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*Report – Seminar*

## **PAKISTAN’S SOFT POWER**

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# Report

## Pakistan's Soft Power

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## Pictures of the Event





# PROGRAMME

## Inaugural Session (1000-1115 hrs)

- 1000 hrs: Recitation from the Holy Quran  
1005 hrs: Welcome and Introductory Remarks - **Ambassador Masood Khan**, DG, ISSI  
1025 hrs: Keynote Speaker - **Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad**, Chairman, HEC  
1035 hrs: Keynote Speaker - **Ms. Marvi Memon**, MNA and Chairperson BISP  
1045 hrs: Address by the **Chief Guest H.E. Mr. Sartaj Aziz**, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs

**1055-1115 hrs: Tea/Coffee Break**

## Session I (1115-1220 hrs) PAKISTAN'S SOFT POWER: CONSTRUCTING A NARRATIVE

**Chair/Keynote Speaker: Ambassador Masood Khan**, DG, ISSI

- 1115 hrs: **Faisal Mushtaq**, CEO, Roots Millennium  
*Soft Power and Education*  
1120hrs: **Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani**, President, GALLUP  
*Soft Power and Public Perceptions*  
1125hrs: **Asghar Nadeem Syed**, Writer  
*Soft Power and the Role of Performing Arts*  
1130hrs: **Zahid Hussain**, Journalist  
*Soft Power and the Role of the Media*  
1135 hrs: **Tahir Mahmood**, Chief Editor, Hilal Magazine  
*New Emerging Trends in Pakistan's Soft Power Narrative*  
1140 hrs: **Dr. Najam Abbas**, East-West Centre, Hawaii  
*Role of Religion in Projecting Soft Power*  
1145 hrs: **Javaria Tareen**, UNHCR  
*Women's Empowerment and Soft Power*

**1220-1400 hrs: Lunch & Prayer Break**

## Session II (1400-1525 hrs) PAKISTAN'S SOFT POWER: EFFECTIVE PROJECTION

**Chair/Keynote Speaker: Dr. Shireen M. Mazari**, MNA and DG SSII

- 1400 hrs: **Rana Athar Javed**, DG, Pakistan House  
*Pakistan's Soft Power: The Way Forward*  
1405 hrs: **Uxi Mufti**, former ED, Lok Virsa  
*Soft Power and Culture*

- 1410 hrs: **Farhat Asif**, President, IPDS  
*Soft Power Diplomacy*
- 1415 hrs: **Touqeer Nasir**, Former ED, NAG  
*The Soft Power of Arts and Artists*
- 1420 hrs: **Shabnam Riaz**, PTV World  
*Soft Power: Branding Pakistan*
- 1425 hrs: **Junaid Sirat Ahmad**, UMT, Lahore  
*Soft Power: An Academic Perspective*
- 1430 hrs: **Mario Esteban**, Senior Analyst, Elcano Royal Institute, Madrid  
*Soft Power: A Perspective from Spain*

**1435-1525hrs: Q&A**

**Five Minute Short Break**

**Session III (1530- 1645hrs)**  
**PAKISTAN'S SOFT POWER: NEXT STEPS**

**Chair:** **Ambassador Khalid Mahmood**, Chairman BOG, ISSI

- 1530 hrs: **Samina Waqar**,  
*Soft Power: Harnessing Digital Media*
- 1535hrs: **Waheed Hussain** , Roz TV  
*The Power of Television*
- 1540hrs: **Raza Khan**, PTV  
*Soft Power: Influence of the Visual Media*
- 1545 hrs: **Omer Sohail**, NDU  
*Soft Power through Sports*
- 1550 hrs: **Arhama Siddiq**, ISSI  
*Soft Power: Role of Think Tanks*
- 1555 hrs: **Shamsa Khalil**, NDU  
*Soft Power through Tourism*
- 1600 hrs: **Ume Farwa**, ISS  
*Soft Power and Knowledge Economy*
- 1605 hrs: **Amna Javed**, QAU  
*Youth and the Future of Soft Power*
- 1610 hrs: **Farheen Ali Khan**, TMUC  
*The Power of Social Media*
- 1635hrs: Concluding Remarks - Ambassador Masood Khan**, DG, ISSI
- 1645hrs: Tea/Coffee**

## Inaugural Session

### **Address by the Chief Guest: Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs**

I am delighted to be here today, at this prestigious forum; sharing my thoughts on a rather crucial topic that is not only of importance to Pakistan but also of importance to the countries which have suffered a lot in the past by the use of, or being affected by coercion.

