.

Closing Remarks by Mr Azizullah Omar, Afghan Head of Delegation

Mr Azizullah Omar embraced Afghanistan's resolve to cooperate in all those initiatives aiming at improving relations with its neighbouring countries especially Pakistan. Expanding and diversifying economic prospects between Afghanistan & Pakistan was at the centre of his talk and building up strong economic relations without getting affected by any country's level of engagement with any other country. Afghanistan is opened up to the region and the world for every possible economic enterprise. This pillar of the country's foreign policy may get a new lease of life by becoming part of CPEC and later extending it further through a transit way passing through Badakhshan, Kabul, and Jalalabad to Pakistan with Chinese help. Besides, implementing Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) in letter and expanding it into a trilateral framework by including Tajikistan would bring significant dividend for

the development and progress of the region.



Mr Azizullah extended his gratitude to NDU and RDDC for the warm hospitality and a successful seminar. With regard to Pakistan and Afghanistan's bilateral relations and trilateral regional cooperative mechanisms, there are many on-going initiatives. Afghan businessmen, entrepreneurs and workers are working in Pakistan, as Pakistan is one of the major trade partners of Afghanistan. Undoubtedly, geographically Pakistan is the biggest immediate neighbour of Afghanistan. Also, in terms of students' exchange, tourism and medical domain, Pakistan is by all means the most important neighbour.

Furthermore, there is no need to compare Afghanistan's relations with other countries as it is difficult to find a state which has equally balanced relations with all of its neighbouring countries. What matters is finding common grounds in improving relations between two countries by exploring ways and means for mutual benefit. A recent decision by Pakistan to get

the border crossing to Afghanistan opened by 24/7 is an indeed a welcomed step. There are other areas like trade etc. where both countries need to cooperate by focusing on positive things. Undoubtedly, there are challenges, but the need is to stem out common goals and fix common issues. In order to materialize this resolve, there is a need to build trust and clarify misperceptions existing between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

In connection to the Danish engagement in Afghanistan, it was reiterated that the Danish government has extended economic, security and professional support to the Afghan Unity Government for reconstruction and humanitarian activities and its assistance in supporting and building a stable and democratic society in Afghanistan are commendable.

While sharing his professional experience in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Mr. Aziz stated that Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA) is an excellent initiative. There is a desire in Central Asian republics, especially Tajikistan, to become a part of the APTTA by turning it into a trilateral forum.

There is a huge potential of trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Pakistan with its immense demographic potential is in much need of energy and may get benefitted from the Central Asian region – a hub of natural resources. CPEC along with the Belt and Road Initiative's corridors are more complementary to each other in nature rather than competitors. For Afghanistan, CPEC is more than just a land route and efforts are on to extract more benefits out of it by building a transit way

passing through Badakhshan, Kabul, and Jalalabad to Pakistan with Chinese help. Hence, Afghanistan is active on economic and security fronts in order to ensure an effective cooperation with Pakistan and opening up its market to the region is a practical manifestation and an important pillar of its foreign policy. Afghanistan is fully committed to practical cooperation and able to facilitate regional economic and security cooperation mechanisms and fully acknowledge its pledge to Denmark for such initiatives and measures.

Closing Remarks by Ambassador Ali Reza Sheikh Attar, (Retired), Iranian Representative

Ambassador Sheikh Attar presented the idea of having a trilateral framework of engagement as the problems being faced by Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran demand multilateral and more specifically trilateral forums of engagement. All the three countries share most of the solutions proposed for problems besetting the region. Denmark's genuine facilitation in bringing these countries under one roof for having an open and candid discussions on issues plaguing the region and helping them illuminate and clarify doubts and misperceptions is indeed praiseworthy and commendable.

In present times complications arising out of problems besetting the region require multilateral and particularly trilateral cooperation among countries which are historically, economically and culturally conjoined and are strategically and geo-strategically almost the same. It will not be too late to find out viable solutions. Unilateral and bilateral efforts are not enough as the Afghanistan issue is very complicated and by such isolated efforts one cannot find solution.



