

Conflicts termed threatening for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Dec 10: The participants at an international conference termed the ongoing conflicts in the tribal areas and Balochistan, a serious threat to Pakistan and a result of an imbalance in civil -military relationship.

“The ongoing conflicts in large parts of the country such as Fata and Balochistan and other parts of the country pose a serious threat to Pakistan as a whole. The underlying factors which have led to the current religious militancy remain largely unaddressed,” says a unanimously-passed resolution at the conclusion of a two-day international conference on “Securing a frontline state: alternative views on peace and conflict in Pakistan”, organised jointly by Heinrich Boll Stiftung and Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS), says a press release here on Saturday.

It says: “The prevalent crisis of human security is the direct outcome of the over emphasis on conventional notions of security, an over-centralised state structure where the balance of civil-military relations are still heavily tilted in favour of the armed forces. The predominance of the Pakistani military in foreign and security policy has proven highly problematic and entailed extremely debilitating consequences.”

Moreover, it says: “The failure to address pressing human security issues (education, health, food, shelter, unemployment) has exacerbated the security situation in the conventional sense. The inability and incompetence of a mighty bureaucracy is also a major factor in poor governance and lack of development.”

Through the resolution, the participants suggested that “Pakistan must work for grassroots political-social-economic empowerment, devolution in its true sense to improve service delivery, reduce poverty and address unemployment, disguised unemployment that also sits at the heart of underdevelopment and urgently prioritise education and invest more and more resources in primary education. In order to diffuse and neutralise these threats, it is necessary to address the root causes of these threats and address people`s grievances.”

In their speeches, the speakers said Pakistan could no longer afford to continue with its decades-long policy of hostile relations with its neighbours at the cost of good relation in economic, trade and cultural milieus.

Those who spoke on the occasion included human rights activist I. A. Rahman, Jeffrey Laurenti, a US-based scholar on foreign affairs, Abdul Rahman Habibzui from Kabul, Dr Smruti S. Pattanaik from New Delhi, Dr Thomas K. Gugler, a research fellow from Vienna, and executive director CRSS Imtiaz Gul.

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Fight for ‘sovereignty’: ‘Pakistan can’t afford international isolation’

ISLAMABAD:

With conflicts afflicting a large part of the country, economic crisis and inadequate socio-economic development, Pakistan cannot afford international isolation.

At the same time, the international community must respect Pakistan’s sovereignty while paying a dispassionate attention to the current crisis that has evolved over three decades and is the direct consequence of the US-led western war against the communist regime in Afghanistan.

These views were expressed by speakers from various countries on the concluding day of a two-day conference on “Securing a Fronline State: Alternative views on Peace and Conflict in Pakistan” organised by the Islamabad-based think tank Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) and Heinrich Boll Stiftung, in media partnership with *The Express Tribune* on Friday.

Describing the current strained relations between Pakistan and the US, Jeffrey Laurenti — a US expert on foreign affairs — said, “They resemble a marriage that has gone bad.”

The risks of further deterioration and hostility between Pakistan and US are high until the Afghanistan conflict is resolved, Laurenti said, adding, “It is like a marriage in a traditional Catholic country where the grip of Church makes divorce nearly impossible.”

He underlined that Pakistan should wake up to the new reality that medieval fundamentalist regime in Kabul will not unlock its economic and social potential. “Islamist generals in Pakistan supported radicals in Afghanistan for two decades and its after-effects continue to haunt Pakistanis till date,” he added.

He opined that even though there is frustration among military commanders and intelligence community in Washington over the fragility of Pak-US relations, the US state department is struggling hard to fix the issue.

South Asian Studies Institute Academy of Social Sciences Head Abdul Rehman Habibzui from Kabul said that Afghanistan acknowledges strategic strengths of Pakistan and in return wants Pakistan to take into account the transit vitality of Afghanistan.

“Afghanistan can potentially link the future energy hub of the world, Central Asia, with Pakistan and other regions,” said Habibzai, adding that “unfortunately” Afghans do not have a positive view of Pakistan due its involvement in Afghanistan.

Taking into account this changing reality Pakistan should restructure its policy towards Afghanistan based on mutual respect and dignity, Habibzai said. However, Afghanistan should also ensure that its land may not be used for subversive activities against Pakistan. “We need to live like twin brothers,” Habibzai remarked.

