

Chaopraya Dialogue 12

Report of Proceedings



A Jinnah Institute
Conference Report



This material may not be copied, reproduced or transmitted in whole or in part without attribution to the Jinnah Institute (JI). Unless noted otherwise, all material is property of the Institute.

Copyright © Jinnah Institute 2013
R0613-11

This publication has been produced with the support of British High Commission.

Chaophraya Dialogue 12

Report of Proceedings



Australia India
Institute



About Jinnah Institute



Jinnah Institute (JI) is a non-profit public policy organisation based in Pakistan. It functions as a think tank, advocacy group, and public outreach organisation independent of the government. JI seeks to promote knowledge-based policy making for strengthening democratic institutions and to build public stakes in human and national security discourse. It remains committed to investing in policies that promote fundamental rights, tolerance and pluralism.

Jinnah Institute's Strategic Security Initiative (SSI)

Jl actively seeks to articulate independent national security strategies for Pakistan that incorporate the country's stated policy imperatives while making room for voices from civil society, parliament, academia and media experts. Jinnah Institute's SSI also encourages constructive engagement between the international community and local policy and opinion makers on key national security interests, with the goal of seeking broad strategic convergences in multilateral and bilateral forums.

Jinnah Institute runs leading peace initiatives with India through sustained Track II engagement. It has been at the forefront of bringing together stakeholders from India and Pakistan to develop bilateral strategies for regional security and stability.

Jl is committed to broadening Pakistan's stake in pursuing informed and inclusive policies on regional and global relationships with India, Afghanistan, other South Asian countries, China, the European Union, the United Kingdom and the United States.

About Australia India Institute



Australia India Institute

The Australia India Institute (All) is a leading centre for the study of India. Through its teaching, research, public policy and outreach programmes, it is building Australia's capacity to understand India. All is also a hub for dialogue, research and partnerships between India and Australia. Based at the University of Melbourne, the Institute hosts a growing range of programmes that are deepening and enriching the relationship between the two countries.

The University of Melbourne established the Australia India Institute in October 2008. In 2009, funding for the Institute was provided by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The University of New South Wales and La Trobe University were also founding partners. In 2012 the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research, and Tertiary Education and the State Government of Victoria provided additional core funding. The Ministry of Culture, Government of India, is funding a Tagore Centre for Global Thought at All – one of three Centres globally that are being funded by the Government of India. All will host a Chair in Indian Studies, funded by the State Government of Victoria and the University of Melbourne and a Visiting Chair in Indian Studies sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

Contents

Introduction	5
Review of Bilateral Relations	6
The Nature of Evolving Public Discourse – Role of the Media	8
The Nature of Evolving Public Discourse – Role of Parliamentarians	10
Military-to-Military Talks	12
Indian and Pakistani Interests in Afghanistan	14
Achieving a Regional Solution in Afghanistan	16
Agenda	18
Delegates	20

Introduction

The Chaophraya Dialogue is a joint India-Pakistan Track II initiative undertaken by the Melbourne-based Australia India Institute (AII) and the Islamabad-based Jinnah Institute (JI), to encourage informed dialogue on Indo-Pak relations. The process has so far led to eleven rounds of dialogue and is now entering its sixth year.

The Chaophraya Dialogue is primarily meant to give informed members of the strategic community in India and Pakistan an opportunity to interact with each other on a sustained basis. Past participants in the Chaophraya Dialogue have included senior former officials (including Ambassadors, Foreign Secretaries, Intelligence Chiefs and top-ranking members of the Armed Forces), academics, journalists and political leaders from India and Pakistan. Initiated before the Mumbai attacks of 26/11, the process played a critical role in bringing together senior interlocutors from the two countries when the official dialogue process was suspended. The Chaophraya Dialogue has since encouraged participants to share the conclusions of each round with their respective governments.

There have been many efforts in recent years to establish greater Indo-Pak peace and understanding through Track II dialogues. The Chaophraya Dialogue draws from a growing international community of stakeholders committed to Indo-Pak peace and has attempted to innovate its conference agendas by addressing the rapidly changing bilateral dynamic on the ground. The liberalised visa and trade regimes are the result of sustained efforts at the Track II level, but new avenues of cooperation and mutual learning need to be explored to make these gains permanent.