It must be realized that all the three countries have a good understanding of each other's viewpoints and the proposals and solutions put forward during the seminar have similar output i.e. achieving peace and security leading to progress and growth for the people of the region. Getting together under one roof for a common cause is a good beginning and a country like Denmark with no interests unlike other Western countries have made an honest effort to bring three important countries of the region together to seek out for solutions to their problems and mitigate an environment of suspicion and doubt. Indeed a commendable effort must deserve our appreciation and gratitude.

Closing Remarks by Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg, Commandant RDDC, Denmark

Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg expatiated on some of the practical recommendations floated during the discussions and the need to have consistency of practices aiming at evolving solutions for common problems of the region. The Commandant highlighted on the necessity for establishing a joint academy in areas of common

military domains for security processes in the region. Another step could be courses for mid-level military officers from the three countries in order to have them exchange views on matters of mutual concern and establish forums of interaction between security forces of the regional countries. The importance of having people with varied knowledge and school of thought gathered at one place would provide enough brainstorming on issues of mutual concern to create an environment for working out solutions to the common security challenges in the region.



The Commandant, RDDC Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg expressed his gratitude and thankfulness to the participating speakers, delegates, and participants. While sharing memories of his maiden visit to Pakistan, the Commandant termed it quite educational and valuable. The ambition was to have a setting at NDU for sharing experiences, talking to each other and building trust in order to exchange ideas, viewpoints and perceptions on different matters; being a focal point of attention of the present joint seminar. Indeed, it is a welcome step that all the participating speakers and delegates

from multiple schools of thought and with diversified experiences get enough brainstorming for creating comprehensive solutions to the common challenges between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.

He underlined that the recommendations made at the seminar need to be transformed into action to make them relevant, and the researchers, defence personals, diplomats, and intellectuals present here have the ability to influence policy-makers and policy making in the direction of a regional reconciliation, where the easing of tension between the region's states takes priority in order to shape the foundation for enhanced security cooperation. At the same time, identifying challenges that might not have an immediate solution is also an important task, as understanding disagreements will reduce the risks of misperception and misreading the actions of another country. Thus, seeking answers across borders through individuals and institutions instead of sticking with assumptions should be a core priority for all actors represented at the seminar. Finally, the Commandant addressed the following aspects as the key findings and recommendations of the seminar; 1) Establishing forums of interaction at tactical, operational and strategic levels between the three countries on a regular basis is worth pursuing, 2) Creating a joint military academy can lead to initial steps of military cooperation, 3) Focus should be within the region on sustainable solutions growing from within by improving neighbourhood relations.

The commandant concluded the seminar by stating that establishing joint academy for mutual communications and

having people at one forum to share knowledge and experiences can be prerequisites for promoting resolution to the regional challenges. The most important message is that if there is a will there are hundred ways to find a solution, and after attending the seminar it is evident to me that will does exist amongst us. Exploring further dimensions of good neighbourhood policies would be beneficial while keeping EU and Scandinavian countries' examples in view.

**Closing Address by Dr Shireen M. Mazari,
Federal Minister for Human Rights,
Pakistan**

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Human Rights Dr Shireen M. Mazari broadly unfolded the changing geopolitical dimensions from uni-polarity to multi-polarity. Denmark's role in leading cooperative mechanism in South Asia with the sole aim of creating stability and peace in the conflict-ridden region especially in Afghanistan deserves commendation. While underlining Pakistan's centrality being a connector to many sub- regions of Asia any regional connectivity mechanism may not bear fruit excluding Pakistan. Enduring regional cooperation must be rested on promoting joint trade and investment; liberalization & facilitation via regional comprehensive economic partnership within the countries of the region would lead to peace, stability and progress.

