

The Silver Lining-Beyond Prevalent Perceptions

2nd RoundTable Discussion



Theme of the Event:

With the theme of "The Silver lining – Beyond Prevalent Perceptions" To shape a point of view for the national workshop with a view to revitalize Karachi, a round table conference was held on December 20th, 2017. The event was attended by many personages from academia, policy makers and practitioners.

PARTICIPANTS OF 2ND ROUNDTABLE

The proceedings included one presentation and were chaired by Rear Admiral Pervaiz Asghar (Retd). Participants at the event included members of the academia, experts and policy practitioners. The speakers and topics were as follows:

1. Rear Admiral (retd.) Pervaiz Asghar – CPEC: Opportunities for Karachi
2. Dr. Huma Baqai - Transforming Karachi's Diversity into Strength
3. Zahid Saeed - Entrepreneurship in Karachi: Challenges and openings
4. Kashif Aziz - Karachipedia: Understanding Karachi Social media

Venue & Date:

The event took place at CPSD's office on December 20th, 2017. It started around 3:30 PM and ended at 6:30 PM. Following the presentations, an open discussion took place with an ending note by CPSD's Chairman, Habibullah Dadabhoj. It came to an end with a Hi-tea for the presenters and other participants.

Highlights of the round table:

Rear Admiral Pervaiz Asghar (retd):

The program started with a recitation of the Holy Quran. After the recitation, the stage secretary gave the procedures over to the Chairperson, Rear Admiral Pervaiz Asghar (retd). He discussed the point of CPEC and Opportunities for Karachi. He stressed on the distinction amongst Gwadar and Karachi, and emphasized that Gwadar may be the future, but Karachi is the present and it will always stay as important as it is today Dhabeji. Surplus energy supply would be there for Sindh once these power generation will be operational.

Karachi on the other hand, he stated, is expanding on an unprecedented level while the fruit of Gwadar still is to ripe and both Pakistan and China want to snag the low hanging fruits first. By contrast, Karachi is already well connected to the rest of the country, through motorways and highways. The newly planned cities, Zulfikarabad and the industrial zone of Dhabejji is also near Karachi and therefore, is well connected with roads and highways. Karachi offers cost cutting transportation of Goods through railway and motorways to the rest of the country. A Motorway from Karachi to Peshawar will be completed in 2018 which will be a great attraction to investors. The city and its people have always presented an environment which is very favorable for investors. Its two Ports: Port Qasim and Dhabejji attracts investors to Karachi and both should increase their efficiency in coming years.

He also made a significant point about Karachi's unhelpful label of an ungovernable chaotic city, which has to be cast aside by meaningful action. He stated that the city may have overcome the dark night of extortion and terror, but concentrated effort is required to stop the return of such a nightmare.

Dr. Huma Baqai:

Continuing the session after this, was the first speaker Dr. Huma Baqai. She talked on the point of Transforming Karachi's Diversity into Strength. She opined that there was a need to recognize and comprehend Karachi's qualities, to take care of its heap issues. She stated that Karachi is categorized as a Metropolis city, which always absorbs immigrants from all over the country. Even the Tehreek-e-Taliban have easily settled in the city due to the very reason, as it's easy to mellow down in the diversity of Karachi. The Taliban even decided against destabilizing Karachi beyond a point due to its significance. When operations were going on in the Northern part of the country, many people migrated to Karachi.

She also pointed out that Karachi is categorized as a "demographic pressure cooker" due to its unprecedented growth rate and we need to understand the statistics of Karachi's growth in order to solve its problems. Karachi's strength is both its ethnic majority as well as its minorities. There is also a big urban-rural divide in Sindh, people of Sindh ask why Karachi is separated from Sindh? According to statistics, 350,000 people migrate to Karachi every year and the situation is expected to remain the same in coming years. The problem of this

high level of immigration is talked about by the international scholars and commentators who have noted that if we are to count the number of immigrants of only one community then there are 5 million Pashtuns living in Karachi.

The city has become a part of a political paradigm. In the provincial assembly of Sindh, PPP fights with MQM, but in the streets of Karachi, MQM fights with ANP. Karachi rejected religious politics which was brought up by Jamat-e Islami and also rejected populist's politics which was done by PPP, but adopted the Ethnic politics of MQM. Therefore, there should be Reconciliation commission for Karachi. She even went ahead and put the country's youth into focus by saying that Bhutto raised the slogan that "All power belongs to people" but I say "All power belongs to Youth".

Bringing attention to the issue of poverty in the city, she stated that the Orangi town is the largest slum of the world and there are over 600 slums in the city. At one point in 1947, Karachi was the cleanest city of Pakistan. She declared that Karachi's decent variety must be changed over into its quality, once its conflict matrix has been resolved.