The 11th round of the Chaophraya Dialogue held in Bangkok from 18-20 December, 2012, addressed crisis prevention measures and the issue of Afghanistan in a regional context. Both sides were represented by senior experts who deliberated upon opportunities and challenges in the Indo-Pak relationship and devised a set of policy recommendations addressing them.

Review of Bilateral Relations

Regarding the current state of bilateral relations, both the Indian and Pakistani delegations agreed that Pakistan was at a significant point in its history, with power having transitioned from one democratically elected government to another for the first time since independence. Several voices in the Pakistani camp emphasised the importance of this 'democratic moment' for strengthening bilateral relations. However, at the same time, the Pakistani delegation expressed a certain amount of caution, urging the Indians not to weigh down Pakistan's 'democratic moment' with unreasonable, exaggerated expectations.

The Indian delegation, in general, was optimistic about the potential for improvement of bilateral relations stemming from Pakistan's 'democratic moment', while also agreeing with the Pakistani view that the moment should not be saddled with exaggerated expectations. One member of the Indian group emphasised that it would definitely be in India's interest to immediately reach out to Pakistan with a message of peace and reconciliation; this, in his opinion, would consolidate civil society and democracy, and pre-empt the military from closing this nascent democratic space. It was further noted by the Indians that PM Sharif was aiming to reinstate the progressive foreign policy that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had long desired, yet been unable to establish. In this regard, they stated that if India could have some assurance regarding PM Sharif's ability to deliver on this goal, it would be keener on having further Prime-Ministerial visits between the two countries.

The Pakistani delegation, while welcoming the generally positive response from India, was also apprehensive about what one member of their group termed 'a wall of strategic intransigence' on the part of the Indian government. In this regard, there was some concern over whether the Mumbai terrorist attacks had developed into an excuse for the government to not move forward on bilateral relations. There was also concern among the Pakistanis over whether India going into elections at this point in time would stultify any efforts towards peace-building and reconciliation. The Indian group was quick to respond that India would neither forget nor forgive the Mumbai incident until its perpetrators were brought to justice; however, they saw no reason for this incident to obstruct the progress of bilateral relations.

Regarding outstanding issues in bilateral relations, there was general agreement in both camps. Issues such as Siachen and Sir Creek, in the opinion of the Indian group, were not likely to progress in the near term, though there was some hope that the Sir Creek issue could possibly be resolved. One

member of the Indian group particularly emphasised that there should be no pining for 'lost opportunities' with regard to the resolution of these territorial disputes. The Pakistani delegation concurred by stating that focusing on the issues might ruin opportune moments to come to larger, big-picture resolutions. On the issue of Kashmir, both the Indians and Pakistanis agreed that more effective Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) across the Line of Control (LOC) were needed. However, it was also argued that CBMs shouldn't be an end in and of themselves, and that they could not be a substitute for substantial dialogue on security issues.

On the question of how the two countries could move the dialogue process forward, a strong opinion was voiced from the Indian side that the two countries should go back to twin track diplomacy. Therefore, it was suggested that the India-Pakistan Joint Commission be revived at the level of foreign ministers. The Pakistani delegation concurred, and further suggested that the Joint Commission could have a new process under the gestures that PM Sharif had made. The two countries also agreed on the privileging of back-channel dialogue via CBMs on resolving sensitive or complex issues.

Both countries were also optimistic about the potential of increased trade relations in strengthening the dialogue process. It was noted that there already were signs of improved economic engagement, and a consensus that this process would be irreversible once embarked upon. The Indian side suggested that starting energy trade across the borders would bode well (given that India's largest single export was finished petroleum products), and proposed the establishment of a pipeline between the two Punjab. Another area on which the need for progress was highlighted was visa regimes and people-to-people contacts between the two countries. Some other specific suggestions were made regarding improvement of bilateral dialogue, such as the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission for Pakistan, and including climate change as an important subject on the agenda of the Joint Commission.