Dr Smruti S Pattanaik from New Delhi emphasised on normalisation of relations between Pakistan and India, adding that even the challenge of terrorism provides the opportunity to cooperate with each other. “Pakistan’s help to India in Mumbai attacks is a case in point,” he said.

“Pakistan and India can carve out space to realign their interests in Afghanistan, since both states believe in the country’s peaceful and prosperous future,” Pattanaik added.

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Friday, 09 Dec 2011

There is no need for Pakistan to expand its nuclear arsenal. The country is facing no direct threat from India or any other state. This was said by an outspoken Dr Pervez Hoodbhoy in the presence of serving and retired military officers – including Inter-Services Public Relations Director General Athar Abbas – at a seminar here on Thursday.

“Why does Pakistan have the world’s fastest growing nuclear arsenal?” asked Dr Hoodbhoy, a physicist and a professor at the Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad.

He said the military is convinced that the US wants to seize Pakistan’s nukes so they want to increase their number to make it difficult for anyone to steal. Also, the military thinks that in the post-US Afghanistan, the nuclear weapons will be useful for defence against any external intervention, particularly from the United States. He said the army is also convinced that US wants to deny Pakistan strategic depth.

“Nuclear weapons have not provided us security. We have internal security threats which we cannot counter with nukes,” Hoodbhoy concluded his analysis at the two-day international seminar “Securing a Frontline State: Alternative Views on Peace and Conflict in Pakistan”. The seminar was jointly organised by Heinrich Boll Stiftung and Centre for Research and Security Studies, and sponsored by The Express Tribune.

Syed Irfan Ashraf, a lecturer at University of Peshawar, said it is not just a single missile fired by United States drones at a potential terrorist targets, but the subsequent damage that haunts people the most.

Ashraf said that after every drone strike, the militants “unleash hell” on the locals. They start search operations in the area to arrest suspected spies and behead them, at times solely on suspicions. Also, he said, when a drone strikes at a single house, other houses in the vicinity are also affected because most of them are made of mud and cannot stand the devastation of hellfire missiles.

He stressed that the drone strikes in the tribal areas are not ending militancy but are instead spreading it. “Had they [drone strikes] been a solution, we would have ended militancy in the area in the past seven years,” said Ashraf. He emphasised that the US and Pakistan have to think of available alternative solutions and stop relying solely on drones.

Executive Director SDPI Abid Suleri said that developmental challenges in Pakistan are chronic and endemic and these are policy level challenges. He lamented that Pakistan in its history, never tried people centric paradigm, rather security paradigm always overtook the former.

Senior journalist and columnist, Ejaz Haider, said that civil-military rift is the major threat to Pakistan. “There should be civilian control over military but for that our leadership lacks the political will,” he said. He added that military was never the sole manifestation of national power but a tool in the setting.

Afiya Shehrbano Zia, an academician and activist, said that it is unfortunate that liberals have failed to carve a clear direction for themselves. The research on extremism and militancy in Pakistan post 9/11 has been unchecked and off focus, she added.

Former ambassador Ayaz Wazir said that Pakistan should not look for a subservient Afghanistan. He said a friendly and autonomous Afghanistan will be beneficial for Pakistan in the long-run.

'Pakistan must realign its policy towards neighbouring states'

STAFF REPORT Friday, 9 Dec 2011 9:11 pm | Comments (0)

ISLAMABAD - Speakers at a seminar said here on Friday that Pakistan could no longer afford to continue with its decades-long policy of hostile relations with its neighbours at the cost of good relations with them in economic, trade, and cultural fields

They said it was about time when Pakistan would have to choose to live amicably with its neighbours or continue its journey on the path to 'international isolation and ultimate self-destruction'.

They were speaking at a two-day international seminar entitled "Securing a Frontline State: Alternative Views on Peace and Conflict in Pakistan", which was jointly organised by Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Pakistan, and Centre for Research and Security Studies here at local hotel.

US scholar on the foreign affairs Jeffrey Laurenti underlined that Pakistan should awaken to the new reality that medieval fundamentalist regime in Kabul would not unlock economic and social potential of that state.

"For two decades Islamist generals in Pakistan supported radicals in Afghanistan and the legacy continues to haunt Pakistan even today", he noted.

He emphasised that Pakistan would find it utmost difficult to carry on its past policies of 'double-dealing', especially when America was on one side and radical Taliban were on the other.

