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Mission of Unity, Stability & Leadership In Muslims

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NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVER-  
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# A WEBINAR ON **PAKISTAN-TURKEY RELATIONS: OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE COOPERATION** THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2020

ORGANISED BY  
**MUSLIM INSTITUTE**



**PROF. DR. AHMET UYSAL**  
DIRECTOR, MIDDLE EASTERN  
STUDIES CENTER (ORSAM)  
TURKEY  
GUEST REMARKS



**PROF. DR. ZAMEER AWAN**  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
AND HUMANITIES, MUST  
GUEST REMARKS



**DR. SHABANA FAYYAZ**  
HOD, DEFENSE AND STRATEGIC  
STUDIES, QAID-I-AZAM  
UNIVERSITY  
GUEST REMARKS

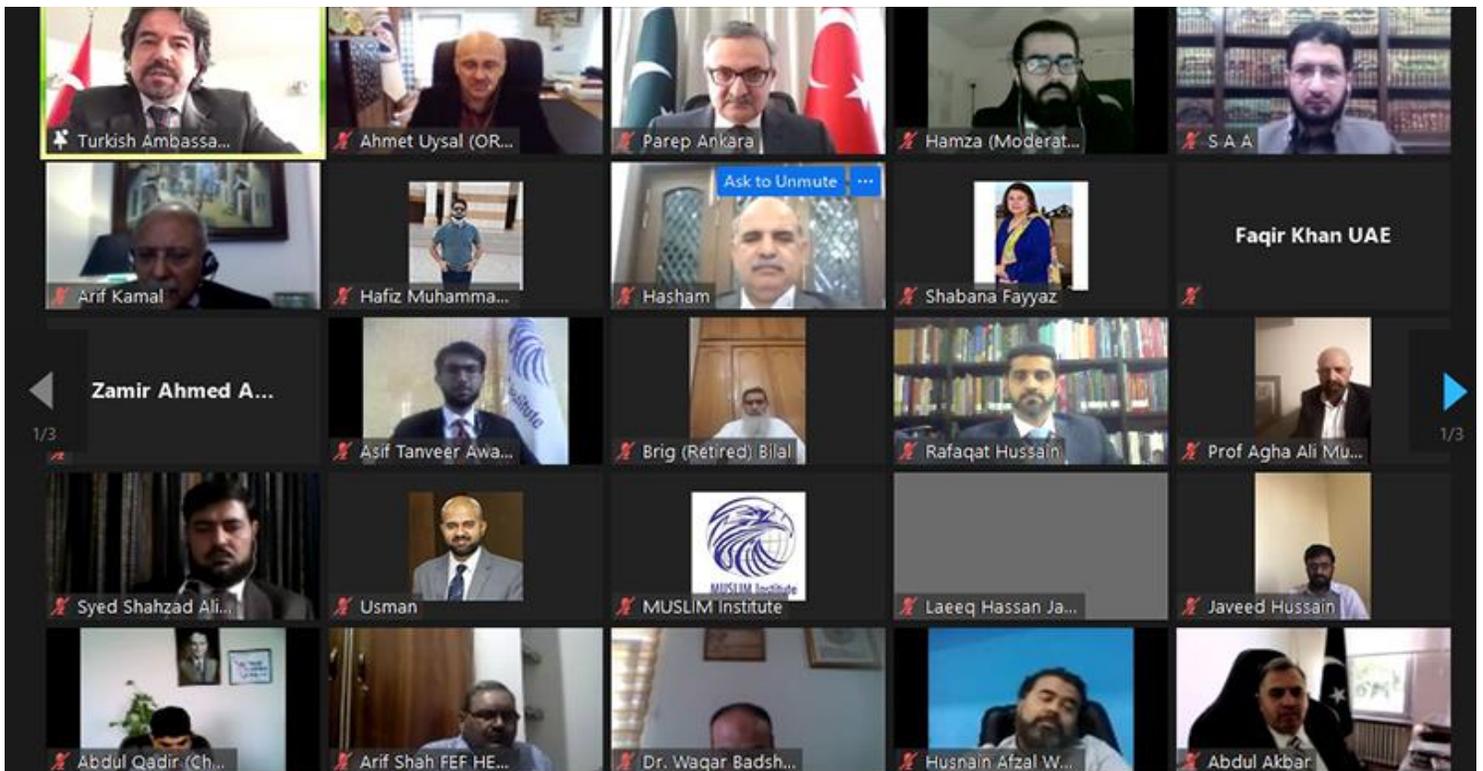


**MALIK ASIF TANVEER**  
PUBLIC RELATION ASSOCIATE,  
MUSLIM INSTITUTE  
OPENING REMARKS

MUSLIM Institute organized a webinar “Pakistan-Turkey Relations: Opportunities to Enhance Cooperation.” Mr. Hamza Iftikhar (Research Associate - MUSLIM Institute) moderated the proceedings. Researchers, students, academics, representatives of think tanks, journalists, political leaders, and people from different walks of life participated in the webinar.

Historical ties between Pakistan and Turkey have been strengthening day by day for decades. Internationally, it is perhaps one of the most important bilateral relations that Pakistan has. Both Muslim countries share common socio-cultural and religious values. People of both countries always stand by each other during difficult times. In 1915, while the Turkish soldiers were defending the Dardanelles Strait with a glorious resistance, a solidarity rally was taken out in Lahore 6,000 km far from the Strait and it was recorded in the unforgettable annals of history. Similarly, the Khilafat movement also presented an unmatched example of sacrifice and love rendered by Muslims of subcontinent for their Turkish brothers.

Soon after the establishment of Pakistan, following centuries’ old traditions, both countries extended each other their support during the most difficult times, such as in natural disasters and responding befittingly to a common enemy in the case of foreign aggression. They cemented their friendly relations with frequent high-level visits. The High-Level Cooperation Council which was established in 2009 and upgraded to the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council speaks clearly of the reality of both countries’ will to further strengthen bilateral relations in every walk of life.



In February 2020, the two countries signed 13 memorandums of understandings (MoUs) including a joint declaration after the sixth meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) which approved a Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) along with an elaborate plan of action to implement the new vision to further strengthen ties. The Strategic Economic Forum aims at reaching the target of enhancing bilateral trade to \$5 billion by 2023 from the current \$800 million. Premiers of both countries had termed