Finally, regarding the question of how effective Track II had been in improving bilateral relations, there was a great deal of emphasis on its importance in allowing the dialogue to continue in instances where Track I relations had failed to make any headway, and also in its role of bringing together people who could influence Track I. According to a member of the Pakistani group, Track II was a critical bridgehead where one made important interventions and created a repository of important memories that the state could not generate itself. Furthermore, it was noted that Track II relations in the context of Indo-Pak relations were very important specifically because of the dismal status of Track I. While there indeed had been moments when the two countries had nearly achieved breakthroughs in bilateral relations via Track I, there had always been a moment of hesitation that had impeded their realisation; hence the importance of Track II. However, concerns were also raised as to how much of Track II discussion indeed informed Track I. Furthermore, a question was raised as to whether the process was actually being reversed, with Track I orthodoxies being brought to the Track II dialogue.

The Nature of Evolving Public Discourse – Role of the Media

On the question of the role of media in Indo-Pak relations, members from both delegations observed that, at times, the media itself was responsible for causing tensions in the bilateral relationship. It was pointed out that the media sometimes sustained common misconceptions in the public domain; media institutions were reported to have ignorantly reported stories or failed to report all the sides of a story, and the manner in which several interest groups had propagated their ideas using media institutions had been cause for worry on both sides.

It was observed that the biggest challenge for journalists working on the Indo-Pak relationship remained the ability to find and report accurate facts to the public. In a society with people who had short attention spans, there was a tendency to view media coverage that reinforced existing beliefs. Therefore, it had become increasingly difficult to differentiate between the media that attempted to perpetuate these beliefs of the public and the media that tried to provide a perspective that represented both sides of the border. Furthermore, all the delegates agreed that one of the main difficulties faced by journalists on the job was the challenge of getting visas and official clearances to do their reporting. This was because journalists from India and Pakistan were often barred from cross-border on-the-ground reporting by the state. This had made it difficult for editors to make comprehensive analyses on Indo-Pak relations.

The delegates also analysed popular perceptions of people in India and Pakistan. In India, summits on Indo-Pak relations were generally viewed with trepidation. Another important perception that existed in the Indian domain was the belief that core issues in the Indo-Pak conflict such as Kashmir, terrorism, Sir Creek and the Siachen glacier issues were intractable. However, they also observed that, notwithstanding these negative perceptions, people still had not rejected the peace process. It was emphasised that the task of media institutions was to counter this negativity and attempt to instil hope about a peaceful settlement in the future. Regular cross-border reporting, news and feature stories could contribute in creating greater public sensitivity on the issue and encourage peace initiatives in the public realm.

As for Pakistan, members elaborated that all political parties from the left to the extreme right were committed to a process of normalization of relations between the two countries. Media institutions in Pakistan had also evolved and matured in line with the broader political developments. Furthermore, it was pointed out that, unlike India, Pakistan has had more exposure of the other side. This could be due to sustained media ties and regular Bollywood movies and soap operas viewed by

the people of Pakistan. Moreover, social media and the internet had broken barriers, especially between the younger generations. Both delegations agreed that social media, while exposing the worst of the other side of the border, also had positive characteristics that needed to be taken into account.

The Indian delegation then dwelt on the nature of media coverage in India in order to answer the important question as to why Pakistan was not often covered in Indian media. According to the Indian delegates, Indian television and print media were highly inward-looking. Moreover, Indian print media had very few correspondents officially posted in other countries. Hence, the inadequate reporting on Pakistan could only be viewed in relation to the larger tradition of inward-looking Indian media. Another problem faced by the Indian media was that many private media institutions had been unable to make profits. Hence, there had been a clear shift away from reportage to studio shows. There were only a few Indian channels that were ready to invest on cross-border reporting and therefore, it was unlikely that many private Indian media institutions would be interested to report from Pakistan.

