

War with India not an option, says Pakistan PM

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London: Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has said that war is not an option with India and that only talks can resolve all outstanding issues including Kashmir.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi

Addressing a conference on 'Future of Pakistan 2017' at the London School of Economics' South Asia Centre here on Saturday, Abbasi described Kashmir as a "core issue" and said relations with India will remain tense until that is resolved.

"Kashmir is the core issue with India. Until that is resolved, Pakistan-India relations will remain tense. We are always open to talks at any level and talks are the way forward. War is not an option," Abbasi said.

Highlighting India's Cold Start Doctrine among recent developments, Abbasi said Pakistan had a "deterrent" in place.

"We have a deterrent to that (Cold Start Doctrine) but I don't think deterrents where both sides are nuclear powers is a solution to any problem. The only solution is continued talks," the Pakistani leader noted.

He, however, expressed little hope of any significant movement with talks between the countries as both are prepared for elections - Pakistan next year and India the year after.

"Any expectation of a great initiative is probably misplaced," Abbasi said.

He also dismissed any support for an independent Kashmir on the ground, while addressing questions from students at the LSE conference on Saturday.

"I have not seen support for that concept (independent Kashmir). This is something that is floated often but it really has no basis in reality. The solution lies with the Security Council resolution that the people are given the right of determination," he said.

Abbasi, who took charge of the Pakistani government in August following the disqualification of the Nawaz Sharif led PML(N) government by the country's Supreme Court, said that while there was "never a dull moment in Pakistan's political life", the country has achieved a level of stability despite the challenges that remain.

The central message of his keynote address at the conference was that the world must acknowledge Pakistan as the country fighting "the largest war on terror in the world".

"Pakistan is fighting terror for the world and we are committed to fighting this menace," he asserted.

Giving a snapshot of the country's foreign policy and relations with global powers, Abbasi claimed that there was a greater understanding of Pakistan's role in the war on terror in the US and that Pakistan-US ties must not be seen only through the prism of Afghanistan.

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