Highlighting the importance of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations for both the states and the region, Abdul Rahman Habibzui from Kabul noted: "Afghanistan acknowledges strategic strengths of Pakistan and in return wants Pakistan to take into account the transit vitality of Afghanistan." He explained that Afghanistan could potentially link the future energy hub of the world, Central Asia with Pakistan and the rest of the region. CRSS Executive Director Imtiaz Gul was of the view that Pakistanis should look afresh at their socio-economic, political and security policies and there was a thumping need for re-evaluation of our policies in the context of emerging global realities.

'No national security at the cost of human security'

■ Speakers at a seminar question sagacity of Pakistan's security-centric paradigm

ISLAMABAD
STAFF REPORT

Pakistan cannot and will not be able to achieve its national security at the cost of human security. It has tried to realise this dream from the last sixty years, but unfortunately ended up losing the both. Against this backdrop, the prevailing state of affairs in Pakistan suggests that the challenges to our security and sovereignty are getting more and more serious and adverse with the passage of time.

These views were expressed by different speakers at a two-day international seminar entitled "Securing a Frontline State: Alternative Views on Peace and Conflict in Pakistan". The event was jointly organised by Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Pakistan, and Centre for Research and Security Studies, Islamabad, in the media partnership of local English daily.

In his keynote address, Dr Yunus Samad of Bradford University, UK said

that national security in Pakistan had become subservient to the idea of military security, at the cost of other dimensions of security. Delineating upon the Pakistani path towards becoming a military security state, he emphasised that it was primarily because of our "India-centric" approach from the outset.

Alluding to a souring fact, he underlined: "Pakistan is rapidly isolating itself in the world due to its reliance over militant policy to achieve its national interests. The roots of adoption of militant as a tool of state policy lie in the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1980s" he asserted. He said the US was "getting wary of Pakistan due to latter's links with militants" and it would be difficult for Pakistan to be at loggerhead with a super power. He also observed that Pakistani position in Islamic world was also problematic, for the Arab states which were at the crossroads in the backdrop of "Arab Spring" thought the Pakistanis were crazy people and extremists, and they were apprehensive of them.

He said they were even wary of large number expatriates living in those states. He suggested that the need for re-evaluation and re-orientation of our national security policy was overwhelming and the state must have more civilian input in its geo-political strategies.

Dissecting the militant ideology and discourse, he said that militancy emerged as social movements in the world and they were becoming independent in terms of finances and recruitments. He illustrated that militants in a society, would only promote intolerance and bigotry. Referring to a sobering factor behind the recent surge in militancy in Pakistan, he proclaimed: "American presence has become magnet for radicalisation and it has blurred boundaries among different militant organizations working in the region." He proposed that Pakistan should come out of "the hole" and position itself prudently in emerging regional order. "Pakistan should use its links with militants as tool of soft power

and enable US withdrawal from Afghanistan", he suggested. Linking the rise of violence with the underlying factors of poor governance, illiteracy, unemployment in Pakistan, he underscored that use of violence for achieving power, self-esteem and sometimes civic facilities had become order of the day and normal state of affairs in Pakistan. Explaining different kinds of causes of insecurity in Pakistan, Dr Abid Suleri, the SDPI executive director, said the developmental challenges in Pakistan were chronic and endemic. He lamented that Pakistan in its history, never tried people-centric paradigm, rather security paradigm always overtook the former. He observed: "State security cannot be achieved without addressing human security." He said that decades' long negligence in terms of human security is playing out today in our streets and cities in the form of ubiquitous violence: urban violence in Karachi and ethno-nationalist movement in Balochistan is case in point.

Speakers see Pak-US relations in critical phase

■ ALMAS HAIDER NAQVI

ISLAMABAD — Speakers at an international seminar on national security said without ensuring human security, national security cannot be achieved in Pakistan.

They were addressing a 2-day seminar "Securing a Frontline State: Alternative Views on Peace and Conflict in Pakistan", jointly organised by Heinrich Boll Stiftung, Pakistan, and Centre for Research and Security Studies.

Dr Yunus Samad of Bradford University, UK said the national security in Pakistan had become subservient to the idea of military security. He emphasised that it was primarily because of our "Indiacentric" approach.

He underlined Pakistan was rapidly isolating itself in the world due to its reliance on militant policy to achieve its national interests.

"The roots of the militant policy can be traced in the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in 1980s" he asserted. "Today the US is getting wary of Pakistan due to the latter's links with militants and it will be difficult for Pakistan to be at loggerheads with a super power," he opined.