Both delegations agreed that media acted as a sort of a pressure group that often attempted to create public opinion. Although it managed to accelerate government policies in the short term, there was no sustained long-term impact. Hence, it had not really been integrated into the foreign policy mechanism to be considered as a decisive actor, and policy making had remained the responsibility of officials. Though the media often reflected the orthodox views of military leaders and politicians, at times it also argued for moderation and presented the benefits of peace negotiations to the public. At the end of the session, all the members recommended that there was a vital need to continue the media conversation across the border, which would enable the sharing of ideas and keep people informed about the real situation on the ground.

The Nature of Evolving Public Discourse – Role of Parliamentarians

This session dwelt to a large extent on the question of whether the new PML (N) government in Pakistan would be able to rekindle the Indo-Pak peace process. There was a marked sense of optimism among the Pakistanis regarding this. It was stated that the current government in Pakistan was more amenable to constructive discussions with India. The Pakistani group also affirmed (in response to queries by the Indians) that the political consensus currently in place in Pakistan was quite strong, with all three major parties in parliament desiring rapprochement with India.

There was also some discussion over the possible role that the military might play in relation to the Pakistani government's push for peace with India. The Indian delegation was quite concerned that the military might derail the civilian government's initiatives. The Pakistani parliamentarians responded that the civilian government was certainly strong enough to carry the military with it, and regretted the Indian perception that Pakistan was still controlled by its military. However, representatives of the Pakistani military took strong exception to the Indian perception of them as impediments to the peace process; they argued that the military, despite its declining socio-political clout, had still opted to not fight against the 'democratic moment' and had left the space for negotiations open. The Pakistani parliamentarians subsequently reassured the Indian delegation that the military was quite aware of its diminished socio-political role, and was not willing to risk itself in another bid for power.

In discussing the potential of the new Pakistani government to rekindle the peace process, a great deal of attention was paid to the problem of terrorism. The Pakistani delegation expressed their concerns about what one Pakistani delegate termed a 'Mumbai hangover' among the Indians. Some noted that Mumbai-like incidents might happen in the future too, and that the Indians had to accept that reality and handle it. Others argued that the Indian understanding of Pakistan-based terrorism had to change. They emphasised the problems that Pakistan faced in policing its tribal areas (which were the traditional breeding-grounds of terrorism), and argued that the Pakistani state (contrary to widespread perceptions) did not have the ability to rein in all militant Islamist groups operating within the country.

The Indian delegation responded that the Indian public's understanding of Pakistan-based terrorism was much more mature than it had previously been. It was further added that, thanks to greater interactions between Indian and Pakistani parliamentarians, members of the Indian government were also much more aware of the nuances of Pakistani society, and thereby less prone

to take up hard-line positions on the issue of terrorism. However, they were unanimous that Mumbai was a watershed event and that the Pakistani perception of a 'Mumbai hangover' was exaggerated. According to them, Mumbai was the culmination of a series of terrorist attacks on Indian soil, hence the high level of public anger and the constant demand for justice.

The Pakistani delegation was also concerned about the possible effect that India's upcoming elections might have on bilateral relations. In their opinion, it might impede the possibility of moving the peace process forward. They also pointed out the weak position of the Indian Prime Minister, which made it difficult to push talks through. The Indian delegation was also aware of the problems arising from the elections, particularly in the case of the right-wing BJP coming to power. It was argued that, if the BJP led by Narendra Modi came to power, a political consensus over improving bilateral relations would continue to elude the Indian polity.

Responding to Pakistani queries over why Indian politicians might not desire a definitively positive outcome, i.e. normalisation of relations with Pakistan, the Indian group pointed out that it was wrong to assume that there was no political cost in pushing for peace. While the Indians admitted that the peace dividend would be considerable in terms of a political result, they emphasised that such predictions remained primarily theoretical. On this note, they added that politicians would hesitate to take such a big risk unless there was a good chance of a payoff. Furthermore, it was noted that not all Indian politicians saw Pakistan as central to Indian political debate, given the vastly heterogeneous cultural and political configurations of Indian society. Therefore, the Indian delegation encouraged a focus on incremental changes rather than a 'big bang' breakthrough.