The chief guest thanked NDU and RDDC for organizing joint conference and providing opportunity for sharing her thoughts. It is encouraging to see practitioners from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Denmark to deliberate on multi-lateral issues and talking about collaboration because the time for unilateralism and even bilateralism is fast fading because of



interconnectivity that now prevails even at the strategic level globally. There is a general tendency to assume that 9/11 altered global security parameters qualitatively which is incorrect. 9/11 has accentuated major shift in the global and regional security dynamics that has been set in motion by the end of bipolarity. The most suitable term in this regard is 'bipolarity' instead of the 'end of the Cold War' because the Cold War ended much earlier but the disintegration of the Soviet Union led to the end of the bi-polar system that has come into existence before the Second World War. The global strategic environment is extremely fluid, and has a conflictual and dialectical international framework. One and the foremost is the emergence of the new international framework devised by the sole superpower the US, which they premised on the system of core state and it had two main features. One is the new alliance system that has come up with an expansion of the old defence alliance systems like NATO, and the second is the idea of coalitions of willing because coalitions of the willing signify that if enough states are around you, you could act outside the

framework of Chapter-7 of the United Nations Charter. All this has led to the weakening of international regime and international law.

An alternate pull has also emerged in the form of resurgence of multi-polarity, although it is still chaotic in form but multipolar world is challenging the idea of uni-polarity and core states and coalition of the willing. This resurgence is seen through the number of countries asserting international law and trying to reassert the relevancy of international norms and international legal institution. The international criminal court is reflective of this. It became much more centre staged and a principle emerged that was not there in the UN charter - but now is accepted at the UN level - and that was the responsibility to protect (R2P) principle gaining more and more acceptability. Scandinavian countries have played a critical role in trying to push forward the principle of R2P. It is now the time for R2P to be operationalized in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir where there is an ethnic cleansing programme going on.

In addition to these dialectical pushes and pulls, today's geopolitical system is also a complexity of multi layered interests specially when there are not only regional or bilateral defence agreements but also extra-regional defence pacts which are known as 'out of area operations'. From Pakistan's strategic standpoint, perhaps one of the most intrusive development in terms of out of area operations has been the expansion of NATO framework in the wake of end of bilateralism. Security of member states is the main agenda of NATO. The security of non-member states is not part of the NATO's strategic purpose; that is why NATO's

presence in out of area operations raises few legal issues. However, it is encouraging to see that Denmark is cooperating with Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan and trying to have a more cooperative dialogue and framework where non-NATO members can express their concern, can give their view point on what is essential and important to them; otherwise they have no say on the NATO policy in Afghanistan.

Moreover, the difference between the Muslim world and the West is becoming more and more pronounced with misperceptions increasing on both sides. The strategic fault lines aggravated because of pro-democracy agendas, be it the BMI (The Broader Middle East Initiative) or Greater Middle Eastern Initiative (GMEI). All that ended causing chaos spreading in that part of the world and the democracy agenda fizzled out very fast where the Arab spring really became the Arab vent of discontent. Russia is also reasserting its old influence in the Middle East and trying to fill in the vacuum created by upheavals in countries like Syria.

Pakistan desires peace in its neighbourhood and that also includes the Persian Gulf region, therefore regional cooperation between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran becomes extremely important. With Afghanistan and Iran, Pakistan share border, culture and history. Stability in the region is extremely crucial for all three countries so that this geographical triangle can keep out the fault lines and instability.

Pakistan's regional security dynamics have become more complex on its Western borders. On one hand, the Afghan situation is a source of instability and on the other hand, India's intrusion into Afghanistan has

multiplied the threat for Pakistan on its Western borders. Further, the federal minister argued that the new agenda of the Modi government is fascist, which is reflected in its attempt to forcefully and illegally annex Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir followed by a complete lockdown. India has moved up the escalation ladder not just by threatening but by carrying out military actions against Pakistan while the world unfortunately watches instead of operationalizing R2P.

These times when strategic complexities are increasing, Pakistan sees the benefits that can come from greater strategic cooperation, especially among the militaries since the nature of warfare has altered and become more multi-layered and widened in scope. Specially, since Pakistan's location is at the confluence of Central South West Asia, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, it can become the harbinger of connectivity for these regions. CPEC is a step in that direction as is the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline (TAPI) gas pipeline project. For all the countries engaged, these projects are a win-win situation. But peace and security must come first. You cannot have economic cooperation unless there is peace and security. This requires an intensity of multi-lateral cooperation among all the actors specially militaries including extra regional forces that are present in the Persian Gulf and in Afghanistan as well.

