

# "Pakistan as an anchor of stability in South Asia"

## Global conversation with Nadeem Riyaz



On 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2017, Nadeem Riyaz, Pakistani ambassador, held a global conversation in room “Sala del consiglio”, where gathered all the Global Governance students from the first year to third. The student, Radiya Khan from Pakistan, gave an introduction of the ambassador.

Nadeem Riyaz is an ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Italy. He completed a Master Degree in political science in Government College in Pakistan in 1984. He also completed a Master Degree in international relations in Columbia university, New York in 1990. Nadeem Riyaz joined the foreign service of Pakistan in 1984. He served as Second/First

Secretary Embassy of Pakistan, Pretoria, South Africa from 1993 to 1996. From 2003 to 2009 he served as Minister/Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Pakistan in Paris, France. After that he worked as Ambassador of Pakistan to Sweden (Accredited to Finland, Estonia and Latvia) from 2009 to 2013. He also served at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad where he had various capacities as: Desk Officer in SEAP in 1986-1988, in Europe in 1990-1993, as a Director from 1990 to 2000 in Europe. From 2013 to 2015, he worked as Additional Secretary (Europe).

Going to the content of the conversation, ambassador Nadeem Riyaz depicted the general scheme that the presentation would have followed: first of all a brief introduction of the macro-region, to shape the context and underline the ongoing dynamics, and then a specific focus on Pakistan itself looking at figures, relationship and challenges.

South Asia is an area that covers 5.1 million squared kilometre, densely populated by over 1.8 billion of people and composed by eight different countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives).

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Furthermore, South Asia is the fastest-growing region of the world and this strong growth is boosting development under multiple point of view but most of all it takes a relevant social issue as poverty which is endemic in the region.

Besides the features of every nation, there are goals and challenges common to the whole area and as mentioned, economic development and social issues, are just two of them.

Indeed South Asia faces hard regional disputes and political instability.

The former are inserted in the context of the aftermath of the second world war, where the colonialist powers present in the region after local claims for right and sovereignty drew borders that did not correspond with social and popular divisions, are principally due to request on resources, of which the area is rich, and national interests. A clear example of that is the dispute among India and Pakistan for Kashmir.

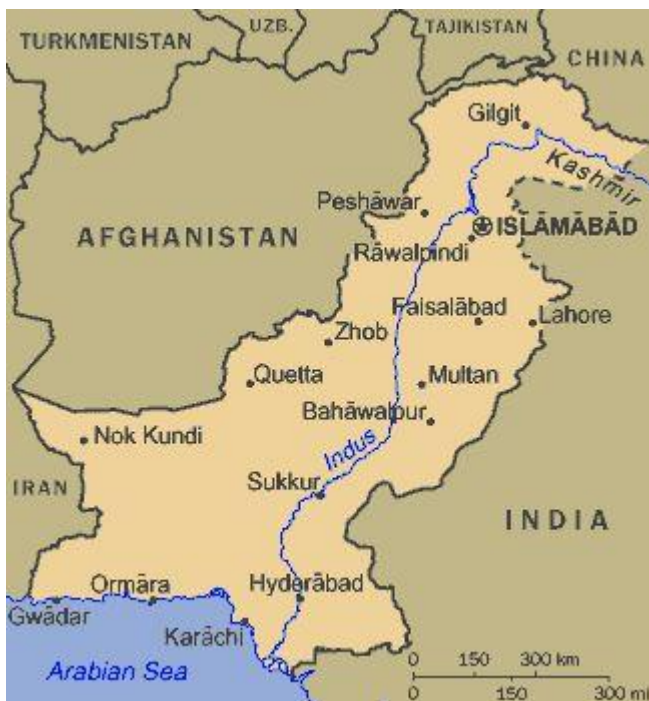
For what concern the latter, Afghanistan is a sample of that, since the old, but still present, religious and social turmoils affect strongly the area even in term of migrants.

Moreover the region hosts two nuclear power (India and Pakistan) which complicate even more the relationship.

Therefore this is exactly the framework in which Pakistan has a key role and plays as anchor of stability.

Thus ambassador Riyaz introduced his country; Pakistan is the second biggest country and democracy in the region, after India. It shares the borders with Iran, Afghanistan, China and India.

The country's economic growth employs a solid base upon which the nation is developing.



Moreover Pakistan uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter and has not no aggressive design against anyone.

Talking then about the relations between his country and the others of the region Nadeem Riyaz analyzed one by one. Starting from Afghanistan, Pakistan's vision underlines the fundamental importance of peace for the country and more in general how all the plans and intentions are aimed to stabilize Afghanistan itself.

Even though there are historical, religious, and ethnolinguistical connections between the two countries the relations are mostly poor.

Then coming to India, the will of Pakistan is to improve the relation with this other fundamental player of the region through

several steps, of which the first inevitably has to be the resolution of Kashmir issue. Furthermore the aim is to share and strengthen the leadership in South Asia.

Bangladesh represent a problematic country for Pakistan for historical reasons and ongoing issues, therefore relations are difficult.

Eventually for what concerns Nepal, Buthan, Maldives and Sri Lanka there are good relations even due to the similar opinions and absence of divergences.

Moreover Pakistan has a strategical position, it represent a geopolitical link to the middle

east and far east and this is the reason why superpowers such as United States, Russia and China are really interested, each for specific and different reasons, in the country reinforcing once more the idea of Pakistan as anchor of stability for the whole region.

Nadeem Riyaz concluded his speech affirming the crucial role of the state, since is in the frontline, is democratic and peaceful and lives strong economic growth.

During the “questions and answers” session, Nadeem Riyaz frankly answered a lot of questions from several students.

He has been asked about Indian-Pakistan relation which he described as complex, the ambassador said that all kinds of negotiation should be carried on, the issue of India and Pakistan is also related to the regional peace. The two nations will discuss in specific way. Riyaz believes Indians will come to negotiate, since if India wants to be a major part of the world, the negotiation with Pakistan is very necessary concluded the ambassador.

Talking about Pakistan-China All-weather strategic partnership, he explained this kind of relationship as based on trust. In Ambassador's eyes, it is a political and economic relationship and includes cooperation. And an example of that is the China-Pakistan economic corridor, a collection of infrastructure projects under construction throughout Pakistan.

Some student also mentioned about the region organizations, the ambassador responded that economic development is the main issue and to be boosted it needs economic and cultural concerns and cooperation among those countries. Economic development moreover will ensure economic transparency and the organizations are made for chasing these goals.

Furthermore, a question regarding the relation between EU and Pakistan, Nadeem Riyaz responded that EU is extremely a key part of Pakistan global relationship beyond South Asia region, indeed Pakistan has strategic plan in various fields of cooperation with EU.

EU has an ambassador place in Pakistan meanwhile Pakistan ambassadors are also in EU.

He said: *“Pakistan has a good strategic position at a geographic level. We are the entry point for Central Asia and the Middle East. We guarantee access to the most important markets in the world and we are strongly committed to all our neighbors, both diplomatic and economic, to ensure a growth in trade that leads to progress and prosperity. Pakistan believes in peaceful relations between neighboring countries. There is a need for peace and stability for the economic prosperity and well-being of people in the whole region. We are working in that direction. We want good relations with all our neighbors. Economic progress is an essential factor and is what the peoples living in this region need.”*

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