

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



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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.
- i) 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 Asian century has made the mantra of Geo-strategy auxiliary and has propelled Geoeconomics in forefront of global affairs. Most of the gurus of globalization have now seized their proselytization about it, giving more realistic space to geo-economics. The phenomenon itself looses its spirit when it is not discussed in the Global and Regional context. Regional and global connectivity is the key to Geo-economics. To fully benefit economically states needs to exhaust and explore every opportunity given its geographic parameters to uplift its human development contours. Pakistan, in this regard has acknowledged the importance of Geo-economics and is keenly looking to shift its focus from geo-politics to geo-economics to steer its national voyage towards economics. Advancing interests by geo-economics seems to be the new beat in international affairs and Pakistan needs to bandwagon it before













Summary

The Webinar was scheduled to start at 1430 hrs PST. Ms. Sabah Aslam, founder Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) welcomed all the guests and eminent speakers. Hereafter she gave her opening remarks and moderated the session.



Speakers Profile

Maj. Gen. Raza Muhammad®



General Raza Muhammad® has varied Command, Operational and Intelligence experience. He has been an instructor at Pakistan Military Academy, Pakistan Staff College and National Defence University. He served on deputation in Saudi Arabian Army as well. He has attended Leadership Academy of German Armed Forces Hamburg and did Peacekeeping Course for Decision Makers at Defence Institute of Legal Studies USA.

Before retiring he was Additional Secretary in Ministry of Defence Production. After retirement he was appointed High Commissioner of Pakistan at Mauritius. He also served as Executive Director in Army Welfare Trust Rawalpindi.

He has a Masters degree in War Studies from Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad and M.Phil. International Relations from National Defence University, where he is presently registered as PhD scholar in the Department of International Relations. He was former Chairman of IICR, and currently, is Advisor to President, NDU.

Mr. Faheem Sardar



Faheem Sardar has over 21 years of experience in the financial industry with specific reference to the Government Policy, Capital Markets as an Apex Regulator, Front Line Regulator, Regulatee, Business Practitioner and guide to other businesses. His experience includes expertise in investments, stock markets, finance, economics, policy, governance, strategic management, national trends, business development, intellectual property and more. He possesses a view of both the Regulator as well as the Regulatee. He is currently a Senior Policy Specialist at the Strategic Policy Planning Cell of the National Security Division of the Government of Pakistan. Prior, he was the MD of TANGENT® which is an independent economics think tank & corporate advisory. He was also the CEO of Askari Securities Ltd for 9 years, being responsible for its revival in 2010 and its new successful commercial vector and thrust. He has also been the GM & Chief Operating Officer of the Lahore Stock Exchange, and has worked with Saudi Pak Investment Co Ltd (in Corporate Finance), and the Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan (in Stock Market Surveillance). He is on the faculty of the Pakistan Institute of Corporate Governance, has been involved in SECP's investor education initiative and has been on the visiting faculty of various universities. His books, "The New Finance Construct", "Mind Conquest" and "CEO at 34" are part of the National Library Collection of Pakistan and has read from them at the National Book Foundation Book Day in April 2016, 2017 and 2018. His books are now becoming part of curricula in various universities. He appears on TV programs to discuss economics, markets, political economy and societal aspects. He has travelled extensively internationally and speaks German in addition to English and Urdu

Dr. Zafar Moeen Nasir



Dr Zafar M Nasir is the former Vice Chancellor of the University of the Punjab. Before joining Punjab University, he worked as Dean in the American University in Dubai. He also served as the Chief of Research and Dean at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad. Besides, he worked in the Government of Pakistan as Director Policies (MP II) in the Ministry of Lahore. He served on the board of NTDC also.

Dr Nasir received his MA and PhD in Economics from Kansas State University (KSU), USA. He specialized in the fields of International Economics and Human Resource Development. After his PhD, he worked as instructor in the Department of Continuous Education of the KSU.