But before I formally begin, I would like to congratulate the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, for organising this event. I am confident that our discussions here today would pave the way for an improved understanding of the concept of “soft power”, and the importance of its implementation for Pakistan.

This is a well-established fact that the term “Power” has been one of the most important notions in the International Relations, since the earliest political writings of eminent scholars like Machiavelli and Thucydides. The concept, however, in my opinion, has not been understood properly. International Political actors have generally understood and used the power in its “hard” form i.e. that arising from military or economic power. The School of Realism, therefore, considers that the only test of “Power” could be “Strength for War”. Unfortunately, this concept has proved to be the cause of most devastating conflicts in the history of the world and has taken millions of innocent lives. In fact, I am of the view that this has also given rise to terrorism, insurgencies and other menaces of such kind. Armed groups and individuals have started to resort to the use of force for their illegal demands.

We can understand this concept of “soft power” as the use of national resources that can lead to a nation’s/group’s/organisation’s ability to affect others through the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading, and eliciting positive attraction in order to obtain preferred outcome. In my opinion, the concept of “soft power”, although unveiled by Joseph Nye in the 90’s, has traditionally existed as a reality as well. The spread of Islam in the early days is a remarkable example of persuading others by the use of intangible sources like culture, morality, basic principles and values. So, soft power is more than influence, since influence can also rest on the hard power of threats or payments. And soft power is more than just persuasion or the ability to move people by argument, though that is an important part of it. It is also the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence.

Soft power has been used traditionally, both in isolation and also along with the hard power, but the extent to which a balance is to be maintained between the two forms of power, is the real point to think about. In the recent decades, the revolution of electronic, print and social media has been effectively and widely used by different countries to mould public opinions. This has started a new trend of using soft power as a tool to use your resources in a manner, which are more likely to be accepted by the others. Let me clarify that although “soft power” is a reality today, but implementation of its tools does not guarantee absolute success and incredible power or authority as other states can render cultural resistance and non-acceptance of imposed norms, values and institutions. In other words, it’s not a comprehensive, one-size fits-all solution as there are limitations to its applications and effectiveness. But the same limitations exist with the coercion/hard power as well, because to be effective, coercive power rests on the target's acquiescence. If I am willing to die rather than capitulate, the most sophisticated weapons and techniques become meaningless.

Hence the sentiments like "I would rather be a free man in my grave, than living as a puppet or a slave", arise.

Hence, as I discussed earlier, the maintenance of balance between the hard and the soft power, in accordance with your resources and limitations, holds the key to maintaining peaceful existence in international politics.

At this important era of globalisation and emerging threats, Pakistan needs to develop and implement its "soft power" in order to get rid of most of its problems. This is a well-established reality that Pakistan has suffered a lot because of its tarnished image. Let me admit that we do have many problems which brought us bad name but, we, unfortunately, have also been the target of false propaganda by some international actors. To counter this trend and to build a 'Brand' and 'Narrative' of Pakistan, we have to use this concept of soft power.

The real foundations of soft power are the rule of law and democratic institutions. The vitality of a nation does not come only from its economic progress and the size of its military, but also from its shared values, cultural heritage and social energy. As democracy is developing stronger roots in Pakistan; its image around the world is becoming more positive. Similarly, the progress we are making in strengthening the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary and the protection of human rights will further strengthen Pakistan's soft power.

It gives me immense satisfaction to mention that the Foreign Office not only recognises the importance of projecting soft power of Pakistan, but it has been using this tool to build a positive image of Pakistan in the rest of the world. There is a full-fledged division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which deals with the Public Diplomacy. This Division and our Missions abroad have done remarkably well to project a positive image of Pakistan in the world.

