



International Webinar on
CHINA-IRAN GROWING COOPERATION & ROLE
FOR REGIONAL CONVERGENCE
THROUGH CPEC: PROSPECTS FOR PAKISTAN

FEBRUARY 15, 2021

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WORDS

Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution aims to draw strategically comprehensive analysis on the contemporary conflicts. Moreover we not only aims to draw analysis but also to present foreseeable way-forward to the peaceful end of the conflicts.

I personally believe that it is that time when our country need think-tanks to play actively the role they are destined to. It is time that nation works collectively to overcome national and international hurdles. Yet there is a marathon to run in this regard

Sincerely,

Ms. Sabah Aslam

Founder/Executive Director IICR

IICR



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ABOUT IICR



Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) is an autonomous, independent research based think tank which believes in ethics of research. Regular research is conducted with the aim of a deep and insight based analysis in order to resolve various issues associated with peace and conflict at the domestic, regional and international level. IICR has a vibrant team of experts, researchers and scholars who have immersed themselves to make the purpose a success.

Mission

Apart IICR believes in conducting in-depth research keeping research ethics into consideration. Our mission is to conduct an independent and unbiased research to propose sound solutions and policy recommendations to deal with humanitarian and security challenges of Pakistan and the region. In addition, we are closely monitoring China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), its progress and its implications for not only Pakistan but for the whole region.

Goals

- a) To conduct in-depth research on issues concerning Pakistan.
- b) To identify key areas of cooperation especially in the field of security.
- c) To document, disseminate and strengthen peace and conflict resolution efforts through analytical discourse.
- d) To identify, articulate and evaluate conflict issues through research and other academic pillars i.e. round-tables, workshops, seminars, and conferences.
- e) To promote post-conflict rehabilitation while initiating and contributing to local, national, and regional peace and conflict transformation initiatives.
- f) To remain committed to promote core social values, as well as public awareness and practice of constructive conflict resolution.
- g) To enhance socio-economic and security environment through informed dialogue, and debate on key issues.
- h) To critically analyse Pakistan's political, socio-economic and foreign policy challenges and to support efforts to integrate the country.
- i) To integrate youth in research work particularly to conflict resolution and making peace efforts.
- j) To secure friendly and cooperative international system, &
- k) To present actual positive image of Pakistan.

Publications

Monographs, Annual Reports, Monthly Briefs, Special Reports, and Weekly Rundown

CONCEPT NOTE

The globe's political dynamics are witnessing a change. Rising regionalism in Asia is becoming stronger through new alliances and partnerships. Now states explore every opportunity of cooperation in order to maximize the benefit in trade and politics. The rising East led by Belt and Road initiative of China is fostering new avenues in order to advance its interests worldwide.

Recent details of China-Iran 25 year's strategic partnership which accounts for \$400 billion over the span of 25 years is also a strand to larger Belt and Road Initiative. Beijing is looking to enhance its economic ties with Tehran which Tehran desperately need amid global sanctions from United States.

In such environment the question here rises that where China-Pakistan Economic Corridor can be a link in this new partnership for regional peace and prosperity? Can it be expanded to Iran knowing the fact that Tehran is under strict global scrutiny? And how Beijing-Tehran economic and strategic interaction reconfigures prospects for Pakistan? To answer these questions Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) is arranged one day International webinar on *"China-Iran Growing Cooperation & Role for Regional Convergence Through CPEC: Prospects for Pakistan"*

Speakers Profile:

- **Mr. Mushaid Hussain Syed (Senator)**



Mushahid Hussain Sayed is a journalist, geo-strategist, politician, and an avid writer and reader. As a specialist on international, political, and strategic issues, he has lectured widely and his articles have been published in various national and international publications including The New York Times, The Washington Post, International Herald Tribune, and Middle East International. He has also authored three books. He is a Member of the Board of Governors of Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), a leading think tank.