Dr Nasir published extensively in the areas of human resource development, international economics, and development economics. His research work has been published in high quality research journals. So far he has published more than 40 articles in the journal of international repute. Recently one of his papers was published in Australia (Australian National University) in an edited book on Policy Reforms. He is on the editorial board of a number of journals. Dr Nasir also worked on research projects financed by World Bank, IMF, Asian Development Bank, United Nation (UNICEF, ILO, UNHCR, and UNDP), and International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

In 2002, Dr Nasir won the global research competition organized by the World Bank, IMF and Global Development Network (GDN) and selected him to work in the Research Department of International Monetary Fund (IMF) at its Headquarters in Washington DC under the supervision of Dr Kenneth Rogoff; currently professor of economics at the Harvard University. He also participated in a number of conferences and seminars in different parts of the world.

Dr. Sameera Imran:



Dr. Sumeera is an assistant professor in National Defence University, Islamabad. She has done her Doctorate from School of Politics and international relations, Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad, in Sino-US Relations Post 9/11: Implications for Pakistan. She also had been Research Fellow, Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China, in 2015.

Apart from teaching she is also a member editorial board of *Journal of Political & Security Studies*, Department of Political Science, Islamia College, Peshawar. Back in 1996 she also served as Sub-editor in *The News*, Pakistan. Given the diverse and vast academic experience, her area of expertise include Great Powers Involvement in South Asia.

Webinar Proceedings

Paper Presented by Dr Sumeera Imran

(Assistant Professor NDU)

The geo-economics, which is the relation of geography and economy, plays a very important role in international affairs today. Today, the world order we have is the Washington consensus and Bretton Woods system. The loans offered by financial institutions are a means to seek security for the global north, which maintains an economic disparity with the south. These capitalist institutions provide a little and extract stability of the order as a price from the global south. The economic gap increases between the developed and underdeveloped.

The Marxist perspective argues that human emancipation can only be achieved by a rapid radical change. The developed world has deprived the south of progress and their own resources. In past we have seen East India Company. Radical change means elimination of capitalism Mercantilism. Self-sufficient states can be more viable in trading world. For that an adjustment within the current world order is most suitable.

On the other hand, the Beijing consensus is a multi-layered Marxist program for social emancipation. The conquest of economic security in depth means is to achieve socialism at home and use BRI abroad to secure economic interests.

Pakistan is a part of this vision of poverty alleviation and Belt and Road connectivity. Beijing has taken the responsibility to bridge the gap between developed North and undeveloped South. The BRI 1.0 is the basic transport infrastructure that is achieved by 2020. BRI 1.5 is the expansion of these infrastructures for the Eurasian trade. BRI 2.0 will provide the digital infrastructure for the world to achieve digital currency exchange mechanisms providing basis for digital revolution and economic progress. Space technology and artificial intelligence are important examples of the departments that Beijing seeks to dominate.

This is a transformation for the world - for human emancipation. Pakistan can benefit from this all. But the degree of utility of these projects for Pakistan depends on Pakistan's understanding and

commitment to these projects. The Chinese are going to match US in their GDP soon. So should Pak be a part of this multipolar world, considering that EU can be another pole in the order. Is Pakistan actually doing anything to stay relevant to the transformation? Or Pak is throwing the mantle of responsibility to Chinese leadership only.

Situation in Afghanistan and Kashmir are two genuine conflicts that if not resolved, will severely restrict Pak's ability to focus on these geo economic projects.

Pak has human potential, gateway to world markets, at crossroads between the east and west, and at a key position to world's most populated areas, including Middle East, China, India, South East Asia, and Africa. The CPEC, which is a flagship project of BRI, is an important ge economic corridor that connects Chinese Xingjang with Arabian Sea, and a source of economic security for China. This source of income can become an alternative to IMF, and other financial institutions. But there are many internal dynamics that must be sorted out to fully achieve economy as the most fundamental goal of foreign policy. Expertise need to be developed. Political stability can lead to a vision for economic stability.