In addition to dwelling on these questions, the two groups also discussed trade (specifically, energy trade) as a means of building peace. The Pakistani group, pointing out the energy crisis in Pakistan, noted that energy cooperation would be a good way to improve bilateral relations. Lahore, given its proximity to the Indian border, would be an immediate beneficiary of such energy cooperation, and India's supplying electricity to Lahore would be seen as a significant symbolic step in moving bilateral relations forward. However, there was some objection to energy trade from the Indian side, citing the fact that India itself faced a scarcity of electricity, and that, therefore, it may not be a very popular policy move to sell electricity to Pakistan.

Military-to-Military Talks

Regarding the question of how the militaries of the two countries viewed the possible resolution of outstanding bilateral issues, both sides expressed guarded optimism that some progress had been made; however, they also stressed that it was unrealistic to expect major breakthroughs in the immediate future. There was also consensus on the need to stop the mutual 'blame game' and overcome the entrenched views and perceptions that each party had of the other. The centrality of a sustained, composite bilateral dialogue in achieving this goal was also emphasised. There was also agreement among the two militaries that issues such as visa regimes and bilateral visits were mainly cosmetic measures that failed to address the key strategic concerns of both nations.

In discussing the possible resolution of issues in Indo-Pak relations, both sides dwelt on their respective strategic perspectives and the perceptions they had of the other party. Both countries maintained that their strategic postures were essentially defensive; India claimed that it was susceptible to enemy attacks, and that its strategic perspective was inherently defensive, while also adding that India had never been the aggressor in any conflict that it had been involved in. The Pakistani perspective maintained that, waging war against another country was beyond its comfort zone; it was stressed in this regard that Pakistan viewed India as an adversary, but not an outright enemy (against whom unilateral acts of aggression were sanctioned). Furthermore, it was also stressed that it was impractical for Pakistan to confront India, and that there was an increasing understanding in Pakistan that its major security threat was internal. Both sides agreed in this instance that Pakistan had to concentrate on combating Islamic militancy.

Regarding each side's perception of the other, the Indian military believed that there might be some resistance on the part of the Pakistani military towards a continuing peace process. This was denied by the Pakistanis, who emphasised that their military had actually been instrumental in sustaining the bilateral dialogue. There was also an Indian perception that Pakistan had failed to adequately address the problem of Islamist terrorism. On the other hand, the Pakistani military's perceptions were informed by the vast asymmetry in the conventional strengths of the two militaries. The Indian response to this perception was that India's security needs differed greatly from those of Pakistan, and that therefore, a disparity in conventional capacities was inevitable. There was particular emphasis on how the acquisition of Tactical Nuclear Weapons as a means of offsetting a disadvantage in conventional strength was a highly problematic position that only set a vicious cycle of nuclear armament in motion.

Coming to the question of CBMs and their effectiveness, there was a general belief on both sides that some of the existing CBMs had indeed been quite effective in preventing the outbreak of conflict. Particular mention was made of the existing DGMO hotlines. It was noted that they functioned well most of the time, and that the accountability of DGMOs was also high. Other existing CBMs such as no attack on nuclear facilities and advanced notice on military exercises had also been effective. Furthermore, the informal ceasefire on the LoC also stood as a prominent example of an effective CBM. However, at the same time, both delegations recognised that most of these CBMs were introduced nearly 20 years ago, and accordingly highlighted the need to revisit the old CBMs and explore the possibility of new CBMs.

Finally, on the question of how military-to-military talks could help in establishing peace between the two countries, both parties emphatically agreed that such talks were integral to achieving peace in bilateral relations. There was a view that military-to-military dialogue might provide a space for continued discussion between the two countries when official diplomatic channels faced problems. Furthermore, given that each military's suspicion and mistrust of the other was itself a great obstacle in bilateral relations, military-to-military talks would help move the peace process forward by lowering that mistrust. In particular, there was an emphasis on how such talks could help further understanding on the nuclear dimension of each other's strategic doctrines, and also help address issues like asymmetric military power between the two countries.

However, the general enthusiasm for military-to-military dialogue and the acknowledgement of its importance was also tempered by some pragmatic considerations of the many challenges encountered in this regard. It was pointed out that the military-to-military dialogue was a relatively recent conversation, and that the two militaries did not seem to engage equally in twin-track diplomacy. Even in an instance where successful military-to-military contact was established, it was pointed out that doubts would remain over just how much of this dialogue would inform government decisions. Therefore, it was emphasised that successful military-to-military dialogue had to take place in a larger enabling environment.

Indian and Pakistani Interests in Afghanistan

Both the Indian and Pakistani delegations expressed certain reservations about each other's intentions in Afghanistan, while admitting that this fixation on each other's activities was indeed part of the problem. For its part, Pakistan was apprehensive about Indian involvement in Afghanistan leading to encirclement of the country and the generation of civil unrest in its border regions (such as Baluchistan). While the Pakistani delegation admitted that such fears might be exaggerated, it nevertheless pointed out that Pakistan remained apprehensive of the India-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership and the possibility that it might create an Afghan security force with an Indian signature on it. There was a distinct feeling within Pakistan that India was trying to curry favour with the Afghans vis-à-vis Pakistan; however, it was warned that such attempts might become problematic once the withdrawal of the international security forces took away the justification for Indian presence on Afghan soil.

The Indian delegation clarified that Indian interests in Afghanistan were primarily economic. India sought to invest in Afghanistan's considerable mineral wealth, and also to gain access to Central Asian oil and gas via Afghanistan. It was contended that an Afghanistan economically linked to both South and Central Asia would be a win-win situation for all parties involved. As a pre-requisite for such economic involvement, India actively desired peace in Afghanistan, which would allow both India and Pakistan to reap great benefits from the ensuing peace dividend. While clarifying these interests, it was also made clear that Indian attempts at currying favour among the Afghans were not of a conspiratorial nature, but were rather the natural consequence of India being a donor that was responsive to the needs of the Afghan people.

At the same time, the India side was apprehensive about Pakistani intentions in Afghanistan, especially in relation to shaping the post-2014 outcomes in the country. The Indian delegation was particularly concerned about what steps Pakistan had taken to weaken the Taliban and other Islamic militants in Afghanistan, and whether they still saw the Taliban as an important component of any future political configuration in that country. However, it was also noted that there had been a distinct shift in Pakistani policies towards the country, and that this boded well for the future. As far as India was concerned, the stabilisation of relations between Kabul and Islamabad would also serve to fulfil India's broad regional vision. The Pakistani delegation also clarified their intentions in Afghanistan, noting that Pakistan had an integral role to play in stabilising the country.

There was much discussion over the specific forms that post-2014 peace and development had to take in Afghanistan. It was pointed out that the Afghans desired a peace based on Islamic principles, and that the Taliban work within the limits of the constitution. Here, another debate ensued on whether the Taliban themselves could be brought into the reconciliation process. The Pakistani delegation, while stating that even the USA recognised the centrality of the Taliban to any future political settlement in Afghanistan, simultaneously emphasised the grim outlook that this would pose for human rights standards within the country. This was accompanied by an acknowledgement that, if both sides disregarded issues of human rights in post-2014 peace-building in Afghanistan, nothing much would be achieved in this regard. In particular, disregarding issues of gender in the peace-building process would prove to be detrimental. However, both sides also acknowledged that their efforts in supporting human rights standards would not go far without active support from the Afghans themselves, and in this regard, some concerns were raised as to whether the Afghans indeed cared about improving their human rights situation. In addition to peace and security, economic development was also held by both groups to be vital in post-2014 reconciliation. However, there would naturally be problems in this regard given the impending withdrawal of international security forces and the concurrent decline in foreign aid.

Pakistan's position regarding the possibilities of stabilising Afghanistan was quite complex. On the one hand, there was an acknowledgement of the enormous burden that Afghan instability had imposed on Pakistan in terms of generating political instability within Pakistan's own borders, and also in terms of the burden of hosting Afghan refugees. This made it imperative that Pakistan take a hand in stabilising Afghanistan, out of its own national interest. On the other hand, its capacity to shape outcomes in Afghanistan was being limited by the very political volatility that it was experiencing as a result of Afghan instability. Nevertheless, there was a deep consensus among both the civilian government and the military that peace in Afghanistan was sorely needed, and also a tinge of optimism that the current 'democratic moment' in Pakistan might translate into solid gains in stabilising the relationship with Kabul. The Indian delegation was also hopeful that the deepening of democracy in Pakistan would bring about a more stable relationship with Afghanistan. However, there still remained a certain degree of doubt as to whether the civilian government was still capable of fully exercising its will in this regard. In any case, both delegations were of the view that India and Pakistan were still not engaging seriously enough over Afghanistan; both sides certainly saw bilateral dialogue over Afghanistan as a distinct possibility, though not without first considering what the Afghan people themselves wanted.

