



2nd PAJCCI'S COMMUNIQUE

INSIGHT ON PAK-AFGHAN NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

September 30th, 2017





○ **H.E. President Ashraf Ghani appeals to Pakistan for dialogueⁱ**

On 20th September 2017, President, Afghanistan while addressing the UN General Assembly called on Pakistan to engage in all-inclusive negotiations for *peace, security and regional cooperation leading to prosperity*. Lately, during the summit in Kazakhstan, President Ghani reiterated the same whereas; Turkish President H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan also extended support of the Turkish government in improving relations between Kabul and Islamabad.

He additionally appreciated the US President, H.E. Donald Trump's new Afghan strategy and commented that: "We welcome this strategy, which has now set us on a pathway to certainty. The Afghan people have looked to the United States for this type of resolve for years". On the contrary, H.E. Prime Minister Pakistan, Pakistan's Parliament and other leaders around the world, including Turkey and Iran condemned Trump's new strategy that blamed Pakistan for providing its soil to terrorist sanctuaries.ⁱⁱ

○ **There is no need for Military solution to the Afghan conflictⁱⁱⁱ**

H.E. Foreign Secretary, Tehmina Janjua met with H.E. Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister, Hekmat Karzai in New York, where they discussed the common issues between both countries. The foreign secretary reiterated that Pakistan wants peace in Afghanistan, which is vital for regional stability. She stressed that there is no need for a military solution to the Afghan conflict, but what we need is to focus on strengthening relations and engagement between the two sides at all levels.

Moreover, H.E. Aizaz Chaudhry, Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States of America has strongly urged the authorities in Kabul to cooperate with the authorities in Islamabad to wipe out the terrorism in a bid to maintain peace in the region. He insisted that the presence of terrorists in Afghanistan is also causing harm to Pakistan.^{iv}

○ **H.E. Prime Minister Pakistan's reaction to Trump's statement^v**

While an interaction with foreign media, H.E. Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that Pakistan had suffered massively due to instability in Afghanistan and we are more committed than any other country in the region for peaceful resolution of the Afghan issue. The Prime Minister established that Pakistan is always open to cooperate with US because both countries have close relationship with each other for a long time and this should not be affected only due to Afghanistan issue. In this context, he strongly rejected allegations about terrorist hideouts in Pakistan and defended that Pakistan had lost

more than \$120 billion in the war against terrorism. Moreover, Pakistan had hosted 3.5 million Afghan refugees. He further said that bilateral verifications and joint patrolling with Afghanistan will be very significant for fighting against terrorism. Additionally, Pakistan has even offered training to the Afghan forces to fight against terrorism because it is a problem for both countries.

○ **Turkey & Iran lauded Pakistan's efforts for regional stability^{vi}**

While attending the first summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on Science and Technology, Turkish President, H.E. Erdogan appreciated Pakistan's efforts for regional stability and fight against terrorism. In response to his views that "Afghanistan issues cannot be resolved without Pakistan", President Pakistan established that Pakistan had taken extraordinary steps for regional peace and security and had faced the biggest loss in its fight against terrorism.

On the same lines, H.E. Foreign Minister of Pakistan visited both Turkey and Iran and held talks with respective leadership. During the meeting, the Turkish leadership ensured that they are prepared to work together for peace and stability in Afghanistan and also agreed to enhance cooperation in political, economic, defense and people to people ties with Pakistan.^{vii} Additionally Foreign Minister of Iran also ensured that Iran will enhance cooperation in establishing peace and security in Afghanistan through regional and multilateral political talks.^{viii}

○ **Pak-Afghan border reopens following Grenade attack^{ix}**

Pak-Afghan border at Torkham was closed in the wake of a hand- grenade attack against security forces personnel, which was launched from the Afghan territory.^x Due to border closure for more than 24 hours, thousands of people and hundreds of vehicles loaded with goods, including fresh fruits, vegetables and other edible items were left stranded. Hence, following a meeting on 16th September between high-ranking border and security officials from both sides, Pakistan reopened the Torkham border crossing with Afghanistan.

○ **H.E. Ambassador of Afghanistan to Pakistan admitted TTP has sanctuaries on Afghan soil^{xi}**

The Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Dr. Omar Zakhilwal while addressing the second round of the Afghanistan-Pakistan Dialogue on Bilateral Reconciliation: Opportunities and Challenges admitted that both countries have mismanaged their relationship and now there is a dire need to

give convincing mutual assurance from both sides to each other. He further commented that: “A prosperous and well-respected Pakistan will benefit Afghanistan”.

While talking about terrorism, this was the first time that any senior Afghan figure publicly accepted that outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has sanctuaries on Afghan soil. He urged on this point by saying that: “Afghanistan must ensure that its space is not used by the TTP against Pakistan, and Pakistan must ensure that its soil is not used by the Haqqanis and others against Afghanistan”.

In a recent interview, the Afghan ambassador said that good people-to-people relationship is the most important aspect for two countries’ ties which people from across the border enjoyed since decades. Further, he added that the Afghan government will welcome Pakistan, China and other countries, if they play a facilitator role to resume talks with Taliban for maintaining peace.^{xii}

○ **Pak-Afghan-US joint efforts to eliminate Daesh^{xiii}**

Despite challenges in the relationship between Pakistan, Afghanistan and USA, a meeting of the trilateral process was hosted at the Ministry of Defense in Kabul, having an agenda to eliminate DAESH (a terrorist group) and to continue the fight against the common menace of terrorism. Earlier, Pakistan and Afghanistan also held bilateral military meetings with the concern of mutual security in the region.