There are several microeconomic and macroeconomic challenges such as taxes, FDIs, management of debts, health conditions, mass illiteracy, unskilled labor, need for technological and vocational training, which need to be adressed to fully tap the economic potential.

In conclusion, the policy makers need to have long term goals in mind to keep up with the transformation that is happening in the Eurasian region and tap the opportunities that are offered, the house must be kept in order.

Paper presented by Maj. Gen. Raza Muhammad®

(Advisor to President NDU)

International relations are built around diplomacy and commerce. As clausewitzian notion implicates war as continuation of policy by other mean. States very purpose of existence is imbued in the preservation of political existence and raison d'éta.

There is no doubt Economy most important for sovereignty. However, it can vary from negative sovereignty or the positive one. Historically, trade over land routes and sea-lanes did not confine

to exchange of commodities only. Ancient Silk Road was one of such projects which connected Eurasia and the World through multifaceted and mutually beneficial economic gains that carried profound social, cultural, and religious impacts in their wake.

Nations have been more conscious of their economy and security. Pakistan already reoriented and has refocused its shift which was visible from the comments shared by the PM and COAS of Pakistan in Islamabad Dialogue which was recently held.

Geo commerce can be defined as inter-linkages that nurture social, economic, political relations, benefitting from each other's geographical proximity built through trade corridors. This subsequently can help bring peace and stability as a possible outcome of intertwined destinies of nations connected in losses and gains, happiness and despair, fear, and peace.

Socio economic development leading to societal emancipation is a possible dividend of geocommerce that resides in connectivity, interdependence, and intertwined interests of the cooperating nations. Not only Pakistan but world needs to realise it. This is achieved through consensus, respect and regard for peaceful coexistence based on accepted norms of universal ethics and morality, efforts to remove the prevailing disparities in efforts to promote peace and harmony. Robert W. Cox, envisioned a transformational framework,

'Evolution of a vibrant civil society, emergence of organic intellectuals and the development of community level solidarity, participatory democracy and non-violent means of conflict resolution, pluralism, multilateralism and regionalism are all key ingredients of transformational agenda. Strategies are designed accordingly to help 'transform'.

Also Siegfried writes that,

"Regionalism in South Asia has entailed the search for collective efforts to overcome mostly weak, congeneric economies, political fragmentation, socio-religious cleavages and the consequent deep-rooted conflicts between different states, especially between Pakistan and India. To enhance the regional cooperation, for quite some time, the idea of Economic Corridor (EC) has become not only a trend in the foreign policy strategies but also a buzzword in plans for stimulating economic growth as well as deeper integration of Asia's sub-regions. This has especially been the case within South East Asia, spearheaded

by the Greater Mekong sub region (GMS) initiative. In South Asia, it is a more recent phenomenon that the establishment of economic corridors has gained prominence. It is one of the most advanced examples is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)."

 Siegfried lays emphasizes on regional affiliations rather economic, cultural or political dependency.

"Regionalism in south is becoming a means to overcome weaker economies, political fissures, socio-economic problems and consequent conflicts between states. Idea of economic corridors has become a trend in foreign policy strategies to enhance regional cooperation. CPEC is one of the most advanced examples in this context."

This model is visible With increasing globalisation and interdependence, envisioned strategies of soft power for transformation of societies and economies which results in inception of initiatives like ASEAN, SCO, EU emanating from the ashes of world war(Postal union, Red Cross, European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), European Economic Community (EEC), and more significantly Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and CPEC. ASEAN, SCO, EU emanating from the ashes of world war(Postal union, Red Cross, European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), European Economic Community (EEC), african Union (AU), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS), World Economic Forum (WEF), World Trade Organisation (WTO), financial institutions like International Monitory Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). They were created for enhanced regionalism for collective and mutual benefit. Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a recent addition to this expanding list.