He was Pakistan's Representative to the Commission of Eminent Persons, set up by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) for its reform in 2004-05. He is also the Vice President of the Centrist Democrat International (CDI) Asia – Pacific Chapter. On January 27, 2006, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Achievement by the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines. Currently he is serving as the senator, on a Pakistan Muslim League (N) platform, to Senate of Pakistan.

- **Prof. Zhou Rong**



The guest professor of China Renmin University, China Sichuan University, & China China East Normal University. He stayed in Pakistan for 10 years and a half as chief journalist of Chinese Guang Ming Daily. The researcher of China Yun Nan Province Social Academy. Used to be a visiting Professor of Pakistan Peshawar University, a visiting Professor of Pakistan Sindh University, a visiting Professor of Pakistan Punjab University.

Currently a top researcher of Pakistan China Institute. He is senior researcher of Chong Yang finance study of China Ren Min University and lecture professor of Huadong Normal University.

Professor Zhou Rong was born in 1955 Graduated in Beijing Normal University in 1983 and got bachelor degree on English literature. Gradated in China Contemporary International relations institutes and got Master degrees. From 1983, the major research area is on Public Relations and International Relations.

On Public Relations, Prof. Zhou used to teach PR in the school for 10 years and wrote more than 20 articles. Especially in Chinese HUA WEI IT Company in Pakistan.

On the International Relations, Prof. Zhou was the author and co- author for many books on Asean countries\Australia\Pakistan\Afghanistan and some other regional issues. And he is regarded as the one of the top specialist on Pakistan in China credited in China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and Iran.

As a journalist, he worked for two newspapers, one is Chinese Guang Ming daily (the second largest newspaper with the circulation of 1,000,000) and the other is Wenhui Daily. He was successfully awarded as to 10 top national journalists in Guang Ming Daily of 2006\ 2007\2008. He interviewed the President Musharraf\President Zardari\PM Nawaz Sharif\President Karzai of Afghanistan. He went to visit the war zone in Pakistan and interviewed with Taliban captives. He was also invited to host more than 20 security risks evaluation programs for Chinese enterprises operating in Pakistan. He has also been the chief guest for China Phonics TV, PTV in Pakistan and CE.CN in China.

- **Amb. Naghmana Hashmi® (Former Ambassador to China)**



Amb. Naghmana was a distinguished diplomat of Pakistan who has served as Pakistan's Ambassador to China, European Union, Belgium, Luxemburg and Ireland before arriving in China for her ambassadorial assignment. She had earlier served in Beijing from 2003-07 as Deputy Head of Mission. During her successful 38-years career, she has also served in Denmark, France and Indonesia.

In Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she served in various capacities in the departments of Human Resource and Career Planning, United Nations, Policy Planning and Public Diplomacy and the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).

- **Mr. Hassan Dawood Butt**



Mr. Hassan Daud Butt, CEO, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment & Trade (KP-BOIT). He also served as Deputy Director CPEC. He served in Ministry of Planning, development and reforms.

- **Dr. Nazir Hussain (Dean Social Sciences, QAU)**



Dr. Nazir Hussain is Dean, Social Sciences, Quaidi-Azam University, and also served as Director, School of Politics and International Relations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. Previously, he was associated with the Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, since 1985. He has also served as Senior Research Fellow on Middle East at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad in 2001-2002. He has over 30 years of teaching and research experience.

He has to his credit a Post-Doc Research Fellowship from the French Institute of International Relations, IFRI, Paris-France (May-November 2010). He has Post Graduate Diploma in Conflict Resolution from the University of Uppsala-Sweden (1991). He was Visiting Fellow at the Henry L. Stimson Centre, Washington DC., in summer 2000 working on 'Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures in South Asia', Research Associate with the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) in 1996-97 working on 'International Humanitarian Law', and Visiting Researcher at the Institute of Political and International Studies (IPIS), Tehran-Iran in summer 1995.