Achieving a Regional Solution in Afghanistan

On the question of attempts at achieving a regional solution in Afghanistan, the delegates discussed the role of the US forces and the implications arising from their imminent withdrawal. There was a general consensus that the USA's stabilisation efforts within the country had largely failed, and that a US withdrawal would greatly endanger Afghan security. Both sides agreed that there was a serious lack of capacity on the part of the Afghan government and military to ensure the country's security; they made note of capability gaps within the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior, as well as the lack of air power, artillery and management know-how in handling contracts, payroll, logistics, and intelligence. In addition, the group also emphasised the detrimental impact on the Afghan economy that would arise from the US withdrawal. It was noted that Afghanistan's GDP was heavily dependent on foreign aid and loans, and that it was purely the US presence that was sustaining any sense of investor or donor confidence in the Afghan economy. Another major point that emerged from this discussion was that the US was no longer concerned about modernising Afghanistan or even ensuring basic standards of human rights, but only about withdrawing in good order. Thus, the post-2014 scenario in Afghanistan appeared uncertain at best.

Despite the overall consensus that the US-led attempt had failed, there was also mention of some positive initiatives that had emerged under the US occupation. One was the Road Map to Peace 2014 (which was published in 2012). This process, importantly, highlighted the need of getting support from Pakistan in resolving the conflict in Afghanistan; it also discussed several modalities of engagement with Taliban. Thus, it appeared to be a useful blueprint to finding a regional solution for Afghanistan. In addition to the Road Map for Peace 2014, there was mention of various other processes like the Istanbul Process, Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference and the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan, all of which had potential for addressing issues in Afghanistan. However, it was simultaneously noted that the usefulness of these initiatives was limited by their lack of communication with players on the ground. Nevertheless, the presence of several initiatives to drive peace forward was seen as a distinct necessity.

In addressing the question of what the contours of an ideal regional dialogue on Afghanistan would be, several proposals were put forward. The Indian delegation emphasised that Pakistan was more or less compelled to play a major role in post-2014 Afghanistan, while adding that their country had a relatively lower strategic interest in Afghanistan due to the lack of direct access to the country. However, they also questioned whether Pakistan had the capacity to perform this role effectively.

They cited the poor condition of the Pakistani economy as a major factor limiting Pakistani capability to stabilise Afghanistan.

Both sides agreed that an ideal regional dialogue on Afghanistan would have to address the urgent need for reconciliation within the country. They also noted that the importance of integrating Afghanistan's concerns into a regional forum was yet to be realised. In this regard, it was considered imperative that countries that were unnecessarily interfering with the issues of Afghans had to stop meddling for the situation to improve. The Pakistani delegation pointed out that the aim of the international community should be to allow the Afghans to decide for themselves and not unduly influence the internal political process; thus, they highlighted the importance of facilitating a process for the Afghans to decide their future as part of an effective regional dialogue over Afghanistan. They also reiterated the importance of giving a hearing to the Taliban and the warlords and providing them with an opportunity to join the mainstream political process. At the same time, strategies for ensuring a stronger Afghani security force that was recruited from a broader category of communities was also seen as a major component of an effective regional dialogue. Given the Taliban's awareness of the weaknesses of the Afghan security forces and the opportunity that the US withdrawal would provide for them to exploit the latter, incorporating such strategies into the dialogue would naturally assume high priority. Finally, both groups reiterated that it was the Afghans themselves who had to decide what steps should be taken, and that the international community should only assist Afghanistan in these endeavours.

