

Foreign Policy Challenges and the New Government

A Talk by Najmuddin A. Shaikh

Saturday, 01 September 2018 - Karachi



**SOCIETY FOR
GLOBAL MODERATION**

Strengthening Tolerance, Interfaith Harmony and Democracy



Founded in 2003 under section 42 of the Companies Ordinance, 1984 as a 'not for profit' organization

Chairman's Note

Society for Global Moderation (SGM) was visualized as a think tank to promote tolerance, interfaith harmony and democracy. The idea for SGM originally came to me in the aftermath of 9/11 and I consulted a few like-minded individuals about it. They agreed that there was a need to form a body which should counter the narrative of extremism and intolerance.



*Syed Jawaid Iqbal
Founding Chairman*

As a result of this consultation, SGM (previously known as The Moderates) was established in 2003. It promotes Pakistani society – and the world's people in general – as largely peace-loving and tolerant. However, many are still accused of promoting violence and terror and having no acceptability of other faiths.

I may stress that SGM is not against any religion, custom or creed. It supports a society based on moderation and temperance and works to change attitudes and enhance values. To further its viewpoint, SGM has been inviting prominent scholars and thinkers from around the world to speak on subjects that are in conformity with its ideals.

Among them are: **Walter Russell Mead**, US foreign policy expert, who has served as the Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow for U.S. Foreign Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations. Subject: *'India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.'* **Marguerite H. Sullivan**, US Public Affairs and Communications Specialist and Director of the Center on International Media Assistance. Subject: *'Media Freedom and Sustainable Democracy'*. **Jacqueline Novogratz**, founder and CEO, Acumen Fund. Subject: *'Philanthropy and Leadership'*. **Vishakha Desai**, President Asia Society. Subject: *'Pakistan's Perception among the U.S. Populace.'* **Dr. Zaheerul Islam**, Islamic scholar. Subject: *'Islam in a Modern State'*.

The SGM Board of Directors subsequently invited **Najmuddin Sheikh**, former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, to deliver a Talk on *'Foreign Policy Challenges and the New Government.'* He presented an insightful view of Pakistan's foreign policy perspectives and had some interesting perceptions to share with the audience.

Excerpts from his Talk and the ensuing question, answers and comments are included in this brochure.

Speaker's Profile

Najmuddin Shaikh joined the Foreign Service of Pakistan in 1961. During his 38 years of service, he also served as Pakistan's ambassador to Canada (1987–1989), West Germany (1989–1990) and Iran (1992–1994). He was Pakistan's special envoy to Yemen, Sudan, Kenya and Bahrain.



Najmuddin A. Shaikh
Former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan

Najmuddin Shaikh was the 21st Foreign Secretary of Pakistan from 1994–1997. Before him, Shahryar Khan was Pakistan's foreign secretary while Shamshad Ahmad succeeded him in that capacity.

Shaikh has been a member of the board of governors of the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad and senior vice president of the Karachi Council of Foreign Relations. He is a political and security commentator and regularly publishes scholarly pieces on foreign affairs in international journals. He is also featured in Pakistani and international media. Najmuddin Shaikh previously wrote a weekly column on foreign affairs for Dawn. He now writes for Daily Times.

Born on September 4 1939, Najmuddin Shaikh obtained a degree in B.Com from the Sindh University and an M.A. from the Tufts University's Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in 1962. His wife, Raana Shaikh, has served as the Managing Director of Pakistan Television, and earlier as Secretary at the Ministry of Culture. He is the brother of Air Marshal Riazuddin Shaikh.

‘Pakistan’s Foreign Policy is in Good Hands’

Syed Jawaid Iqbal thanked Najmuddin Shaikh for agreeing to address members of the Society for Global Moderation (SGM) and other distinguished guests on the topic of “Foreign Policy Challenges and the New Government.”



He said the subject was interesting as well as relevant, keeping in view the fact a new government had taken over in Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan. He hoped there would be drastic but practical changes in the country's foreign policy so that it can work towards reviving the positive image of the country as a peace-loving nation. And there was no one better than Najmuddin Shaikh to tell

us as to how this could be done.

A complex global situation has developed by the Trump-led assault on allies and adversaries alike.