Hillary Clinton had also given an idea of the New Silk Road, as a strategy to mitigate poverty, underdevelopment and instability in Afghanistan by interconnectivity and interdependence between the Central Asian States, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India she said:

"Turkmen gas fields could help meet both Pakistan's and India's growing energy needs and provide significant transit revenues for both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Tajik cotton could be turned into the Indian linens. Furniture and fruit from Afghanistan could find its way to the markets of Astana or Mumbai and beyond."

While the comments made by Hilary does not get due attention at White House and Capitol Hill, it does get in China and it took the leap forward. Pakistan can also learn from such open wisdom.

As the world is facing a pandemic which is not bounded by territorial boundaries or political sovereignty. It affects rich and poor, modern or a-modern, democratic and non-democratic nations alike. However, it has compelled a voluntary and collective approach for human security, it has opened a door to craft such agreements between nations through which burden can be shared among nations.

Pakistan is already on the right direction shifting priority to economics and regional connectivity for commerce and mutual interdependence for ultimate peace in the region. Ultimately Pakistan will be linked with Eurasia, and Africa if things goes as per desires.

Paper presented by Dr. Zafar Moen Nasir

(Former VC Punjab University)

Pakistan, in recent weeks, has shifted its foreign policy from geopolitics to geo-economics. Pakistan paid heavy price in the past as front—line state not only in cold war but also in war on terror owing to its geostrategic value. It is time now to come out from that war rhetoric and move in the economic development to achieve human development goals. This policy is a welcome shift and much appreciated within country. "Geo-economic vision" offered by Pakistan's army chief emphasizes on regional integration and pursuits of sustainable development as common goals through peace and stability in the region. The whole Indo-Pak region has undoubtedly huge benefit of this policy shift as it is the least developed and one of the world's poorest area. Moreover it is the least integrated regions in the world. This shift in geoeconomics is particularly important for Pakistan because of its economic vulnerability due to low exports and heavy debt burden with low human development indicators.

The shift to geo-economics from geopolitics is not an easy ride at all; a number of risks are there to face. As the American forces are going to leave Afghanistan in few months' time, the clouds of civil wars are looming there and going to create tremendous security risk in the region. America

has realized that Pakistan can play both positive as well as negative role after with drawl of its forces from Afghanistan. Now it depends on Pakistan's policy how to tackle the Afghan issue. As Pakistan has already shifted towards the geoeconomics, the chances are Pakistan will focus more on the economic outcomes rather than geopolitical gains. The constructive role in Afghanistan by Pakistan will bring dividends for both nations.

Although both India and Pakistan announced cease-fire on border and working on back channel diplomacy, the Indian policy in Kashmir is same. Pakistan has shown its clear stance on Kashmir and did not accept the new status. The volatile conditions are not going to ease as both countries are not going to make any kind of concessions to avert the conflict.

The conflict between US and China is another emerging issue for Pakistan as the country cannot risk taking side in this new cold war. The situation for Pakistan is complex for making choice; America is siding with India to counter-balance China's rising power whereas we depend on China for arms to counter Indian threat. Pakistan is perceived as ally to China by US therefore it has lost interest in Pakistan. An indicator of this fact is that military aid (in terms of arms supply) from US to Pakistan has significantly dropped since 2016. Pakistan has to swim through these complicated scenarios to make geo-economics work which looks an uphill task in the current situation. Policy makers have to carefully draft plans not to offend superpowers due to our relationship with China.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an ambitious plan to connect China's remote Xinjiang region with Gwadar in the Arabian Sea through Belt and Road initiative (BRI). Under the CPEC, billions of dollars were invested in electric power, road, and other infrastructure projects in Pakistan. But the poor planning drove Pakistan back to IMF. Even after six years, the CPEC is nowhere close to a functional economic corridor and earning 6-8 billion dollars of toll is still a dream. America is projecting CPEC as a debt trap for Pakistan and therefore pressurized Pakistan to rethink about the risks of CPEC. Pakistan is however steadfast and determined to make this project a success.