Agenda

12th Chaophraya Dialogue

17th July

09.30 – 11.00: Session 1- Introduction and Review of Bilateral Relations

1. What is the current state of Indo-Pak relations (Terrorism, Kashmir, Sir Creek, Siachen, trade etc.)?
2. How do we take the dialogue process forward to a more meaningful peace process? What are the best modes of engagement?
3. Has been effective in improving bilateral relations by informing/influencing Track I?

11.00 – 11.30: Coffee Break & Group Photo

11.30 – 13.00: Session 2 -The Nature of Evolving Public Discourse

1. What role does the media play in the agenda formation of Indo-Pak relations?
2. What are the popular perceptions in India and Pakistan about the dialogue process?
3. What, in the opinion of the general public, are the major stumbling blocks in the India-Pakistan reconciliation process? How do we address that?

13.00 – 14.00: Lunch

14.00 – 15.30: Session 3-The Nature of Evolving Public Discourse

1. Will the democratic transition and coming to power of the PML(N) in Pakistan be able to rekindle the Indo-Pak peace process?
2. What impact will new political alignments in India have on the bilateral relationship, after the next general election?

15:30 – 16:00: Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:30: Session 4-In Military to Military Talks

1. How do the two militaries view possible resolution of the outstanding issues between India and Pakistan?
2. Are the existing military CBMs enough to avoid any misunderstandings in time of conflict and should more be done?
3. How can military to military talks contribute towards greater peace between the two countries?

18th July

09.30 – 11:00: Session 5- Afghanistan 1

1. What are the Indian and Pakistani objectives in Afghanistan in the long term?
2. How do India and Pakistan view the post-2014 Afghanistan reconciliation process?
3. Can India and Pakistan cooperate in stabilising Afghanistan? How?

11.00 – 11.30: Coffee Break

11.30 – 13.00: Session 6-Afghanistan 2

1. What are the major attempts at finding a regional solution to the challenges in Afghanistan? How useful are they?
2. What are the contours of an ideal regional dialogue process on Afghanistan?

13.00 – 14.00: Lunch

14.00 – 16.00: Session 7-Working Groups

16.00 – 16:30: Coffee Break

16.30 – 17.30: Session 8-Joint Resolution and Closing Plenary

DELEGATES

INDIA

Dr. Sushil Aaron	Centre for Policy Research
Dr. Ajay Darshan Behera	Jamia Millia Islamia University
Mr. Mohan Guruswamy	Observer Research Foundation
Ms. Suhashini Haidar	CNN-IBN
Dr. Happymon Jacob	Jawaharlal Nehru University
Mr. Prashant Jha	<i>The Hindu</i>
Dr. Mallika Joseph	Regional Centre for Strategic Studies
Dr. Manoj Joshi	Observer Research Foundation
Amb. Vivek Katju	Indian Foreign Service (Retired)
Lt. Gen. Arvinder Singh Lamba	Indian Army (Retired)
Prof. Amitabh Mattoo	Australia-India Institute
Mr. Baijayant "Jay" Panda	Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) for Odisha
Amb. Gopalaswami Parthasarathy	Indian Foreign Service (Retired)
Air Marshal Vinod Patney	Indian Air Force (Retired)

PAKISTAN

Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas	Pakistan Army (Retired)
Lt. Gen. Tariq Ghazi	Pakistan Army (Retired)
Mr. Ali Dayan Hasan	Pakistan Foreign Service (Retired)
Amb. Aziz Ahmad Khan	Independent Researcher
Dr. Saba Gul Khattak	Member of Parliament (National Assembly of Pakistan)
Mr. Shafqat Mahmood	Pakistan Army (Retired)
Brig. Asad Munir	Member of Parliament/Federal Minister
Mr. Naveed Qamar	Pakistan Foreign Service (Retired)/Jinnah Institute
Amb. Sherry Rehman	Jinnah Institute
Mr. Raza Ahmad Rumi	Jinnah Institute
Mr. Moeed Yusuf	US Institute of Peace
Mr. Salman Zaidi	Jinnah Institute





Email: info@jinnah-institute.com
www.jinnah-institute.com