In his Talk, Najamuddin Shaikh said that a country's foreign policy emanates from its domestic policy and if its internal policies are strong, this will certainly lead to strong external policies. He said that the new government in Pakistan will start moving towards a new identity and that it would recognize terrorism as a recurrent theme. He was of the view that since every country has its own interests to look after, Pakistan must also accept the realities surrounding it and must accept that the Taliban are a reality though it must make sure that it does not become a party to the conflict.

He said that the tasks for the new government are enormous. Its first focus should be on internal reform. But, because of FATF and regional security, a complex global situation had developed by the Trump-led assault on allies and adversaries alike. Pakistan had perilous foreign exchange reserves which would make recourse to the IMF inevitable. At the same time, it was essential that Prime Minister Imran Khan and his team gave equal time to foreign policy, especially since it related to relations with the US. This also impacted Pakistan's role in US-Afghan relations.

Najamuddin Shaikh said Pakistan's first priority must be Afghanistan. He talked about the factors to be considered In this regard, first, he said, the 'foreign presence' which, including civil contractors for the US and the International Security Assistance Force, numbered around 70,000, could not be maintained without using Pakistan's air space and overland routes. He said there was no alternate route. According to him, recently the National Defence Authorisation Act passed by the US Congress provided what is essentially the Coalition Support Funds at a level of \$350 million as against \$900m in 2017. This would be disbursed to a number of countries to strengthen border security and will have few conditions attached beyond the requirement that utilisation is coordinated with the other country and the Americans. He said border security and border management is a project we have been working on and assistance in this regard would be welcome and in line with our priorities.

Shaikh pointed out that the sum earmarked for Pakistan under this head was \$150m. The Americans had always maintained that as a matter of principle they did not pay transit fees to countries through which their supplies moved and they used other methods to provide compensation. He asked that was \$150m adequate compensation and did this also mean aid which was suspended. He also asked that would more money be available if Pakistan-US differences are resolved?

He said India was in Afghanistan as a provider of aid which had amounted to about \$2bn. Its presence was welcomed by the Afghan populace. As an active adversary, Najmuddin Shaikh said there was no doubt that it used its presence, in tandem with anti-Pakistan forces in Afghanistan, to augment its capacity for creating mischief in Balochistan.

In his view, Pakistan's security agencies were rightly concerned. The question was that what consequence was this added capacity, given that India had a long permeable border with Pakistan. He said we have a coastline that has often been termed a smugglers' paradise. Should Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and Afghan stability, a long-sought-after Pakistani goal, be put at risk for an augmentation that is, if not minimal, not very substantial, he inquired.

Shaikh said he was aware of the fact that for India it was important to maintain the façade that terrorism was coming from across the border but this still meant that Pakistan must engage with India and hold talks with them. He said he was encouraged by the fact that many countries were willing to mediate in this regard. He stressed that while New Delhi talked to Srinagar regarding various issues, it must also talk to Islamabad.

Najmuddin Shaikh considered Pakistan's foreign policy to be in very competent hands under Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi who had the ability to steer foreign affairs in a very able manner. This would open a new chapter in Pakistan's external relations. He said that Pakistan as a country had great potential and that if the new government utilized even 30 per cent of this potential and laid the foundations of a new service structure, it could move forward with prestige and pride.

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The event



in pictures



Q&A and Comments



Saad Amanullah

Saad Amanullah: What are the key challenges of Pak-US relations?

Answer: The key challenges of Pak-US relations are Pakistan's own internal problems. The truth of the matter is that you need to keep your relations with the US on an even footing. This is urgent and necessary. Your focus should not really be on foreign policy but on resolving your internal problems. Those problems will attract favourable international attention if the steps that you take are seen to be irreversible and are addressing the problems that you have identified yourself and on which you have taken action. Now, it has acquired even more urgency, with the FATF telling you that you have to take these steps. If we take these steps, we will not just have the support of the US but of its allies and Russia and China.



*Syed Fakhar
Ahmed*

Syed Fakhar Ahmed: Does Pakistan have the clout to deliver what the Americans want, to help it to exit from Afghanistan gracefully?

Answer: This is the moment of truth. If, perhaps, there can be no agreement, then it would be good for the Taliban leadership – whether you call it the Quetta Shura, or the Peshawar Shura, or the Miranshah Shura – to move to those areas of Afghanistan where they have control. Helmand is one area in which nobody denies a degree of Taliban control. We should try and insulate ourselves as far as possible. Let the Afghans sort out things themselves, but keep yourself as aloof as possible from this. I realise that this may be a difficult task, but that is what we should be aiming for. Fencing our border, and we have made considerable progress on this, is a good step. We must facilitate trade with Afghanistan even while preventing the misuse of the Afghan Transit Trade Agreement.



