Re-imaging South Asian Security

The South Asian region, despite hosting more than one-fifth of the world’s population and a shared historical and cultural legacy, remains the least integrated regional block in the world. The region has been marred in conflict ranging from internal insurgencies to cross-border terrorism to bilateral, regional and global disputes. India and Pakistan, the two largest countries of the region are nuclear powers and have remained acrimonious towards each other since their independence. Their overbearing presence has held the rest of the region hostage to the threat of a catastrophic war. It has resulted in abnormally low economic interaction within the region, marginal people-to-people contact, misconstrued narratives about adversaries, and a general aura of deep seated mistrust throughout the region.

As part of the Fourteenth SDC, SDPI is hosting a panel on “Re-imaging South Asian Security”. Set in the current context, this forward looking discussion will aim to examine avenues to transform the way security is approached in South Asia. In today’s globalized world, South Asian states, with their population, natural resources, strategic location, and incredible human resource capabilities are well placed to work together for the common good of the region. How can security relationships be overhauled to address outstanding disputes and forge partnerships against the now-pervasive menace of terrorism? Can economic integration become the new moniker for the way South Asian states prioritize regional ties? What role do states like India, Pakistan, and external parties like the U.S. have to play in this transformation? How does the present conundrum in Afghanistan impact South Asian futures and the outlook of global powers?

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