Dr. Hussain has attended scores of national and international conferences, seminars, workshops and symposiums within and outside the country. He has written extensively on security issues in national and international research journals. He has written over 60 research articles and is author of two books; *Strategic Dynamics of West Asia* (2010), and *Defence Production in the Muslim World: Limitations and Prospects* (1989). He has also successfully supervised 7 Ph.D. and 48 M.Phil. theses; some of which have been published as book/research articles.

- **Dr. Talat Shabbir**



Dr Talat Shabbir is Director China Pakistan study Centre at Institute of strategic studies. He holds PhD in International Relations from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. He has M Phil in International Relations from University of Karachi, Masters in International Relations from University of Balochistan and Masters in Political Science from University of Punjab. His research areas are South Asia, Belt and Road Initiative, CPEC and Pakistan-China relations. Dr Talat has been a visiting scholar at Sigur Centre for Asian Studies, George Washington University, USA. He has been on the faculty of Institute of Strategic Studies Research and Analysis (ISSRA), National Defence University (NDU) where he was responsible to conduct national security workshop and national media workshop. He regularly contributes to newspapers on domestic, regional and global politics and hosts an academic programme Belt and Road Economic Future (BRIEF) on a Digital Broadcast Television (DBTV) to address issues related to Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Having served Pakistan army for thirty years, Dr Talat has diverse experience of management, administration, public relations, advocacy, HR and media. Dr Talat also has literary interests and has a book of short stories and collection of selected poetry to his credit.

Webinar Proceedings

WEBINAR WAS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN AT 1200HRS PST. MR. SYED NASIR HASSAN, PROGRAMME CORDINATOR ISLAMABAD INSTITUTE OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION(IICR) WELCOMED ALL THE GUESTS AND EMINENT SPEAKERS. AFTER FORMALLY WELCOMING THE DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AND PARTICIPANTS HE THEN GAVE OPENING REMARKS AND MODERATED THE SESSION.

Indian Attempt to Sabotage the Webinar

THE WEBINAR WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ATTENDED BY DIVERSE SET OF AUDIENCE BUT DUE TO SEVERE INDIAN DIGITAL INFERENCE WE HAVE TO LIMIT IT ONLY TO SPEAKERS. DURING THE COURSE OF OPEINING TIME SOME INDIANS ROUGE ELEMENTS INFILTRATED AS PARTICIPANTS WITH MUSLIM NAMES AND STARTED CHANTING HINDU NATIONALIST SLOGANS AND ALSO STARTED ABUSING THE DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS.

DURING THE WEBINAR OUR PANEL CONTROL WAS SABOTAGED BY INDIANS DUE TO WHICH OUR CHINESE SPEAKER WAS REMOVED FROM THE ROOM. HOWEVER, OUR STAFF REACHED HIM OUT AFTER THE WEBINAR AND THEN RECORDED HIS STANCE ON THE SAID SUBJECT.

KEEPING VIEW OF SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES AND TO AVIOD ANY FUTHER DISTURBANCE, THE TECHNICAL TEAM HAS TO REMOVE ALMOST ALL OF THE PARTICIPANTS AND ONLY LET SPEAKERS TO BE IN THE WEBINAR.

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Glimpse of International Webinar

International Conference on “*China-Iran Growing Cooperation & Role for Regional Convergence through CPEC: Prospects for Pakistan*”

On February 15th, 2021 Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) organized a one-day international webinar titled “*China-Iran Growing Cooperation & Role for Regional Convergence through CPEC: Prospects for Pakistan*”. The eminent speakers included Senator Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China-Pakistan Study Center, ISSI, Mr. Hassan Daud, CEO, KP-BOIT, Prof. Dr. Zhou Rong, Dr. Nazir Hussain, Dean Social Sciences, QAU and Senator Mushaid Hussain Syed. The Session was moderated by Syed Nasir Hassan,

