

Book 'The Lost War' by Brig Ishaq Khattak (Retd) Launched at IRS

written by admin | July 31, 2024



The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with Pakistan House hosted the launch of the book titled, 'The Lost War: Why the Taliban Re-emerged to Claim Victory in Afghanistan', authored by Brigadier Ishaq Ahmed Khattak (Retd) at its premises.

Speaking at the event, the author reflected on his challenging yet rewarding journey as an author. He noted that capturing the memories of the tumultuous years during the US invasion posed significant complexities, especially in addressing the book's central question: why the Taliban re-emerged to claim victory in Afghanistan. The author also described how his passion for writing about Afghan affairs began in 1998 during his posting in Peshawar, where frequent interactions with Afghans and the Taliban sparked his interest in the Afghan culture, history, and the struggle.

Addressing the gathering, Amb Jauhar Saleem, President of IRS, emphasized that while the global war on terrorism has concluded, achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan remains a significant challenge in the post-US withdrawal era, continuing to threaten regional and global security, particularly for Pakistan. He noted that Ishaq Khattak's book, "The Lost War," is not just a historical narrative but provides vital lessons for promoting lasting peace in Afghanistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Athar Javed, DG Pakistan House, lamented that despite Pakistan's fight in the global war against terrorism being the frontline state, its contributions and sacrifices had largely been unrecognized. Reflecting on the book subject, he said that the author while avoiding oversimplification, and undermining any country presented a natural flow of the events and major occurring during the peak of NATO mission.

Ambassador Asif Durrani, Pakistan's special envoy to Afghanistan, stated that 'Ishaq Khattak's book offers a realistic assessment of the events that enabled the Taliban's resurgence and triumph after two decades of conflict'. 'His analysis correctly highlights the governance issues under the Karzai and Ashraf Ghani administrations and the US's failure to promote reconciliation as key factors in lingering the Afghan crisis', he remarked.

Lt. Gen (r) Asif Yasin Malik, former Secretary Defence, praised the author for effectively leveraging his extensive experience with the land and its people to analyze events and their repercussions for Pakistan and the region. Lt. Gen Malik noted that the author's greatest strength lies in guiding readers through historical events, linking them to present-day issues. 'The book offers valuable insights for a diverse audience, from the general public to policymakers and historians', he remarked.

Abdullah Gul, Chairman TJP, while describing the past occurring presented useful suggestions for future course of actions with regard to ongoing Afghan security problems. Hassan Khan, Journalist, Khyber News, stated that the book was a great contribution to the literature on the Afghan wars and conflicts, accurately depicting the events during the US invasion and realistically addressing the shortcomings of the NATO mission.

The event attracted a diverse audience of diplomats, researchers, students, and journalists.