Since security now extends beyond traditional notions, military cooperation has also to transcend traditional frameworks of cooperation. It is not enough to have military exercises. Military cooperation must be more inclusive by taking into

consideration the new forms of hybrid warfare that are now emerging. For that, understanding each other's societal dynamics including socio-economic development by militaries must underlie collaborative efforts by all stake holders to achieve shared goals.

The chief guest congratulated NDU and RDDC for conducting the seminar, which could not have come at a better time given the strategic imperatives in this region and beyond. It is an important step for creating a peaceful region and for furthering the goal of regional peace and security leading to mutually beneficial socio-economic development. At a time when certain powers are moving away from cooperative strategic frameworks it is encouraging to see the commitment towards strategic cooperation displayed by the organizers and the participants of this seminar.

Vote of Thanks by Major General Asif Ali, HI (M), Acting President NDU

The Acting President of NDU, Major General Asif Ali, HI (M), expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all the distinguished participants of the two-day seminar especially the constructive approach adopted by them throughout the discussions that turned the event into a thought-provoking and intellectually stimulating experience. It was very encouraging that regardless of whether shared approaches of progress and cooperation were adopted or not, all the participants shared commonalities of interest.

The National Defence University in Pakistan and the Royal Danish Defence College have joined hands for promoting dialogue, peace and cooperation, where regional security cooperation has been the



scope of attention for the delegates from across many countries. The seminar's academic activity had marked a timely and well-focused opportunity that provided a platform to analyse the issue at hand with three-fold focus; efforts for regional security cooperation, drawing attention to irritants & obstacles and deliberating on opportunities.

The uniqueness and exclusivity of the NDU-RDDC seminar is reflected in the process of making regional cooperation functional through dialogue and then maintaining these forums of dialogues. The four countries involved in the present seminar have their own set of experiences in dealing with complex security challenges including militancy, insurgency, anti-government and terrorist activities despite constraints and challenges of varying degrees and types. This diversified pool of experiences enables one to extract pertinent strategies and approaches that can be helpful in bringing stability and achieve mutually agreed strategic objectives in a candid and free manner. In this regard I am deeply encouraged to see obvious

convergence in our discussions on multiple issues.

During the course of sessions, several of the speakers addressed that discussing issues only without taking practical steps will take us nowhere. Hence, moving beyond talking and materialising recommendations into practical manifestations must be the result of such platforms of mutual interaction. The future stability of this region lies in continuous dialogue and engagements, which would consequently enable us to promote consensus on common issues that could be converted into solid measures.

Secondly, it has been highlighted that we need to forget about the issues in our history and move forward. It is true that one should not remain entrenched in the past. However, one needs to learn from the past, live in the present and work for the future. It has also rightly been said that economic prosperity cannot be guaranteed without security. One has to put own house in order to ensure its economic security alongside its internal and external security.

Pakistan is the nation who has hosted over 3.5 million of Afghan refugees without any foreign support and assistance. It is a

land of large-hearted people and over 2.7 million Afghan refugees are still living in Pakistan. It is not a matter of capacity or capability but a matter of mutual trust. Keeping mutual trust intact and boosting it further will help in moving forward.

The president expressed his hope that deliberations taken place during the multiple thematic sessions of the seminar had put forth practicable ideas for establishing regional security cooperation between the three regional countries. Carrying forward this idea for its practical manifestation must be the next goal. All appreciation is to the Commandant of RDDC, ISSRA and their respective teams for showing diligence, dedication and untiring efforts for making the joint venture a success. The President also thanked the Chief Guest, Federal Minister for Human Rights, for sparing her precious time to share valuable thoughts with the audience. Finally, he expressed his gratitude to all the distinguished guests, participants and especially the international speakers for sharing their strategic insights for regional security and peace.





ANNEXURE **I**

Participation Profile

PARTICIPATION PROFILE – IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

Major General Asif Ali, HI (M)

Major General Asif Ali, Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military), was commissioned in 1987. He is a graduate of Command and Staff College Quetta, National Defence University Islamabad and National Defence University China. The General has held various command, staff and instructional assignments. On the instructional side, he remained on the faculty of Command and Staff College Quetta and School of Artillery. He has also served as Military Observer in Iraq and

Kuwait Observer Mission. His commanded experience includes command of an Artillery Regiment, an Infantry Battalion, an Infantry Brigade and Artillery Division in War on Terror in South Waziristan. The General holds Master's Degree in War Studies, Master's Degree in Strategic Studies, Master's Degree in Military Sciences and Management and Master's Degree in Military Sciences from China. He has remained Commandant School of Artillery.