We have been trying to project the soft image of Pakistan by promoting its rich cultural heritage, music, cuisine, festivities, dress, sports, values and resilience of the people. Foreign Office has arranged Sufi music events, food festivals, cultural shows, truck art festivals and many other events both in Pakistan and in the rest of the world. Recently, Pakistan Day has been celebrated in the United Nations for the very first time. Similarly, Foreign Office has been organising "Agha Shahi Lecture Series" in which intellectuals and professionals from different walks of life share their views and experiences with the officers of the Foreign Ministry. Foreign Office has also been trying to project Art works like calligraphy. Recently, masterpiece works of famous calligraphers has been compiled by the Foreign office in a single volume named "Allama Bil Qalam".

However, there is a need to do much more in this field. Thinkers and scholars like you have to share this responsibility. We all have to develop a brand of Pakistan which is currently unknown to the rest of the world. This will not only help in developing our soft power, but will also augment our "hard power".

### **Ambassador Masood Khan**

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Masood Khan, Director General ISSI, identified three functioning principles of soft power, namely culture, institutions and diplomacy. He also



mentioned the countries which have successfully utilised the concept of soft power as an instrument of their respective national power. Noting that Pakistan had immense "soft power" which had reached its peak in the 1970s when the country was a major tourist hub in the region. He identified various challenges, and presented a roadmap to augment Pakistan's soft power in the region. These included; Project Pakistan as a sovereign, democratic, progressive and prosperous state, which is at peace with itself and others; constructing an image at home and abroad which instils hope, inspiration, goodwill and attractiveness. He suggested branding Pakistan as "Spectacular Pakistan" and "Shaandar Pakistan".

### **Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad**

Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad, Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) emphasised the need to impart quality education to our youth as the most efficient means to strengthen the country's soft power. He stressed on the importance of research and good education and said that for development, the significance of social sciences and humanities cannot be ignored because they point to the issues in a society. He talked about the importance of higher education and research for socio-economic growth in the country, though HEC and the government are fulfilling their responsibilities and making efforts towards strengthening universities, there is still a shortage of skilled teachers. He added that the nations that adopt a futuristic approach towards development and invest in quality higher education are the ones who make progress. Dr. Ahmad said the use of power and muscle had not given much to the world, and that misery and problems were the outcome. He added that the world has not seen the real picture of Pakistan because it has not been presented properly; and those who come to Pakistan say that they have never imagined that Pakistan is so peaceful. Pakistan has to convey this message to the international community. Education is the way forward, because it is the knowledge economy that matters. He also said that Pakistan's youth has strong potential, and they should be prepared to be good citizens not only for Pakistan, but also for the rest of the world, so that they would run industries and economies of developed countries as there will be less youth in the developed countries in the future, and this will enhance the soft power of Pakistan.

### **Ms. Marvi Memon**

The Seminar was also addressed by, among others, Ms. Marvi Memon, Chairperson, Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), who spoke via video link and said Pakistan can portray its soft image abroad by highlighting the success stories in poverty alleviation and women empowerment. BISP, she said, was playing its part in this regard. Experience sharing is an opportunity to build soft power. BISP is the largest single social safety net of the country and one of the largest in the world in terms of targeting, budget and operational procedures. BISP is a success story that caters for the 5.2 million of the poorest. BISP is ready to share its experiences with global community. Pakistan is blessed with quality women, and it is essential to showcase these successful women to the world for Pakistan's soft image. BISP is committed to financial empowerment of the women. In a nutshell, everything thrives on economy. The recent BISP E-commerce initiative is a step towards poverty alleviation. Now the products of poor beneficiaries are available online and will result in more success stories in future. She reiterated that through BISP E-Commerce, the products of beneficiaries are available online giving international recognition to the traditional products of the country.