Dr. Talat Shabbir

While speaking to the panel Dr. Shabbir shared that Iran faces serious repercussion in international arena but that cannot deny the strategic vitality it holds meanwhile china is enhancing its multilateralism and trying to connect with regional as well as global countries. CPEC as well as BRI are ambitious projects of global and regional connectivity. When we talk about Iran-China relations, Iran is a country which is under sanctions and is not actively into the international political arena. China has been following an approach of multilateralism since last decade in order to pursue its economic aims. Despite a decrease in trade relations between both the counties as per 2019 figures \$24billion of trade was done between both the countries. In 2019 China invested nearly \$26 billion in Iran and most of it was in energy sector. Reciprocating this, Beijing is one of the cores and largest customers of Iranian oil with 120,000 barrels of oil per day. Moreover, in July 2020 \$134million worth of oil was purchased by China from Iran. There are common grounds on which this relationship stands for instance, China believes in non-interference and Iran is victim of interference. Adding more Dr. Talat said that Iran holds strategic sea lines position which China can benefit for its Belt and Road Initiative. Despite being cordial relations Iran and Pakistan are somewhat reluctant of each other. The things should be seen through economic prism which can usher new beginning of Tri-lateral relations between all three countries under the economic umbrella, said Dr. Shabbir. Adding further he said that there could be a possibility of sister posts like Gwadar and Chahbahar and working together which can complement both. This would

advance Chinese interest and also would be beneficial for China as well. It is also very important for Iran also to mitigate pressure which it has from international countries as well as institutions. If Iran is in mainstream of international politics, it will also be beneficial for China as well. For Iran also it is important that a Security Council country is on its side. At last he said that all three parties in this relationship needs to find common grounds on which this relationship can harbor better for every member and there should also be possibility of Iran joining CPEC.

Mr. Hassan Daud

Next on Panel was Mr. Hassan Daud. Addressing the participants Mr. Daud emphasized that Persian Gulf is a complex competing zone where there is a clash of interest. In this region Iran and Saudi Arabia are two most significant players. Government of Pakistan is extending the scope of CPEC to open new avenues of prosperity while emphasizing development in less developed areas in second phase government is opening new doors for regional integration. Today 22 projects are in different stages of implementation. Further adding Mr. Daud said that the western borders are extremely critical as they are gateways to not only energy and resources but also for Central Asia. Speaking on cultural affinity Mr. Hassan said that both Pakistan and Iran share deep linguistic and cultural ties which is quite visible in many national aspects. Similarly, Gwadar and Chabahar both deep seaports complement each other and Chinese involvement in Chabahar could be beneficial for all three parties. Both these ports require infrastructure which Chinese can assist. Adding more he said that both Pakistan and Iran can support each other and supplement each other as both are deep seaports which hold strategic as well as economic importance. While sharing his views on research and Development Mr. Daud said that Pakistan only contributes 0.24% of its GDP and similarly Iran also spends meagre amount which is 0.83% of its GDP. Both countries are progressing on economics which calls for collaboration and in order to extend economic objectives there is a need to look back at China in 1980s and learn from its experiences. The visit of Chinese leadership from railways authority is welcoming as well as the shipping of cargo from Iran. China's experience on agriculture can be a great lesson for Pakistan and Iran as well. The future lies in synergy, it is time to convert natural borders into natural collaboration.