Dissecting the militant ideology and discourse, he said militancy had emerged as social movements in the world and they (militants) were becoming independent in terms finances and recruitments.

"Pakistan should use its links with militants as tool of soft power and enable US withdrawal from Afghanistan," he suggested. Linking the rise of violence with the underlying factors of poor governance, illiteracy, unemployment in Pakistan, he underscored the use of violence for achieving power, self-esteem, and sometimes, civic facilities.

Highlighting the importance of relations with neighbours, former ambassador, Ayaz Wazir said Pakistan should not look for a subservient Afghanistan, rather it should work to enable a friendly and autonomous Afghanistan.

It will be beneficial for Pakistan in the longer run. We should facilitate the west in negotiation with Taliban and Pakistan can do this due to its close relations with Taliban, he said.

Dr Abid Qayyum Sulehri, Executive Director, SDPI said developmental challenges in Pakistan were chronic and endemic. These are policy level challenges.

He regretted Pakistan in its history, never tried people-centric paradigm, rather security paradigm always overtook the former.

Dr Saba Gul Khattak, former member Planning Commission said insecurity at home is wreaking havoc at the state level and women and children are bearing the

brunt of such type of insecurity in Pakistan. She said targeting of militants houses in tribal areas had badly impacted women and children there.

"Homes are prime mark of identification for the people and their demolition is the prime threat to individual security", she stressed.

Shakil Ramay, senior research associate underscored climate change was turning out to be the most fundamental non-traditional security threat for Pakistan and its impacts can already be felt in the form of floods, droughts, cyclones and sea level rise in and around Pakistan.

M Ziauddin, senior journalist said it was

military in Pakistan wreaking havoc and is in need of reformation. Prominent political analyst and anchorperson, Ijaz Haider said civil military rift in Pakistan was a major threat to Pakistan.

"Pakistan should have civilian control over military but unfortunately we cannot have that because civilian leadership lacks political will", he illustrated.

Dr Parvez Hoodbhoy of Quaid-i-Azam University said a paradigm shift was going to take place in Pakistan.

"Today, Pakistan is treating America as an enemy and in order to challenge it at some stage it is rapidly enhancing its nuclear arsenal."



MAKING A POINT: Dr Yunus Samad (R) of the Bradford University speaking at the launch of *The Pakistan-US Conundrum* Thursday. — Dateline photo by Sohail Shahzad

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International seminar

Hoodbhoy sees no need for enlarging nuclear arsenal

Speakers deliberate on the country's security situation

A OUR CORRESPONDENT ISLAMABAD

Defence and security experts and academics at a seminar on Thursday called for an alternative solution to the current war on terrorism and a paradigm shift in security policy of the country.

"There is no need for Pakistan to expand its nuclear arsenal as the country is facing no direct threat from India or any other state," said noted peace activist and physicist Dr Parvez Hoodbhoy. A large number of experts, diplomats, media practitioners, serving and retired military officers were present.

"Why does Pakistan have the world's fastest growing nuclear arsenal?" asked Dr Hoodbhoy, who teaches at the Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad. He said the military is convinced that the US wants to seize Pakistan's nukes so they want to in-

crease their number to make it difficult for anyone to steal. Also, the military thinks that in the post-US Afghanistan, the nuclear weapons will be useful for defence against any external intervention, particularly from the US.

He said the army is also convinced that US wants to deny Pakistan strategic depth.

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Lecturer at University of Peshawar Syed Irfan Ashraf

are also affected because most of them are made of mud and cannot stand the devastation of hellfire missiles. He stressed that the drone strikes in the tribal areas are not ending militancy but are instead spreading it.

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Afya Shehbaz Zia, an academician and activist, said that it is unfortunate that liberals have failed to carve a clear direction for themselves. The research on extremism and militancy in Pakistan

"There should be civilian control over military but for that our leadership lacks the political will"

Senior journalist Ejaz Haider

post 9/11 has been unchecked and off focus, she added. Former ambassador Ayaz Wazir said that Pakistan should not look for a subservient Afghanistan. He said a friendly and autonomous Afghanistan will be beneficial for Pakistan in the long run. Dr. Yunus Samad of Bradford University, UK also launched his book on the occasion, titled "The Pakistan-US Conundrum, Jihadists, the military and the people: The Struggle for Control". He said his book was unique as it challenges the conventional wisdom on the subject.