She added that market access to the handicrafts of marginalised segments would contribute in their welfare. Ms. Memon highlighted that it is a positive sign that 100,000 beneficiaries have already started their own businesses benefiting from the Prime Minister's Interest Free Loan Scheme. BISP has recently signed an MoU with AHAN to refine the skills of the beneficiaries so that they may find a decent living for themselves and their families. She said that that the BISP had been supporting all the initiatives and products which are meant to alleviate poverty and uplift the status of women in the country. All these steps would help to highlight the soft image of the country to the international community.

## **Session I**

### **Pakistan's Soft Power: Constructing a Narrative**

Session I of the seminar was chaired by Ambassador Masood Khan, Director General Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI). The speakers for the session included Mr. Faisal Mushtaq, CEO of Roots Millennium Schools; Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani, President GALLUP Pakistan; Mr. Asghar Nadeem Syed, Drama Writer, Mr. Zahid Hussian, Senior Journalist; Mr. Tahir Mahmood, Chief Editor, Hilal Magazine; Dr. Najam Abbas, Senior Fellow, East-West Centre, Hawaii, and Ms. Javaria Tareen, spokesperson, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Balochistan.

#### **Mr. Faisal Mushtaq**

Mr. Faisal Mushtaq highlighted the significant role that education can play in promoting the soft image of a country, and, thereby, strengthening its soft power. He said people who are promoting country's soft power need to be given more strategic power. A soft power un-nurtured is soft power lost; if it is nurtured, it is strategic power.

#### **Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani**

Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani pointed to the findings of a survey that showed that Pakistan was viewed negatively in all 12 countries where the survey was conducted. More disturbingly, he said, even within Pakistan, the country's image was negative and this disconcerting tendency was more visible among the elite than in the common man. To improve this situation, he said, Pakistan should engage at domestic front more seriously, recognising that easy talk would not do.

#### **Mr. Asghar Nadeem Syed**

Mr. Asghar Nadeem Syed said we had the soft power resources like performing arts, history and culture, but unfortunately we could not utilise them in a decent way to promote Pakistan's soft power. He said in most cases, India was not as blessed as is Pakistan, but the former had performed far better in utilising its soft power resources. He was of the view that we were ourselves to blame for ceding cultural ground to India internationally.

#### **Mr. Zahid Hussian**

Mr. Zahid Hussian said Pakistan did suffer from a bad image and we should not blame the media for this, as media cannot concoct stories neither could it hide the truth. He gave the example that recently Pakistan had two positive developments - Oscar for Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy and Women Cricket Team's performance in World T20, and Pakistani media duly covered both. But all this was overshadowed by the Iqbal Park bombing and storming of the capital by the supporters of Mumtaz Qadri.

#### **Mr. Tahir Mahmood**

Mr. Tahir Mahmood spoke about the co-relation between the soft power and the hard power, emphasising that soft power is an alternative form of power and it cannot be a substitute of hard power. He said Pakistan was destined to be a peaceful, progressive and prosperous country.

## **Dr. Najam Abbas**

Dr. Najam Abbas was of the view that Pakistan as the world's second largest Muslim country had various options to augment its soft power. He emphasised the need to highlight the remarkable work being done by humanitarians and philanthropists such as Abdul Sattar Ehti and Chippa. He also said Pakistan should effectively utilise the diaspora platforms established by Pakistani Diaspora communities around the world to augment its soft power.

## **Ms. Javaria Tareen**

Ms. Javaria Tareen cited her personal example to make the point that women empowerment could be an effective means of building Pakistan's soft power. For this, she said, family had to support their female members, who in turn should live up to this trust, and then the state should provide security and other opportunities for the women to enable them to realise their potential.

## **Question and Answer Session**

Different questions were raised during the question and answer session on how to build a national narrative regarding the soft image of the country. There were also questions with regards to why the government has lacked behind in improving the soft image of Pakistan in the global community. The speakers were of the opinion that improvement of literacy rate and building of consensus on national issues were the need of the hour. Also, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Culture Ministry have a big role to play to mend the image of Pakistan abroad. The panellists said that the Ministry of Broadcasting and the private media channels can also be a big help in constructing a positive, strong, and lasting soft image narrative of the country by showing the diversity of the country in a more positive framework and by doing more advocacies. This will help build up the softer image of the country in the outside world, especially in the West.