Presently, he is serving as Director General Institute for Strategic Studies Research and Analysis, National Defence University.

Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg

Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg assumed his post as Commandant of the RDDC in 2018. Previously, he was Deputy Director at the Ministry of Defence Personnel Agency for three years and also the head of the manning division in that agency. The Rear Admiral began his naval service in 1981 and following graduation from the Royal Danish Naval Academy was posted to corvettes for three years. He then became Commanding Officer of Training Ship Division 3, Svanen and

Thyra, Operations officer on inspection vessels and Operations Officer on the HDMS Olfert Fischer. Following a four-year detail to the Danish Defence Intelligence Service, he assumed the position of Chief of the Danish Intelligence Cell in Sarajevo, Bosnia. Afterwards, the Rear Admiral returned to Chief of Defence headquarters as a staff officer. He was Head of the Senior Staff Officer Course from 2008 to 2009. He was Head of the Faculty for Military Psychology,



Leadership and Pedagogy. Admiral holds both an MBA and MPA and has studied at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

Dr Michael Rubin

Dr Michael Rubin is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, where he researches Arab politics, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Iran, Iraq, the Kurds, terrorism, and Turkey. Dr. Rubin has a Ph.D. and an M.A. in history from Yale University, USA where he also obtained a B.S. in biology. Dr. Rubin has lived in post-revolution Iran, Yemen, and

both pre- and post-war Iraq, and he spent time with the Taliban before 9/11. He is author, co-author, and co-editor of several books exploring Iranian history, American diplomacy, Kurdish studies, and Shi'ite politics



Lieutenant General Naeem Khalid Lodhi, HI (M), (Retired)

Lieutenant General Naeem Khalid Lodhi, HI (M), (Retd) was commissioned in 1974 and joined Corps of Engineers in Pakistan Army. He served in various command assignments as Commander Engineers, GOC and Corps Commander. He also served as Deputy Engineer in Chief at GHQ. After graduating from Military College of Engineering, Command and Staff College Quetta and

National Defence University, he remained on the faculty of all the three prestigious institutions. General Lodhi also holds Masters in International Relations and has attended finance related short courses at Columbia University USA, and France. He has also served as Secretary Defence for a short tenure and was also appointed as Defence Minister of Pakistan in an interim setup. Presently, he contributes regularly



in national and international newspapers as an eminent defence analyst.

Ambassador Dr Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal, (Retired)

Dr Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal is a well-known political figure of Afghanistan. He has served on a number of key government posts for the past 15 years including President's Special Representative, Afghanistan's Ambassador to Pakistan, National Economic Advisor of Afghanistan, Minister of Finance,

Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, Chief Economic Advisor to former President Hamid Karzai, and President of Afghanistan Investment Support Agency. Before Dr Zakhilwal joined the Afghan government, he worked for various international organizations in Kabul, including the World Bank,



United Nations (UN) and Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Dr Zakhilwal obtained his Bachelor's degree in Economics

from University of Winnipeg in Manitoba, Canada in 1994 and Master's degree in Economics at Queen's University in Kingston Canada, 1995 and later completed

his doctorate in Economics at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, 2001.

Lieutenant General Hidayat-ur-Rehman, HI (M), (Retired)

Lieutenant General Hidayat-ur-Rehman, HI (M), (Retd), was commissioned in 26 AK Regiment on 16 September, 1983. He has varied experience of command, staff and Instruction assignments. He is a graduate of Command and Staff College, Quetta, the US Army Command and General Staff College and National Defence University, Islamabad. He has been Instructor at PMA and also on the

faculty of Command & Staff College Quetta and NDU. Besides, he served as liaison officer Bagram (Afghanistan), and Sector Commander in Ivory Coast. He has also commanded an Infantry Battalion and an Infantry Division. He remained Chief Instructor at NDU. He has also commanded 11 Corps from 2014 to 2016. He has recently been retired as Inspector General Training & Evaluation (IGT&E)



Ambassador Alireza Sheikh Attar, (Retired)

Ambassador Alireza Sheikh Attar is an Iranian diplomat and political dignitary. He has served as Iranian Ambassador to Germany and India. He received his bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from Sharif University of Technology, Iran and then got his Master's degree in Management. He is a prolific writer both in Persian and English

languages and has a number of publications to his credit on management and global politics with a special focus on Iranian perspectives.