Prof Zhou Rong

Prof Zhou Rong while discussing the topic maintained that the level of relationship and trust between China and Pakistan is far above another relationship. He said that China and Iran have reached a strategic partnership project which spans to 25 years which includes economic, trade and some military aspects as well. This partnership pact has been talked a lot back in Tehran but there is little buzz in Beijing. On official ranks this has been discussed but there is no public announcement of it. Since it needs to be kept in mind that so far there is no formal agreement which binds both China and Iran to 25 years. Further he added that the level of understanding between the two states is no match to China-Iran Relations. The friendship between Pakistan and China is regarded by both sides through various expressions. Even though China shares good relationship with Iran. However, there are few aspects which needs to be considered, the United States of America has a new elected president and under President Joe Biden the relationship between two countries might normalize a bit. They might not be harsh as they were before in the tenure of Donald Trump. Another thing which needs to be understood is that he said, because Iran was isolated and sanctioned, Iran wanted to get China and some other friendly countries for its financial assistance. For this case Iran has just highlighted the collaboration between China and Iran. However now situation has gradually changed and is changing this might affect Tehran's tone over this agreement as well. Adding more he said that CPEC in near future could be China-Iran-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CIPEC). But it would be too early to say that. Chinese government have not announced any long-term agreement with Iran. However, Iranian government unilaterally talked about the agreement to show it as a symbolic gesture to USA. As far as CPEC is concerned he said that, we have seen that with development prosperity comes, and hence Pakistan through 2nd & 3rd phase of CPEC would be able to attract more employment, infrastructure, and conducive business environment. Both China and Pakistan share a very matured relationship which implies that no matter who comes and goes in power in Islamabad the bond between both the countries would stay strong. However, for Iran China does not know the constant behavior irrespective of political or global changes. The question is if their relations with west becomes normal, would they still be wanting to be with China or not? Adding more he said that despite the fact that the development in Chahbahar started in 1992 and Gwadar's was started in around 2003-04 and currently we have seen that the development and infrastructural work in Gwadar has been done with absolute pace as compared to Chahbahar. China would like to connect

CPEC with Iran, Iraq and even with Turkey through road infrastructure which will bring stability and peace for the region. The cooperation between Iran-China and Pakistan is not only depended on three countries but also on changing international dynamics. Moreover, the presidential elections in Iran is also nearby and it can also affect the policy making of Iran. What would happen next, no one know but one this is sure that Joe Biden is a rational man and is not like Donald Trump so he would try to normalize relations with Iran. Pakistan is very hopeful that United States is interested in CPEC if that would be the case and both Pakistan and China agree there could be more phases of CPEC with investment from US. Moreover, he said that Pakistan could be hub for regional investment and could serve as the source of regional harmony and peace. Upon a question about prospects for Pakistan if Iran-China friendship matures he highlighted that if Iran decides to join CPEC then central Asian countries and also Afghanistan would also be interested in joining CPEC. By this conglomerate of states in CPEC west some of the European countries would also be interested as well since Iran is a land Gateway between regions.

Ms. Naghmana Hashmi

Ms. Naghmana Hashmi shared her thoughts on the said topic. In her address she restated that this bond of brotherhood which diplomatically established in 1971 is becoming stronger with each day passing. Although they had civilizational relations in past rooted in ancient silk route. She said that the years 1978-79 were both crucial for Iran and China, ironically when Beijing was onto the historical venture rapprochement with Washington, Tehran sheerly discredited any option of siding with Washington. By the end of decade following the 1979 revolution China became Iran's most important political, commercial, and military partners. However, this Iran and China axis suffered major setback in 1997 because of two main factors, in 1993 Clinton administration officially adopted dual containment policy with over cooperation with Tehran directly and at the same time Beijing and Washington was in friction with each other on Taiwan. Throughout the course of last quarter of 20th century Iran and China suffered many turbulences in their relationship, said Ms. Naghmana. Moreover, China-Iran collaboration is logical and pragmatic partnership. She says that if one looks at the premise of China Iran collaboration both regard each other as civilizational strategic partners with some similar objectives. While shedding light on contemporary relationship between China and Iran, Ms. Hashmi said that the close affinity of