the Strategic Economic Forum and the 71-point plan of action, as the “roadmap for deepening economic cooperation.” While addressing the national assembly of Pakistan, Turkish President also showed willingness to turn his country's relationship with Pakistan into one that roots in business and trade. The MoUs signed by the two governments relate to the fields of standardization, conformity assessment, metrology and training, diaspora policy, media, development and facilitation of tourism, halal accreditation, trade facilitation, and customs cooperation matters, railways, postal services, military training, and hydrocarbons.

Turkey's improving ties with China have also opened new avenues of cooperation for the Pakistan-Turkey strategic partnership, especially vis-à-vis the Belt and Road Initiative, and CPEC being part of it. Both countries can reap enormous benefits from this project. It will not only enhance bilateral trade but also bring economic prosperity for both.



Strong cooperative relationship in defence industries between the two countries is a major asset. The past ten years or so have witnessed a profound improvement in this area. Turkey is working with Pakistan in building armored vehicles, tanks, military communication systems, and naval patrol boats. Moreover, the contract with Pak Navy for building military vessels which is signed in Karachi stands out as an exemplary work in the field of defence and shipbuilding. There is also a willingness on both sides to expand the relations to explore further areas such as aerospace industries.

People of both countries share a common worldview and practice the teachings of Sufism, while Mevlana Rumi and Allama Muhammad Iqbal remain not only a soft image of both the countries but also one of the strongest bonds between the people

of two countries. Followership of Sufi orders in both countries further strengthens people to people contacts. Love and hospitality for each other are deep-rooted among the nationals of both countries. Turkish dramas documented on Muslim history and civilization are very popular among Pakistani masses. The popularity of the Turkish Drama serial “Ertugrul” in Pakistan is yet another manifestation of this bond.



We need to think about how we can build a skyscraper on this fantastic foundation stone to bring our trade relations at par. Pakistan is a country of two hundred and twenty million people and Turkey is that of eighty-two million plus. Together, both countries constitute three hundred million which is five to six percent of the world population. Unfortunately, we have so far failed to achieve any significant figure in bilateral trade. Our trade is currently around 600-800 million dollars. The COVID-19 pandemic has further decreased the trade quite significantly, causing about a 30% reduction. We need to cultivate stake of both countries in each other’s prosperity. Due to COVID-

19 and excessive usage of technologies, the techniques of business adopted by the world have changed dramatically. Turkey, being technologically quite advanced in artificial intelligence and social security, can collaborate with Pakistan for mutual benefits.