Ahmed Ali

Ahmed Ali: Do you think that after US exit from Afghanistan, the economic condition of the war-torn country would be even worse?

Answer: In Afghanistan, a minimum US presence is necessary because in its absence, aid, which finances the Afghan National Defence Forces and Afghan budget, would disappear or be drastically reduced. This would dramatically raise Afghanistan's unemployment rate, which is currently at 40pc, will put on the roads discharged soldiers with few skills other than bearing a gun, and cause the sort of economic distress that will bring hordes of refugees across the only border that still remains open - Pakistan. My estimate is that even in

the best of circumstances — reconciliation, doubling of Afghan agricultural production, reduction of opium production, relatively high transit fees for South Asian trade with Central Asia — it will be 2030-35 before Afghanistan's economy can achieve a measure of self-sustaining stability.



Kazi Asad Abid

Kazi Asad Abid: Should Pakistan resort to Track Two Diplomacy to come to terms with and find a mutually-agreed solution of the Kashmir crisis?

Answer: I think Track Two Diplomacy could be effective if both countries were willing to find a desirable way out to bring the long-festering Kashmir issue to its peaceful end. In fact, Track Two tends to be an unofficial channel for the exchange of ideas and proposals unconstrained by the official stance of the parties concerned. Track Two diplomacy has been defined as the bringing together of professionals, opinion leaders or other currently or potentially influential individuals from communities in conflict without official status to work together to understand better the dynamics underlying the conflict and its transformation from violence (or potential violence) to a collaborative process of peace building and sustainable development.

Experts believe Track Two should not be seen as an activity designed to address only a specific issue between two parties since there are also regional security problems and problems pertaining to other fields that could benefit from a Track Two exercise. In Pakistan, over the past few years, this nomenclature for a spate of meetings between members of Pakistan's civil society with their counterparts in India and Afghanistan has gained notoriety. Many of these meetings are seen to be no more than an opportunity for retired government officials, journalists and in and out of office politicians to engage in discussions, which largely follow the pattern of official discussions and prove to be equally unproductive. There is a certain amount of truth in this. Productivity must be defined as being the immediate generation of problem-solving proposals that are accepted by both sides of the conflict and lead to formal agreements.



Ali Habib

Ali Habib: Do you think Pakistan can do more to internationalize the Kashmir issue?

Answer: Pakistan must continue the programme that Prime Minister Imran Khan has laid down for improving the country's economy as well as uprooting the menace of terrorism and extremism from the country. This will help us win international support for Kashmir.



Zia Zubari

Zia Zubari: Independent of what the Americans want, do we derive any advantage from hosting the Afghan Taliban leadership on our soil?

Answer: Clear thinking suggests that if the Taliban remain on our soil, and if the US, pushed by Trump's inclination to retreat into 'Fortress America', sees no vital interest in staying, we will have a situation where, in an impoverished Afghanistan, the Taliban will control the provinces bordering Pakistan, the erstwhile Northern Alliance in the north, and a civil war will ensue. The Taliban's natural allies will be the TTP — decimated but not destroyed — alongside whom they had fought against the Soviets and then the Rabbani-Hikmatyar governments. All that will result is turbulence in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Is that what we need? If we do ask the Taliban to leave after receiving guarantees that they will be negotiating partners and not pariahs in Afghanistan, our relations even with Trump's US will improve. That is the benefit we will enjoy for a decision made in our own interest.



Naveed Khan

Naveed Khan: On the issue of Iran, Pakistan is in a very tricky situation, vis-à-vis not just the US, but its friends, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. How does Pakistan walk the tightrope in case of a conflagration without antagonising any of the three?

Answer: Right now, the only thing we can do to help Iran is to ensure that our borders are secure. We have arrived at an agreement with them about rapid reaction forces. The Iranians have erected a wall, which makes penetration somewhat more difficult. This is all we can do. We have the capacity to increase trade with them – items that come under humanitarian grounds and will not lead to sanctions. I think we have explained this to the Saudis and the UAE as this has been our traditional stand. In a quarrel between two Muslim states, we take no sides, but we try to act as mediators to bridge the differences they have. This we will continue to do. This was established by the fact that the alliance that was termed initially as an anti-Iran alliance, is now an anti-terrorism alliance.