Pakistan is interested to bring other regional countries into the folds of CPEC. It is playing geoeconomics in the region by connecting with other countries to realize the potential benefits. Prime Minister Imran Khan invited Sri-Lanka to join CPEC and connect with other countries through CPEC. However, Sri-Lanka is already a busy transregional shipping hub. Therefore, it sees no benefits of joining CPEC.

Pakistan is also trying to connect with other regional countries such as Iran and Turkey through existing infrastructure. A freight train was planned to boost trade among ECO countries. But apparently Pakistan is missing the required infrastructure to realize these initiatives. Central Asian countries provide good opportunity for Pakistan to realize geoeconomics. But so far there is nothing to other than imaginary lines on the map. Although Pakistani ports are providing the shortest possible route to many regional countries but studies show that these are the slowest and costliest due to the border clearance process.

Paper presented by Mr. Faheem Sardar

(Corporate and government executive, Author, Economist and Analyst)

World is run on economics, a country with good economics is able to assert politically, geographically, ethically, and morally if necessary, but most importantly economically. In past 50 years we have seen that relations between various countries are primarily governed by economics.

The world's economic structure has to be analyzed along the developed, developing, and underdeveloped categories but most importantly is how they ended up there. For this we have to see the industrial base of the country and their military prowess. In other words, how they expanded their industrial base, became economic influencers and then were able to project their capacities across the globe. There are various dynamics that dictate which category that country would fall in. Four major such indicators are:

- 1. What is their industrial base?
- 2. What path they are coming from?
- 3. Where do they stand today?
- 4. Their military prowess?

The successful economic structure of a country is dependent on various reasons such as physical infrastructure, financial infrastructure, management and interplay of infrastructure, innovation,

productivity, ability to control and inflict violence etc., however the concept of costs, a critical and integral part of successful economic structures, is rarely brought up.

Countries developed their industrial bases when they had lower costs of production which mainly depends upon labor costs, metal costs, fuel costs and so on. The cost structures have changed over the last thirty years or so and Pakistan has to move accordingly. China for example, have won the "cost war" where they have produced more products at a lower cost. Vietnam, Russia and the US are some other examples. Not only the cost reduction but these countries have effectively controlled violence both defensive and offensive.

Pakistan's economic structure was well made in the 50's and 60's. it was clearly marching at full momentum towards mass industrialization. This faltered in the 70's when market forces were interfered with, uncontrolled wars happened, physical and financial infrastructure and their management went awry, and productivity and innovation fell. Since the 1990's Pakistan has been realigning and testing systems. With the help of concepts like deregulation, market forces, consumption, and now, regional mega projects, Pakistan has been struggling with its economic structure. Pakistan's GDP was rising until the violence in the form of terrorist's attacks started and then as per the estimates Pakistan was losing 120 billion dollars annually.

Geo-economics and geopolitics are used synonymously and interchangeably by many and there is reasoning in that to the extent that they both are part and parcel of the same debate. Pakistan using its geographic abilities, cost structure and proximity to build up its economy and political prowess, was, is and will be a logical step towards true and sustainable development. Geo-economics itself is about how to project strength away from home in extreme cases.

Geo-economics is actually more than the 'economics of geography' or rather I would term it as geography of economics. Geography of economics means understanding the latest dynamics of economics (many of which are the same as before), and how they can be used for higher efficacy. It is time we understand that its not economics of geography rather it's the other way around i.e. geography of economics. Which means that any part of the globe which can be beneficial for ones economics it should be integral part of their geography even if that part is thousands of miles apart from direct contact.