Professor Amin Saikal

Professor Amin Saikal is a distinguished Professor of Political Science, Public Policy Fellow at the Australian National University. He has been a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow in IR. He is an awardee of the Order of Australia (AM), and an elected Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia. His most recent books include: 'Iran Rising: The Survival and Future of the Islamic Republic', 'Islam beyond Borders: Umma in World Politics'

– co-author; and 'Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival'. He has also published numerous articles in major international journals, book chapters in edited volumes, feature articles in major dailies, including The New York times, The Guardian, The Wall Street Journal, and The Sydney Morning Herald and he is also a frequent commentator on Australian and international TV and radio networks.



Mr David Vestenskov

Mr David Vestenskov is chief consultant for the Centre for Stabilisation at the Royal Danish Defence College, Denmark which coordinates projects within the framework of the Danish Peace and Stabilisation Programme for Afghanistan and Pakistan. His analytical work and research is primarily focused on security developments in Pakistan,

Afghanistan, and the surrounding regions; subjects on which he has published numerous articles and books. His current work comprises research, international networking, and project implementation in areas facing international security issues, counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, as well as regional peace building.



Mr Azizullah Omar

Mr Azizullah Omar is a seasoned Afghan diplomat with a long experience of serving on a number of key positions in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Afghanistan. These include; acting Director General of Economic Cooperation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy and Acting DG of Policy and Strategy of MoFA (2016-2019), Charge' D affaires of the

Afghan Embassy and permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the UN office in Geneva from respectively. He has also served as Director of Multilateral Relations of MFA from 2005 to 2008. Prior to his appointment abroad, he was member of the second political Directorate (Iran & Turkey Desk) of MFA (2002-2005). Mr Omar holds Bachelor's and Master's in Business



Administration from the University of Berkley, USA.

Lieutenant General Shaheen Mazhar Mahmood, HI (M)

Lieutenant General Shaheen Mazhar Mahmood, HI (M), was commissioned in 27 Cavalry in March 1987. He is a Graduate of Command and Staff College, Quetta and National Defence University, Islamabad. He carries with him a varied experience of Staff, Command and Instructional appointments. He has been a Brigade Major of an Infantry Brigade, Deputy Military Secretary and Vice Chief of the

General Staff at General Headquarters. The General Officer has commanded an Armoured Regiment, an Armoured Brigade, an Infantry Brigade, Mechanized Division and Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (North) as Inspector General. On the instructional side, he has been on the faculty of Command and Staff College, Quetta and NDU



Ambassador Ali Reza Bikdeli, (Retired)

Ambassador Ali Reza Bikdeli is a senior diplomat and political analyst with a wide range of ambassadorial experience around the world. His diplomatic career includes a number of key assignments such as: Iranian Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey (2010-2016), Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus, (2006-

2009), Ambassador to the Republic of Azerbaijan (1994-2000), Charge d'affaires of the Embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran in Kazakhstan (1990-1991) and Deputy Head of the Embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran in Moscow (Ex- Soviet Union) (1986-1990).



Major Karsten Marrup

Major Karsten Marrup is head of the Air Warfare Centre (AWC) at the Royal Danish Defence College. He has an operational background as senior air battle manager and holds a Master's degree in military operational art and science from United States Air Force University. At the AWC, he teaches and researches air power related issues. His

analytical work and research have primarily focused on International Humanitarian Law, measuring the strategic effect of offensive air power, and integrated air and missile defence. His current work comprises research on countering UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) and Russian air power.



Mr Fazel Rabi Wardak

Mr Fazel Rabi Wardak graduated from the Engineering Faculty of Kabul University, and received his MBA from Preston University Peshawar, Pakistan. Mr Wardak has successfully managed multi-million worth projects and programs supporting the Afghan political processes in Afghanistan since 2002. Currently, Mr Wardak is the Foundation's Director for

Strategic Programs and Regional Cooperation in the Afghanistan office. Previously, he has held positions as Sub-national Governance Head, Director of Governance, and Chief of Party of the Change Management program for the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Live Stock (MAIL), Afghanistan.



Brigadier Saeed Ullah

Brigadier Saeed Ullah was commissioned in the Pakistan Army in 1994 in an infantry Battalion and subsequently served on key assignments which include: participating in counterterrorism operations for more than four years at the United Nations in addition to command of an infantry battalion in

Frontier Regions of Pakistan. He served as Instructor at the School of Infantry and Tactics. Brigadier Saeed holds two Masters' in Irregular warfare & Information operations and Regional Security Studies in South Asia & Middle East from USA.



Mr Mohsen Roohisefat

Mr Mohsen Roohisefat is a prominent Iranian diplomat and bureaucrat with a wide-ranging experience of serving at different diplomatic missions around the globe including: Counsellor of Iranian Embassy in Malaysia (2011-2014), Deputy Chief of Mission Iranian Embassy in Pakistan (2004-2008), Acting Counsel General at Iranian Embassy in Afghanistan (2004), Deputy Chief of Mission at Iranian Embassy, India (1999-

2002), Deputy Consul General of Islamic Republic of Iran in Peshawar, Pakistan (1990-1992). He is Master's in Political Management from School of International Relations, Tehran. Mr Roohisefat is a prolific writer and regularly contributes to various national and international journals on political and economic systems of various countries through comparative analysis of Iran, Syria, Algeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.



He is currently serving as the Director of Institute for Political and International studies (IPIS).

Senior Colonel Ding Hao

Senior Colonel Ding Hao, a researcher at the Institute of Foreign Military Studies of the Academy of Military Sciences, China and director of the South Asian Society of China, is mainly engaged in the study of Indian military affairs and security issues in South Asia. The main

achievements include: monographs "Basic Military Situation of India", "Basic Military Situation of South Asia", "Indian Military Thought", "Indian Military Operations Manual" and "Indian Strategic Culture and Military Thought".



His Excellency Ambassador Rolf M.P.H. Holmboe

His Excellency Ambassador Rolf M.H.P. Holmboe is a career diplomat serving as Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan since 2017. From 2015 to 2017 he was a Research Fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute in Ottawa, Canada. He served as Ambassador of Denmark to Lebanon (2013-2015), and to Syria and Jordan (2012-2015). Previously, he was Director of Strategy and Policy Planning and Head of Department for Stabilisation at the Danish MoFA,

and served as Denmark's Representative to the Palestinian Authority and as Danish Representative to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency from 2005 to 2009. As an army reserve officer, he has participated in missions to conflict zones and functioned as an arms control inspector under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). As an external lecturer, he has taught conflict studies in fragile states at Copenhagen University.



He holds a Master's Degree in Political Science and a Supplementary Degree in Arabic Studies from Aarhus University, Denmark.

Dr Shireen M. Mazari

Dr Shireen M. Mazari is currently serving as Federal Minister for Human Rights. She holds a B.Sc. (Hon) from the London School of Economics, and a Masters, M. Phil and PhD, from Colombia University, New York, USA. She served as Director General, Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (2000-2008). She also remained as Chairperson /Associate Professor, at Department of Defence and

Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad (1988-1993).

Dr Mazari has been a regular columnist for the English dailies of Pakistan and was Editor of "The Nation" a leading English Daily, (2009 – 2010). She has written extensively on defence and security issues. Dr Mazari has also authored a book titled "The Kargil Conflict 1999 Separating Fact from Fiction". The book is a



ground breaking study of the Kargil Conflict from a Pakistani perspective.