## **Concluding Remarks by the Session Chair**

Summing up the session in his concluding remarks, Ambassador Masood Khan said that it is an unfortunate reality that Pakistan suffers from a negative image in the West. He said that the government, and especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working extremely hard to improve the soft image of the country, and in this regards their efforts should be lauded. Ambassador Khan also emphasised that there are a lot of positive things happening inside the country, and the Pakistani diaspora abroad is also contributing towards improving the image of Pakistan. But, there is a need to build a national narrative and consensus towards what type of soft image Pakistan needs to project to the world. In this regard, he said that the civil society has also got a big part to play, and secondly the education system of the country needs to be refined to produce academics who can go out to promote a better image of Pakistan to the outside world.

## **Session II**

### **Pakistan's Soft Power: Effective Projection**

Session II of the seminar was chaired by Dr. Shireen M. Mazari, Member National Assembly and Director General Strategic Studies Institute Islamabad (SSII). The speakers for the session included Mr. Javed A. Rana, DG Pakistan House Institute; Mr. Uxi Mufti, Chairman, Asian Image, Islamabad; Ms. Farhat Asif, President, Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPDS), Mr. Touqeer Nasir, Former DG of Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA); Ms. Shabnam Riaz, Television host on PTV World; Mr Junaid S. Ahmad, Director at University of Management Technology (UMT), Lahore, and Mr. Mario Esteban, Senior Analyst, Elcano Royal Institute, Madrid.

#### **Mr. Javed A. Rana**

Mr. Javed Rana said that soft image does not mean soft power; it is one of the by-products. Talking about why it is very difficult to change the negative image that Pakistan has abroad, he said that Pakistan gets very little coverage abroad especially in the media, and whatever exposure it gets is more negative than good. He said that one thing he has realised by working abroad is about perception building, and Pakistan's perception is being damaged by other vested powers. Pakistan's embassies have been working to bring out the positive side of the country, but no one hears about it in the foreign media, as little to no coverage is given to Pakistan. There are 5 factors which affect the country's image in the west. First, there is lack of space provided to news relating to Pakistan both in the print and electronic media. Second, the foreign diplomats and delegations that visit the country speak highly about Pakistan when they are here, but they do not report the same when they return back to their respective countries. Third, Pakistani embassies and missions abroad are doing a great job in trying to project the positive image of the country, but they are restricted in their movements unlike the embassies and missions over here, whose staff can roam the whole length of the country. Fourth, a better job needs to be done in lobbying Pakistan's position by targeting the audience which is friendlier. Fifth, the media needs to give more space to the positive things happening inside the country rather than reporting only about the negative aspects of the country. According to Mr Javed, working on these 5 factors would help improve the image of the country abroad.

#### **Mr. Uxi Mufti**

Mr. Uxi Mufti spoke about effective projection of soft image. He said that there is an external publicity cell in the Foreign Office and there is no need for more such structures, as they become a waste of time and money. There is a need to focus more on networking. He further stated that Pakistan has failed to project itself abroad because it does not have a written culture, it has an oral culture. Pakistan has a high illiteracy rate of about 60%, and these people are the ones who really project Pakistan's image when the foreigners come here. The

biggest cultural ambassadors like Rahat Fateh Ali were not that much literate. The literate people of Pakistan have failed to project Pakistan's heritage, and most of the Universities do not teach courses on culture and heritage. Therefore, due to this, Pakistan has failed to project its soft image and education plays a big part in it. The Pakistani government has failed to bring forward its real social heritage and culture and this hinders its image abroad, as the problem is inside. The education about heritage needs to be more creative rather than imitative of other cultures so that Pakistan can project itself better. He said that we are in the age of industrial arts not feudal arts. Therefore, there is a need to embrace digital marketing and copy right issues, and strengthen the Ministry of Culture, and more funds need to be provided to it so that it can transfer a better image of Pakistan.