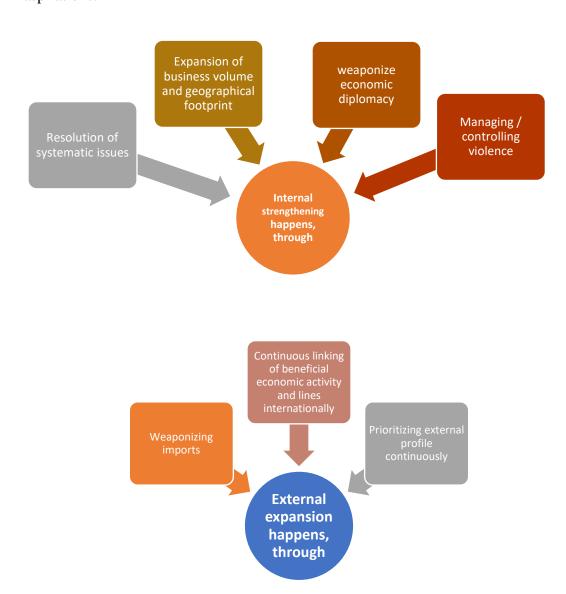
Comments by Dr. Azhar

Not denying the importance of economy but I guess we are putting extra emphasis on economy and ignoring the actual issue. Our actual issue is not economy, it is a symptom. This is the issue of capitalism that it has put us behind to look at the holistic approach. What capitalism believes is an economic struggle, so people race towards earning money and at the end the real benefit goes to certain pockets, it does not translate to the welfare of the people. Officials often say that we are following China model however what china did first is to do structural reforms in their political system and then it carried out with its economic model. We often put this fact in the hindsight and try to set our trajectory. Officials need to realize that in order have sustained economic growth political stability and good governance is necessary which can only be achieved through structural reforms. We need to put our house in order first.

Recommendations:

- The mutual gains from connectivity could help alleviate the sufferings of the large segment of the population of Pakistan, Afghanistan and India that lives below poverty line. The figures as per the Asian Development Bank stand at 39.1% for Afghanistan and 29.5% for Pakistan. India has not shared its figures on the WB/ADB sites.
- Pakistan should fully exhaust the opportunities through the arrangements which It is part of such as, CPEC, ASEAN, SCO. There lies tons of potential which can be explored.
- Through the Afghan transit trade route it can explore the western and north-western horizon slicing directly through Central Asian Republic (CARs),
- If things get settle on human grounds between India and Pakistan, then through Wagah the Eastern locus has a lot of potential for Pakistan.
- Lastly reaching globally through Gwadar, Pakistan should expand itself in all possible directions. However, there is one catch-22, prior to expanding outwardly Pakistan needs to strengthen its inward infrastructural requirements. Though, with CPEC much of infrastructural needs are met and other are in pipeline but Pakistan should not totally rely on CPEC, it should work on its on-development plan which is necessary for securing economic objectives for itself rather related to one project.
- Chabahar a complimentary port now all Pakistan needs is to persuade Tehran with the help of Beijing to make Iran-Afghanistan-China-Pakistan corridor.
- Pakistan can benefit from geoeconomics through increasing its production base and enhancing exports. This is the best way to get sustainable development and realizing the higher growth.
- If Pakistan wants to realize the geoeconomics., it has to expand its export base rather than focusing on the tolls and road use charges. Tariff policies, trade pacts and other agreements (Geoeconomics instruments) should be for export expansion.
- Pakistani goods should be integrated in the supply chain of major brands to reach in more markets.
- Central Asian states provide a good opportunity for Pakistani goods because of centuries old trade relations with these countries.

- Pakistan has to mobilize the trading blocs such as SAARC and ECO to penetrate in the member countries markets.
- The policy makers need to have long term goals in mind to keep up with the transformation that is happening in the Eurasian region and tap the opportunities that are offered, the house must be kept in order.
- Pakistan needs to ensure following steps in order to fully benefit from its economic aspirations:



Media Coverage



Exclusive Coverage by PTV World







Webinar Urges Govt To Look Futuristic In Its Policies To Benefit Global Economic Schema



Pak needs futuristic in policies in order to benefit from global economic schema: Sameera

By News desk - April 27, 2021



Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR)