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SEMINAR DIAMOND JUBILEE OF PAKISTAN

Pakistan's Relations *With* Central Asian States

ORGANISED BY MUSLIM INSTITUTE

HONOURABLE SPEAKERS



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AMBASSADOR OF
KAZAKHSTAN TO PAKISTAN
CHIEF GUEST



**H.E. SAHIBZADA SULTAN
AHMED ALI**
DEWAN OF JUNAGADH STATE
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OPENING REMARKS



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MUSLIM Institute organized a Seminar titled "Diamond Jubilee of Pakistan: Pakistan's Relations with Central Asian States" in collaboration with Nazaria-i-Pakistan Trust on Sunday, August 28, 2022, at Nazaria-i-Pakistan Trust Lahore. His Excellency Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, was the chief guest on the occasion. Asif Tanveer Awan Advocate, Public Relations Associate moderated the proceedings.

Remarks by the Speakers

Brief summary of remarks shared by speakers is as follows:



The ideological and geographical significance of Central Asia for Pakistan could be traced from Allama Iqbal's Presidential Sermon delivered in Allahabad in which Allama Iqbal gave the example of Egypt. He described that Egypt's back is geographically toward the African world and its face is towards Arab world. Allama Iqbal said that just like that of Egypt, the back of the north-western region of the Subcontinent (Pakistan nowadays) is towards India, and its face is towards the Islamic world which spreads across Central Asia. Furthermore, anthropologically, this region always remained different from other parts of South Asia. Its socio-cultural realities are similar to that of Central Asia and the Middle East.

The importance of Central Asia for Pakistan could be accessed from a document written by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah when the resolution of Pakistan was passed on 23rd March 1940. In his writing, Quaid-e-Azam referred to the letter of Lala Lajpat Rai who was an extremist Hindu and was associated with many extremist movements like Shudhi and Sangathan. Lala Lajpat Rai wrote a letter to one of his leaders and said that he was not afraid of Muslims of the Subcontinent. But, if these Muslims were given a chance to be united and form a state, they would surely join hands with the Muslims of Central Asia and the Middle East. Historical relations that existed among them for a thousand

years would be restored. Quaid-e-Azam mentioned the letter because he knew that when they would get their country, their direction would be towards Central Asia and the Islamic world spreading to the west of the newly formed state-Pakistan.



The shrine of Allama Muhammad Iqbal links two outstanding features of Islamic civilization. On the one hand side of the shrine of Allama Iqbal lies Shahi Qila (Lahore fort) which is a symbol of Muslim political might in the Subcontinent. Whereas, on the other hand, the shrine lies Shahi Mosque which depicts the spiritual aspect of the Muslim civilization. The architecture of both, Lahore Fort and Badshahi Mosque, is of Central Asian origin. Allama Iqbal, a great Islamic philosopher and national poet of Pakistan, while describing his thoughts, says that after diving into the legacy of Mevlana Rūmī, Urfi Shirazi, Fakhr al-Dīn 'Irāqī and Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār, for years, the secret of life came to him and he inspired the youth of Ajam (East) and the youth of Central Asia. Allama Iqbal says that "I have found my future in this legacy of Central Asia, you too may see your future from my eyes because the fire of those towering personalities burns inside my eyes".

The shrine of Shaykh 'Alī al-Hujwīrī also guides you in the same direction.

The founder of the Chishtī spiritual order, Muḥay-Ad-Dīn Chishtī Ajmeri, was born in Chisht, Kandhar, so the area of his spiritual lineage is also Central Asia. His beloved teacher, Khavājah Baqī Billah, was born in Afghanistan and all his training was done in Central Asia. As many dynasties were established in Subcontinent like Ghaznavid, Ghori, Lodhi, Tughlaq, Slave or Mughal, all these people came here from Central Asia. It is worth mentioning that majority of the Muslim heads of state in princely states of the Subcontinent were of Central Asian origin. During the Muslim rule in Subcontinent Persian was adopted as an official language rather than other local languages. This also proves the socio-cultural assimilation

between these two regions. The court language and all the court decisions were written in Persian. Interestingly, the national language of Pakistan, Urdu, was also invented by the Central Asia people. Great names of Urdu literary figures such as Mirza Ghalib, Bahadur Shah Zafar, and Qali Qutb Shah were also of Central Asian origin. Therefore, it is maintained that the people living in Pakistan have centuries-old strong relations with Central Asia.



The history that exists tells that language, way of life, dress, religion, food, and faith that the majority of the Subcontinent Muslims follow, mostly came from Central Asia and Arabia. Where there are such strong spiritual, historical, literary, and academic ties, it becomes imperative to strengthen the economic, diplomatic, defence, and political ties between Pakistan and Central Asia.

The gap between Central Asia and Subcontinent emerged due to the iron curtain of the USSR and British Rule in the Subcontinent. An iron curtain was drawn between the two regions to maintain a borderline between the colonial powers.

Pakistan can strengthen its ties with Central Asia. Both the previous and current governments have made efforts to further the bilateral relations. The relations with Central Asia can be built on the fronts of human development, energy sector, technology, health, education, media, industry and trade.



Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was established by Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey to promote economic, technical, and cultural cooperation among the member states. In 1992, the Organization was expanded to include seven new members, namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. To re-establish bilateral relations with Central Asian states, a conference was arranged in Iran in 1992 under the Umbrella of ECO. Then a conference of ministers was organized in Pakistan to promote the similarity of history and culture with those states and at that time, Quetta Action Plan was announced. The objective was to establish land connectivity between all the partner countries. In 1993, in Kazakhstan, a meeting of major transporters was held for the purpose. In that meeting, a mega plan was formulated to connect all the above-mentioned countries with roads and railways. In 1996, the first project of this mega plan was completed by restoring the railway between Turkmenistan and Iran.

The efforts of Kazakhstan's ambassador for building people-to-people relations are commendable; he is the first ambassador of Kazakhstan who has travelled across the whole of Pakistan. Moreover, he is among those ambassadors in Islamabad who have introduced new ideas and strategies in diplomacy.

It is the 75th independence celebration of Pakistan and it also concludes 30 years of Pak-Kazakhstan friendship. Kazakhstan came into existence in 1991 and Pakistan was the first country that recognized Kazakhstan's independence. Central Asia and Pakistan have all the resources to build friendly ties; honest, sincere and effective leadership can utilise all the resources. Along with that, mutual trade should be promoted. Moreover, defence pacts could be signed, as well, for peace and prosperity of both regions.

In the current situation, there are floods in Pakistan which have severely affected one-third of the country. Kazakhstan stands with the Pakistani people in every field of life. Kazakhstan sees Pakistan as a brotherly country at every forum whether it is the United Nations or any other organization. Kazakhstan always supported Pakistan on International issues and remained in favour of Pakistan. For regional development and growth, regional connectivity and infrastructure are obligatory. Pakistan and the Central Asian States states should focus on regional connectivity through road and rail routes.



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