Tehran and Beijing is clearly seen as bad omen for the west particularly United States. Despite the fact that agreement needs to be approved by parliaments of both the countries it has deeply put an impact on international politics. The details have not been publicly revealed but apparently the agreement has political, economic, and strategic dimensions and has been designed to pave the way for considerable Chinese investment which will uplift transport, energy, telecommunication, and health sector. The partnership agreement among both the countries which is still under consideration has very significant provisions which will further create a strong interdependency among both countries. Adding further she said that the prosperity of CPEC and regional sustainability is also depended on relationship with Iran. The deal is to also involve security dimensions to it as well which include security cooperation and intelligence sharing. In such circumstances any Chinese Iranian military cooperation would be seen as pro-active move by the west. Tehran and Beijing share more business oriented and less ideological relationship with each other. She also said that Iran fully understands the swift and global rise of China. Iranian leaders no see China as only superpower which can challenge United States and ease the financial pressure on them. On Beijing's part it sees Iran as regional power located at the crossroads and has loads of untapped financial potential which Beijing can benefit from. Moreover, Iran's look east policy would also be beneficiary for China as it will minimal the US presence in Persian Gulf. The pact can guarantee energy security to both China and Iran. Furthermore, she said that in an event of intensifying China-US tensions, United States might pressure KSA and some other gulf countries for hinderance in oil supply thus Iran would be a good addition for securing energy lines. Closer ties between China-Iran could increase Chinese role in one of the most crucial regions of the world. Adding more she said that Chinese A-political developmental approach to the region utilizing Iran's regional power to expand economic relations with nearby countries and establish security in the region thorough what it calls developmental peace. Commenting on Pakistan she added that linking Gwadar and CPEC to Kashghar needs more regional infrastructure so do BRI which can be easy through the inclusion of Iran. Hence Iran can be crucial to security and economic interest to BRI, CPEC and Pakistan. The United States state department has warned of sanctioned to Chinese companies that choose to do business with Iran. These sanctions would have spillover effect if Pakistan didn't do what needs to be done. China's presence in Middle East would reshuffle the established geo-political realities in the region. In this regard Pakistan can bandwagon and expand its regional role to Middle East and Europe as well.

Dr. Nazir Hussain

The next speaker on panel was Dr. Nazir Hussain. While speaking to the participants Dr. Hussain said that Pakistan needs to revisit its foreign policy in many aspects, particularly the country's foreign policy needs to look beyond regional countries and extend its horizons to global scale. The partnership pact between China and Iran is a great opportunity for Pakistan as the trade between both the countries would need the land of Pakistan due to the costly and time taking sea lanes. Adding more he said that Pakistan needs to stop looking relations through the prism of Bi-literalism and think through National Interest. In current canvas here lies an opportunity provided by China and emerging geo-political environment and Pakistan needs to cash it. Lastly adding Dr. Nazir said that Pakistan needs to look beyond CPEC and explore more options in the globe, but foremost Pakistan needs to give-up the emotional approach to foreign policy.

Senator Mushaid Hussain Syed

The last Speaker on the panel was Senator Mushaid Hussain Syed. While speaking to the participants he said that there are few things which needs to be discussed as new realities are emerging. The foremost reality is that new administration under Biden will look for reinstating Iran Nuclear Deal and lift sanctions. In this regards US has stopped supplying arms to KSA and UAE and they have highlighted that they will no longer support the war against Houthis. Highlighting more he said that it should not be forgot that Biden administration is same as Obama and under John Kerry the national security team played crucial role in securing Iran Nuclear Deal which are again part of Biden administration. Keeping this there is a possibility that Iran and United States could go for normalizing of the relations between two. Adding more Senator Hussain said that another factor is that last December there was a meeting of joint working group of CPEC on international cooperation in Urumqi, China. In that meeting it was decided that China and Pakistan both would welcome new other regional parties to CPEC most probably Iran and Afghanistan. The third aspect said Senator Hussain is that there have been two major border clashes between India and China. With India moving in United States' camp China needs more friends in the region to counter the influence of Indian aggression. This is the reason that China's stance over Kashmir is getting more overt even in Security Council. Further, he said that there has

been improvement in relations between Pakistan and Iran especially militarily. Which was done under swift visits by high profile personalities of both countries. Now there is a slight tilt of Iran towards Pakistan. Lastly Senator Hussain said that China and Iran's collaboration is great news for Pakistan, and it should benefit by all means. So far both China and Iran are playing it down, there is a talk of \$400billion and 25-year plan but both sides are low key about this development. Not to forget that out of \$400billion an amount of \$280billion is about oil. China needs the oil. Senator added that during a meeting of committee on foreign relations Foreign Minister gave a dossier on Indian state terrorism which highlighted that there 87 Indian inspired RAW funded training camps out of which 66 were in Afghanistan 21 in India and none in Iran which is fortunate news. Moreover, both countries are agreed upon border agreement. India's exit from Chabahar could be a welcoming fact for Pakistan and this bond would secure CPEC for Pakistan. However, both Iran and China are moving cautiously, and this bond is signed but not sealed yet, it a work in progress. The Iranian side has built a pipeline up till Pakistan, whereas Pakistan has not done so because that would send a clear message that Pakistan is actively engaged with Iran despite international sanctions. The electricity which comes to Makran coast comes from Iran. Everyday 100MGw of electricity is used out of which 74MGW is used in Gwadar and rest is used by other cities. Moreover, he added that when India was doing trade with Iran the United States gave them special wavier and exemption. It is not an issue of principle it is an issue of geopolitics. For Pakistan the three relationship which needs to be observed are, China-US ties which might improve,

The session ended with the vote of thanks by Ms. Sabah Aslam, CEO IICR.

Recommendations:

1. Iran is the new geo-graphical pivot of the world, with access to central Asia and Europe and having 1358 nautical miles costal stretch to the Persian Gulf house of almost 55% of the world oil. Geo-graphically as well as geo-strategically with abundance of natural resources. Pakistan needs to have close ties with it and parting CPEC with Iran could not only be beneficial for Beijing but Islamabad as well.
2. In order to establish and strengthen relations between Iran and China, Pakistan shall play its vital role. This would directly benefit Pakistan economically as well as strategically.
 - If there are trade relations among Iran and China, that trade would be passing through Pakistan making Pakistan as a direct beneficiary of it.
 - In terms of strategic advantage Pakistan can formally make Indian role in the sub-region to minimal by improving its relations with Iran.
3. Another aspect which can be explored viz a viz Pakistan-Iran relation is that both countries have deep seaports touching Indian ocean i.e. Gwadar and Chah-Bahar. Both of these ports complement each other and can provide more advantage to the region as well as both countries if these two ports collaborate rather compete. A joint mechanism could be formed in collaboration with Iranian counterparts.
4. There is a need of non-sentimental and unemotional approach to Pakistan's foreign policy. At this very moment Pakistan's foreign policy is dominated by emotions and sentiments. Most of the time there is a constant worry of not offending anyone is visible in Pakistan's foreign policy. In international relations particularly in foreign policy emotions have no place, there is only one thing which should be considered and that is "National Interest", even if that requires offending anyone.
5. At this very moment there is a silence across globe regarding new US administration and its relations with Iran. There is a possibility that Iran's relation with United States under Biden presidency will improve. As a democrat and already being served as vice president under Obama, Biden has most of Obama administrations staff as his national security team.
6. If there is a normalization between Iran and United States, then Pakistan needs to properly plan and execute its foreign policy rather taking decisions haphazardly.

7. In order to minimize India's rouge role in Balochistan, Pakistan needs to establish strong bi-lateral relations with Iran. This would not only put Indian role to minimal but also would improve the condition in Balochistan.
8. The Trio of Pakistan- Iran and China needs to find common ground for cooperation as well as improving relations. That common ground could be Baluchistan and Gwadar. If Iran becomes part of CPEC it will be dependent to Baluchistan and would not let any rouge state or actor sabotage peace in Baluchistan.
9. CPEC in near future could be China-Iran-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CIPEC). But it would be too early to say that. Chinese government have not announced any long-term agreement with Iran. Pakistan needs to explore potential and possibilities and if feasible and beneficiary for Pakistan, Pakistan could side with Iran's inclusion in CPEC.

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PAKISTAN

Speakers discuss strategic importance of Iran, China

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