ANNEXURE **II**

Programme

Day 1 - October 22, 2019 (Tuesday)

Inaugural Session		
Time	Activity	Remarks
0900 – 1000	Registration	
1000 – 1005	Recitation of the Holy Quran	
1005 – 1010	Introductory remarks by Sponsor Director	Pakistan
1010 – 1020	Opening remarks by Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg, Commandant RDDC	Denmark
1020 - 1040	Expert remarks by Dr Michael Rubin	USA
1040 – 1050	Address by Acting President NDU	Pakistan
1050 - 1100	Presentation of Souvenirs & Group Photo	
1100 - 1130	Tea/ Coffee Break	ISSRA Lounge

Session – 1 Role of Military to Military Cooperation in Promoting Regional Security Moderator: Lieutenant General Naeem Khalid Lodhi, HI(M), (Retired)			
Time	Activity	Speaker	Country
1130 – 1135	Introductory remarks by Moderator	Lieutenant General Naeem Khalid Lodhi, HI (M), (Retd)	Pakistan
1135 – 1150	Appraisal from Afghanistan	Dr Omar Zakhilwal	Afghanistan
1150 – 1205	Appraisal from Pakistan	Lieutenant General Hidayat-ur-Rehman, HI (M), (Retd)	Pakistan
1205 – 1220	Appraisal from Iran	Ambassador Ali Reza Sheikh Attar, (Retd)	Iran
1220 – 1235	Expert remarks	Professor Amin Saikal	Australia
1235– 1315	Interactive Session		
1315 – 1325	Wrap up by Moderator & Presentation of Souvenirs		
1325 – 1420	Prayer and Lunch Break		

Session – 2 Identifying Mechanisms for Reducing Civilian Casualties through Military Cooperation Moderator: Mr David Vestenskov			
1420 – 1425	Introductory remarks by Moderator	Mr David Vestenskov	Denmark
1425 – 1440	Appraisal from Afghanistan	Mr Azizullah Omar	Afghanistan
1440 – 1455	Appraisal from Pakistan	Lieutenant General Shaheen Mazhar Mehmood, HI (M)	Pakistan
1455 – 1510	Appraisal from Iran	Ambassador Ali Reza Bikdeli, (Retd)	Iran
1510 – 1525	Expert remarks	Major Karsten Marrup	Denmark
1525 – 1605	Interactive Session		
1605 – 1620	Wrap-up by Moderator & Presentation of Souvenirs		
1620	Dispersal		

Day 2 - October 23, 2019 (Wednesday)

Session - 3 Exploring Opportunities for Establishing Exchange Programmes and Cooperation among Security Institutions in Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran Moderator: Professor Amin Saikal			
Time	Activity	Speaker	Remarks
0930 – 1000	Registration of Participants		
1000 – 1005	Recitation of Holy Quran		
1005 – 1015	Introductory remarks by Moderator	Professor Amin Saikal	Australia
1015 – 1030	Appraisal from Afghanistan	Mr Fazel Rabi Wardak	Afghanistan
1030 – 1045	Appraisal from Pakistan	Brigadier Saeed Ullah	Pakistan
1045 – 1100	Appraisal from Iran	Mr Mohsen Roohisefat	Iran
1100 – 1115	Expert remarks	Senior Colonel Ding Hao	China
1115 – 1200	Interactive Session		
1200 – 1210	Wrap up by Moderator & Presentation of Souvenirs		
1210 – 1240	Tea/Coffee Break		
Closing Session			
1240 – 1255	Way Ahead: Balancing Regional Security Cooperation	H.E. Rolf Holmboe, Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan	Denmark
1255 – 1305	Closing remarks	Ambassador Ali Reza Sheikh Attar, (Retd) Iranian Representative	Iran
1305 – 1320	Closing remarks	Mr Azizullah Omar Afghan Head of Delegation	Afghanistan
1320 – 1335	Closing remarks	Rear Admiral Henrik Ryberg, Commandant, RDDC	Denmark
1335 – 1350	Address by Chief Guest	Dr Shireen M. Mazari, Federal Minister for Human Rights	Pakistan
1350 – 1400	Vote of Thanks	Major General Asif Ali, HI(M), Acting President NDU	Pakistan
1400 – 1405	Group Photo		
1405 – 1500	Lunch		
1500 Onwards	Dispersal		



PICTURE GALLERY



















ROYAL DANISH DEFENCE COLLEGE

**INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS (ISSRA)
NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD**