



Institute of Regional Studies

Chinese Political System is Pluralistic



ISLAMABAD October 28, 2020: “Chinese political system is way more pluralistic than is generally perceived,” said Amb Naghmana Hashmi at a roundtable organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here on Wednesday. Amb Hashmi served as Pakistan’s ambassador to China from 2019 to 2020 stated that the Communist Party of China (CPC) has an elaborate process of soliciting feedback from party cadres and other relevant stakeholders on important national matters before a decision is taken at the top. “Everybody who matters is consulted before making any decision,” she said. Commenting on China-India relations, Amb Hashmi was of the view that while the Chinese public had started warming up to India and the West in early 2000s, their perceptions about the West as well as India completely changed after both tried to pressurize China when it was battling the pandemic of COVID-19 in early 2020. While she opined that China did not consider India a serious competition militarily, economically, or culturally, she added that China would try its best to avoid an all-out confrontation with India because it would jeopardize its long-term plans of economic development.

Amb Hashmi credited the long-term planning of the Chinese government for its rapid rise in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. She stated that Chinese did not want to be humiliated ever again because of their internal weaknesses. She added that Chinese economic development was a product of technological progress, peaceful resolution of border disputes with all the neighbours, and a forward-looking trade and economic policy. Amb Hashmi maintained that China had improved its relations not only with Pakistan but the other South Asian countries, excluding India, as well. She shared that China had allowed duty-free access to various Bangladeshi products to its market, it was rapidly improving transport links with Nepal, and making economic inroads into Sri Lanka and Maldives.

Amb Hashmi argued that while the US had increased its rhetoric against China amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, it had underestimated the resilience and capacity of the Chinese state and society to overcome the tragedy. She further stated that the Western perception about China lagging behind it in innovation was misplaced. She shared that China was producing the largest numbers of PhDs in the world. Responding to a question about whether China would have any hegemonic ambitions after it acquires the status of the mightiest super power of the world, Amb Hashmi stated that China had never had hegemonic ambitions against any state in the past 10,000 years and it was unlikely to do so in future either. Responding to another question about the CPC rule in China, she said that most Western observers tended to misinterpret the Chinese society through its own prism. She was of the view that China was a collectivistic society owing to Confucian thoughts in which sacrificing personal benefit for public good is considered noble. She said that contrary to Western propaganda about the CPC ruling China with an iron-fist to quell dissent, the Chinese public was highly appreciative of the Chinese rule.

President IRS Amb Nadeem Riyaz thanked Amb Naghmana Hashmi for her candid discussion and thoughtful remarks.