### **Ms. Farhat Asif**

Ms. Farhat Asif said that she has been working on the subject of Pakistan's soft image and how it can be improved. She talked about a project called 'Shabash Pakistan' which focuses on the youth and how they should be engaged and informed about Pakistan's culture and heritage and show the world the country's soft side. She talked about a Global Soft Image Report published in 2015 which gave an index ranking to countries according to the projection of different countries soft image in which UK ranked first. She said that Pakistan should recognise the contributions of Malala and Ms. Chinoy who have won global awards. These people need to be projected and they can be used as assets abroad. She also said that women can be used to present a better image of Pakistan, as well as the students who perform outstandingly in different academic fields. Finally, she added that Pakistan needs to stop the brain drain from happening from the country and more focus should be placed on the youth as they can become ambassadors of soft image and help in increasing the soft power of the country.

### **Mr. Touqeer Nasir**

Mr. Touqeer Nasir said that external international factors have harmed Pakistan's image and the country is going through a tough phase to project itself positively. He further said that Pakistan has lacked behind in projecting itself on the world level, especially its history and distinct traits of its culture and heritage. Pakistan has failed to identify historical traits of the country which consist of music, poetry, arts, and mystical heritage. Even the founder of Pakistan, Mr. Jinnah, pointed out these distinct symbols of Pakistan's history, which were not developed properly, and therefore, have played a big part in developing a national image of the country. These traits have not been given their due, and therefore, Pakistan is in a retreat mode with regards to its image abroad which has developed a negative face and is being associated with extremist Islamic ideology. He further added that the media in the previous decades used to play a positive role, but now the media is not playing an influential role even though it has got the technology and the intellect to do so. He finally said that Pakistan has got a lot to offer to the world, but the media of today is not helping to project a better image of the country.

### **Ms. Shabnam Riaz**

Ms. Shabnam Riaz said that in today's world, creation of a positive image of a country is very important in an attractive way. The image needs to be like a brand which can be sold to the outside world. She added that negative perception and image is being associated with the people of Pakistan. She added that Pakistan needs to work on its branding and what type of image it wants to have abroad; because once a negative connotation is attached to a country it is very hard to get rid of it. The foreigners who come over here are surprised by the potential offerings of Pakistan and the vast pool of things it has to offer. But most people abroad are apprehensive about the image of the country and the government needs to work on it. The potential is already there, and it has to be mined and packaged properly. There are 3 things which need to be done to have a better brand of Pakistan abroad. First, be assertive and believe in Pakistan and its potential. Second, the media needs to show a positive picture of the country as it is aired outside also. Third, the women of Pakistan need to be presented in a more favourable manner and not as a minority that is suffering. All these things will help to develop a better brand of Pakistan.

### **Mr. Junaid S. Ahmad**

Mr. Junaid S. Ahmad said that Pakistan needs to work on the ideology the country is following. There is a Pakistani phobia which has emerged outside and needs to be countered so that the image of the country can be improved abroad. Pakistan needs to work on the ideology which suits its needs, not something that is imposed from outside, especially regarding the type of Islamic ideology to be followed. He further added that Pakistan's image got into trouble as it jumbled up its policies in the past. But, it can correct them by working on an ideology which will help us improve our image abroad and make our future more progressive, and also help us to get out of the oriental stereotypes that have developed in regard to the image of the country.

### **Mr. Mario Esteban**

Mr. Mario Esteban said that soft power can be divided into many areas, which come together to form a bigger picture. He said that Pakistan ranked higher on indexes related to military and other hard power components compared to Spain, which ranks higher in soft power components like tourism. This determines the image of the country on the global scale. The foreign media determines the image of the country, so Pakistan needs to improve its soft power components. He said that Spain focuses on tourism as a strong point of its soft power component, and Pakistan also has to choose an area through which it can project its soft power and hence improve its soft image.

### **Question and Answer Session**

During the Question and Answer session, the panellists answered various questions and it was implied that Pakistan has failed to adequately project its soft power abroad through its

soft image as the country has failed to remove the negative perceptions regarding the image of the country, even though Pakistan has the highest number of UN peacekeepers. There is a need for re-projection of Pakistan's soft image abroad by working on its diversity, history and culture and brand it adequately.