Shamim Alvi

Shamim Alvi: Do you believe that the US will give Pakistan access and certain concessions in trade, especially since everything hinges on our 'good behaviour' and their 'do more' mantra?

Answer: We love these phrases: 'Trade not aid'. Where is your capacity? Increase your capacity. Slogans and catchphrases are not what we need. What we need is the rebuilding of our economy and making sure that it delivers. The business community is up in arms. I hope Khan will resist their efforts at not paying taxes. They are the ones who have to be the catalysts to give us this capacity.

Media Coverage

DAWN

02 SEP 2018

Daily Times

02 SEP 2018

'Strong internal policies will lead to strong external policies'

Staff Report

THE NEWS

02 SEP 2018

'Good governance key to viable foreign policy'

Former foreign secretary Najmuddin A. Shaikh says we need to make our borders foolproof

'Pakistan must make decisions in its own hands'

Former foreign secretary Najmuddin A. Shaikh discusses challenges facing new govt on external front

event organized by the Society for Global Moderation: "Speaking on 'Foreign policy challenges in the new government days', Mr. Shaikh, recently shared how he perceived a foreign policy was formulated and diplomacy should be conducted."

Najmuddin A. Shaikh

Former foreign secretary Najmuddin A. Shaikh (right) speaks at a talk, titled 'Foreign Policy Challenges and the New Government'.

BUSINESS RECORDER

07 SEP 2018

'Pakistan in Good Hands'

Najmuddin Shaikh

Najmuddin A. Shaikh

66 Afghanistan is the prism through which the United States views Pakistan

Pakistan's foreign policy in good hands: Najmuddin Shaikh

03 SEP 2018

Pakistan's foreign policy is in good hands, says former foreign secretary Najmuddin A. Shaikh. He said that the new government has a clear vision and is committed to maintaining the continuity of Pakistan's foreign policy. He also emphasized the importance of good governance in formulating a viable foreign policy.

'Pakistan in Good Hands'

Najmuddin Shaikh

Former foreign secretary Najmuddin A. Shaikh has said that a foreign policy emanates from the policy, and if the internal policies are in good hands, the external policy will also be in good hands. He said that the new government has a clear vision and is committed to maintaining the continuity of Pakistan's foreign policy.

روزنامہ خبریں

03 SEP 2018

پاکستان کی خارجہ پالیسی بخیر ہاتھوں میں

پاکستان کی خارجہ پالیسی بخیر ہاتھوں میں ہے، سابق خارجہ سیکریٹری نے کہا۔ ان کا کہنا تھا کہ نئی حکومت کی پالیسی بخیر ہاتھوں میں ہے اور وہ پاکستان کی خارجہ پالیسی کو برقرار رکھے گی۔

روزنامہ دنیا

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Former secretary says Pakistan's foreign policy in good hands

WARCH PRESS RELEASE

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Najmuddin A. Shaikh

The Business

03 SEP 2018

Pakistan's foreign policy in good hands: Speakers

Seminar on 'Foreign Policy Challenges and the New Government'

PAKISTAN TODAY

02 SEP 2018

Pakistan's foreign policy in good hands: Najmuddin Shaikh

(NNI) Shaikh, former foreign secretary, said that a foreign policy emanates from the policy, and if the internal policies are in good hands, the external policy will also be in good hands. He said that the new government has a clear vision and is committed to maintaining the continuity of Pakistan's foreign policy.

Pakistan's foreign policy in good hands: Speakers

Seminar on 'Foreign Policy Challenges and the New Government'

By Staff Correspondent

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Najmuddin A. Shaikh

PAKISTAN TODAY

04 SEP 2018

Foreign Policy Challenges and the New Government

Najmuddin A. Shaikh

in a Talk on 'Foreign Policy Challenges and the New Government', former foreign secretary Najmuddin A. Shaikh said that a foreign policy emanates from the policy, and if the internal policies are in good hands, the external policy will also be in good hands. He said that the new government has a clear vision and is committed to maintaining the continuity of Pakistan's foreign policy.



**“ A people that
elect corrupt
politicians,
imposters, thieves
and traitors are
not victims... but
accomplices ”**

– George Orwell



**SOCIETY FOR GLOBAL
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STRENGTHENING TOLERANCE, INTERFAITH HARMONY AND DEMOCRACY