○ **HEC awarded 3000 scholarships to Afghan students^{xiv}**

The Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Dr. Omar Zakhilwal while addressing the award ceremony in Lahore in which Higher Education Commission (HEC) has given 3000 scholarships to Afghan students said that bilateral misunderstandings between Pakistan-Afghanistan relationships will not affect people-to-people relationship of both countries. He added that the things are moving in the right direction on the political side and he is hopeful of better ties between the two countries.

The Ambassador thanked Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan and said that there is no better way of strengthening the bilateral relationship between the two countries than extending educational scholarships to Afghan students because these students will serve as agents of change in the future.



○ **Uncultivated land in Afghanistan^{xv}**

According to Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) Afghanistan, it has 7.5 million hectares land which is suitable for growing crops, but due to several problems only a small portion of the land is being used. Mr. Lotfullah Rashid, spokesperson for the Ministry of Agriculture commented that: *“The problems for farmers is the lack of access to land due to insecurity, lack of irrigation canals, and other issues which have remained from the past and have affected our activities in this respect”*.

Today, this is one of the biggest issues of Afghanistan and a number of analysts suggest that if government is not able to work on big projects, at least medium-sized & small dams and irrigation canals should be built to resolve the matter. On the other hand, Mr. Yasin Farahmand, a member of the Academy of Sciences of Afghanistan commented that: *“We should learn from the experiences of our neighboring countries like Iran and Pakistan; these countries have gotten the private sector to help in producing fertilized seed and through this they have considerably increased their products”*.

○ **PAJCCI’s new team will further facilitate the vision of regional peace and economic prosperity: Zubair Motiwala^{xvi}**

As per the notification issued by PAJCCI in context of its elections for the year 2017-18, Junaid Esmail Makda would be the President of the Chamber. He is one of the founding members of the Chamber and has been instrumental in running the operations successfully since the inception. Daroo Khan Achakzai and Faiz Muhammad Faizi have been chosen as Senior Vice President and Vice President respectively.

Chairman PAJCCI, Zubair Motiwala welcomed the new team and showed confidence that under such seasoned management, PAJCCI will be better equipped and attains further successes. He iterated that the Chamber has been successful in managing certain lacunas; however, there is a long way to go to make the mark impressively. He mentioned that tariff disparity is incentivizing parallel trade; hence it is important for PAJCCI to advocate appropriate tariff rationalization along with strengthening confidence building measures.

The newly elected President, Junaid Makda, thanked the executive body for the vote of confidence and ensured that under the visionary leadership of Zubair Motiwala (Chairman, Pakistan Chapter) and Khan Jan Alokozai (Co-Chairman, Afghan Chapter) along with due support from executive committee members of both chapters, the Chamber will ensure further efforts in alleviating mutual issues of



businesses across the border. He added that futuristic perspective of PAJCCI is to enhance regional trade ties and capacity building of business entities to tap the emerging opportunities.

Additionally Zubair Motiwala strongly urged both the governments to segregate business and trade ties from political and military tensions, though, establish strong security measures that are vital for stabilization and sustainability of both the countries without compromising upon the sentiments of the business community across the border. He emphasized that both the governments should take immediate steps to enhance confidence building measures and keeping current confidence level and business stagnance in view, place the economic agenda as a top priority item in all the strategic meetings. Further, involvement of joint chamber, that represents sentiments and issues from across the border, would significantly help not only in improving the business graph but would also re-establish the confidence building measures.

ⁱ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1358887>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/09/11/ghani-says-afghanistan-ready-for-comprehensive-talks-with-pakistan/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1510260/foreign-secretary-meets-afghan-deputy-fm/>

^{iv} <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1499977/aizaz-urges-afghanistan-to-cooperate-with-pakistan-to-address-terrorism/>

^v <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/09/12/pm-questions-isafs-success-near-afghan-border-areas/>

^{vi} <http://nation.com.pk/national/10-Sep-2017/without-pakistan-afghanistan-conflict-cannot-be-resolved-erdogan>

^{vii} <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/09/12/pakistan-turkey-to-continue-working-together-for-peace-stability-in-afghanistan/>

^{viii} <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/09/12/pakistan-iran-to-enhance-cooperation-in-afghanistan/>

^{ix} <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/09/16/pak-afghan-border-reopens-following-hand-grenade-attack/>

^x <https://www.rferl.org/a/pakistan-afghanistan-torkham-border-hundreds-stuck-after-closure/28738989.html>

^{xi} <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1504361/top-diplomat-vows-afghanistan-will-not-collude-india-harm-pakistan/>

^{xii} <http://www.radio.gov.pk/25-Sep-2017/pakistan-and-afghanistan-rendered-great-sacrifices-in-war-against-terrorism>

^{xiii} <https://www.geo.tv/latest/158087-tripartite-bilateral-meetings-in-kabul-among-pakistan-afghanistan-and-us>

^{xiv} <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2017/09/28/pak-afghan-grievances-are-fleeting-afghan-ambassador/>

^{xv} <http://www.tolonews.com/business/millions-hectares-land-remain-uncultivated-afghanistan>

^{xvi} http://www.pajcci.com/PressRelease/PressReleaseImage_90.pdf