Turkey, as a trading nation, has done extremely well in the last few decades. Its trade is almost four hundred billion dollars in imports and exports taken together. Pakistan, unfortunately, has not been a trading nation so far. Entrepreneurs need to come forward and promote trade as this is not the sole job of governments, who can only facilitate

trade. The present government in Pakistan has made it a priority. It has identified number of sectors. Construction: 50 USD million low cast houses for Pakistani families. Infrastructure: There is a special package in the construction industry in place in Pakistan now. Tourism; Pakistan, last year, was positioned as the adventure tourists' destination of the year by many international magazines like Forbes.



More than forty million tourists visited Turkey last year that generated thirty billion dollars of revenue. Pakistani sea coasts starting from Karachi to Gwadar consist of beautiful and pristine beaches. These coastlines carry enormous potential if we learn from the Turkish experience on that count. The government should explore the possibilities of replicating at grassroots level what Turkey in the last thirty years has been able to exploit from its tourism industry.

In terms of the inter-governmental actions to promote trade, there is a free trade agreement under discussion for a fairly long time. Turkey, despite its impressive industrialization, still has only 10 to 15 USD million textile exports. Pakistan should look at complementarities and we should look towards joint ventures.



In relation to numerous opportunities, there are two major challenges, one is the trade and the other is economic investment side. There are more than a hundred Turkish companies that want to operate in Pakistan. Pakistan has so much to learn and to cooperate in this regard. Several companies are working already in Pakistan like in hydropower projects so the economic investment side is healthy relative to the economic trade side. In this respect, the investment from Turkey will add to Pakistan's ability to expand business not only with Turkey but also with the rest of the world.

Recently on the Azerbaijan matter, both the countries have supported Azerbaijan's principled stance and opposed Armenian aggression. On Indian Occupied Kashmir issue, the Turkish government and people have always stood with the oppressed and voiced for the just resolution of Kashmir as promised in the UN resolutions. Similarly, on the Palestine issue, both the countries oppose and condemn Israeli aggression and illegal occupation. In this realist world, such a strong relation of brotherhood is an example of its own kind.

Both countries have faced the issue of terrorism and huge influxes of war migrants. There are more opportunities to share experiences and cooperation in this regard. In the evolving geopolitical and geo-strategic environments, challenges are growing for the Muslim world. The need of the hour is to strengthen mutual trust and unity among all Muslims.

The one important factor is Pakistan and Turkey's interests in Afghanistan's peace and prosperity. Both countries propagate the same perspective of a peaceful Afghanistan. Turkey, Pakistan, and Afghanistan are going through the process of tristate relations for working together for the prosperity of Afghanistan that is lagging behind for years. Turkey follows the vision of Allama Iqbal that Afghanistan's peace is important for the peace in Asia and considers Afghanistan as "heart of Asia."

OIC has 56 Muslim member countries but has been unable to achieve its true potential. Turkey is doing efforts to address the problems structurally and Turkey wants OIC to be a forum that is far more active and operational. Another important aspect of the relations is regarding Islamophobia. Turkey and Pakistan are working to cope with the issue of Islamophobia at different platforms.

# Interactive Session

*A brief summary of the discussion extracted from the interactive session is as follows:*

There is a strong relation between both countries. Turkey is a country that has both economic and military power. On the other hand, Pakistan is a nuclear country. Both countries should work together in all areas in the next decade. Both countries should cooperate in the field of science and technology. Pakistan can learn from Turkey in modern technology especially in the area of education and agriculture. Pakistan and Turkey are shoulder to shoulder in all major issues like Nagorno Karabagh. Turkey also supports Pakistan on Kashmir.



**MUSLIM Institute**  
Mission of Unity, Stability &  
Leadership In Muslims

PO Box: 562, Islamabad,  
Pakistan

[info@muslim-institute.org](mailto:info@muslim-institute.org)  
[www.muslim-institute.org](http://www.muslim-institute.org)