Mr Zahid Saeed:

The second speaker was the Ex Nazim of Jamshed Town and Indus Pharma, MD Zahid Saeed who examined Entrepreneurship in Karachi, its Challenges and openings. He investigated the troubles faced by business visionaries in Karachi and Pakistan as a whole. Mr Saeed opined that about Entrepreneurship, unfortunately, there is a wrong perception in the mind of the people. People think that entrepreneurs are vampires, who drink the blood of masses and workers, and are troublesome because of the way that profiting and esteem is seen as a social foul play by the more extensive Public.

He focused on the point that there was a need to backpedal, tally the genuine populace of Karachi and give it its due reward. In every 16 days, CWDP announces billion of rupees for the industrial cities like Sialkot, but unfortunately there is not a single penny for Karachi. When there were 4 lakh people living in Karachi during the British era, colonial Government constructed clubs, monuments, market places, and educational institutes. MD Zahid Saeed, like Dr Huma Baqir, pressed on the significance of the ports in Karachi and of its dual functions: it provides import substitution and it incorporates export of 10 billion dollars without the funding of federal government.

Mr. Kashif Hafeez Siddiqui:

Statistical surveying Consultant Mr. Kashif Hafeez Siddiqui took after the speakers with an introduction to Karachipedia, Understanding Karachi Social media. In the introduction he featured distinctive realities on the diverse financial patterns, for example, work, living arrangement, transfer pay, offices, shopping inclinations and TV viewership among others. He added that Karachi has 6 districts, 209 union councils, 32 cantonments, and 38 union councils in suburbs. There were 1698 respondents to a survey with age gap from 16 to 65 of both genders. 54 % people see a better future for Karachi and 39 % see similar future as the present. While the others were indifferent towards it. There is only 10 % unemployment in the city. 68 % of citizens own bikes. The Newspaper readership is 18 % and TV viewership is 93 % in the city.

Open House Debate:

The end of the speeches was trailed by an open house talk. The level-headed discussion was enthusiastic with every one of the members enjoying scholarly exchange of knowledge and information. For example Members worried on the approaches to conquer any hindrance between the legislature and the private division. They additionally talked about the adequacy on the current political and financial arrangement of the nation. Also the part of the reasoning first class and its weaknesses were likewise examined by the members.

During the Question answer session, a question was raised upon how to bridge the gap between private and public sector? Electric bikes are encouraged in all over the world, but they are discouraged in our country. Duty on electric bikes is 100 % and on a hybrid car is 50 %. There should be liberalization of economy in Pakistan. Huma Baqai answered that you are burning candle from both side. You have to provide an umbrella of rule of law. While Zahid Saeed answered that U.K is among the top 5 Super powers. Their National Health services is very vibrant while our ruling elite is failing to deliver. PTCL made huddles in the usage of fax machine in the early period. We imported the medicine of Hepatitis C at the cost of Rs 35000. but now we have innovated it and produce it at the cost of Rs 3000. But this occurred after the Government permission which was given after the 3 years struggle. After the partition during 1947 to 1965 there was a liberal trade with India and M. Ali Jinnah had no issue with it. There are

54 African countries, but we have relationships with 9 countries and in only 5 countries, Pakistan has a consulate. We have old Acts and laws, but a new charter of economy is needed, like charter of democracy. If Sadiq Khan could be mayor of London so why don't we have any Khan as a mayor?

Huma Baqai added to this answer that Wars are being fought today on conventional front. Now they are being fought on intellectual and economic front as well. Societies are diverse now who can be a source of weakness like Afghanistan. We co-exist for compromise like there is always a Sindhi speaking CM and Urdu speaking as a Governor. Sometime Quota system is necessary, if we want to engage marginalized sectors into mainstream; we have to compromise on merit. Mr. Sohail said during 1947 to 1970, there was Entrepreneurship, but no textile mill and we suffered a lot due to nationalization policy in 1973. Hence, we need a political change.

Murtaza Khoro added that there isn't any silver lining but there is a golden lining. There are many emerging economies like China and Turkey, and Pakistan is one of them. Discussing about Gwadar, he further added that CPEC is not about just Infrastructure or Energy, but there is a lot more than that. There isn't any competition between Karachi and Gwadar, the former is the present and the latter is the future. He further discussed that there is no border for technology and it has inherited capacity to go to people and user. There are 20 million rupees allocated in budget of Sindh for education, but still we have a dysfunctional education system. At the end Pervez Asghar said we have to own the city and country and to do this there should be a local government system.

Member of Board of Governors, Habibullah Dadabhoy gave the Thanking Note and concluding comments. He expressed gratitude toward every one of the members for partaking in the activity. He additionally emphasized on the continuation of such activities keeping in mind the end goal to use the undiscovered capability of the youth. The roundtable ended with a Hi Tea organized by CPSD for the members.





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