The Director General ISSI, Ambassador Masood Khan emphasised that Pakistan's soft image is a work in progress, but in the recent past, the country has made strides to improve it abroad, and many academics and young Pakistani's are working towards improving the soft power of the country. However, more resources needs to be given to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Cultural Ministry to work on this positive global perception-building.

### **Concluding Remarks by the Session Chair**

Concluding the session, Dr. Shireen M. Mazari said that there is a need to identify the core variables of soft power in Pakistan. She said that since 1947, we have been in an identity crisis and have failed to own our history before independence; this gave space to India to take over our culture and project it as their own. The damage to Pakistan's image was done when it failed to embrace its different ethnicities and languages which hampered the image of the country. The state has not embraced the ownership of the country's culture, and has therefore, destroyed its own soft image. She further stated that there was a need to embrace Pakistan's own heritage and it can't be merged into one common denominator. There is a need to look at diversity and embrace it so that Pakistan's soft image can emerge which is not tunnelled. The soft image has to emerge first inside the country, and only then it can be projected outside. Finally, she said for all of this to happen there is need for clarity towards diversity, and non-isolation of history and to come out of the Arabic tradition of ideology which has been imposed upon the country. It's the job of the government to project a better image of the country abroad and it can't be done by the military, the civilians need to take ownership of it.



### **Session III** **Pakistan's Soft Power: Next Steps**

Session III was chaired by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG ISSI. The speakers of the session included: Ms. Samina Waqar, renowned Pakistani journalist; Mr. Waheed Hussain, Director News, Roz TV; Mr. Raza Khan, PTV World; Mr. Omer Sohail, National Defence University (NDU); Ms. Arhama Siddiqa, Research Fellow, ISSI; Ms. Shamsa Khalil, National Defence University; Ms. Ume Farwa, Research Associate, ISSI; Ms. Amna Javed, Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU); and Ms. Farheen Ali Khan, The Millennium University College (TMUC).

#### **Ms. Samina Waqar**

Ms. Samina Waqar highlighting the importance of languages said that the teaching of national and international language is very important to communicate with the rest of the international community. Pakistan has taken a lot of positive steps in various sectors such as its steps on war against terrorism and operation Zarb-e Azb, and it should also be promoted through digital media at the international level. Pakistan can also promote its softer image through digital media by focusing on culture, heritage, and tourism. Pakistan can also benefit from digital media by creating awareness on issues like education and against domestic violence. In this regard, there is a need to develop a mechanism like the western countries. People associated with digital media should come forward and take responsibility to promote Pakistan's soft image by promoting its culture, heritage and tourism. Pakistan needs to develop its media to project its soft image.

#### **Mr. Waheed Hussain**

Mr. Waheed Hussain said that “seeing is believing” and TV images have increased their impact in both negative and positive ways. This impact could be personal, psychological, domestic, social, cultural, political and economic. In the developing world, TV content has led to the formation of many theories, such as, “Cultivation Theory” by George Gerbner, “Agenda Setting Theory” by Dr. Max McCombs and Dr. Donald Shaw, and “Hypodermic Needle or Bullet Magic Theory” by Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet. He said that with the technological development, the outreach and influence of media has expanded. One can have access to media from everywhere and it is impacting our daily life. From the 1950s to the 2010s, the power of TV has increased manifold, and it has been declared and accepted as the most effective tool of modern information. As Joseph Nye said “Information is power, the modern information technology is spreading information more widely than ever before in the history.”

Mr. Hussain said that at personal level, TV is guiding thoughts and actions, both in negative and positive way. It is affecting life style, dresses, food, and meetings. This can also be utilised to promote soft image e.g. when the Taliban government fell in Afghanistan in 2001, the Indian Foreign Minister flew to Kabul to welcome the interim government in a plane not packed with arms or food, but crammed with tapes of Bollywood movies and music, which was quickly distributed across the city. He also gave numerous examples like US series on PTV during 1980s; Chinese plays on PTV; Turkish plays on Pakistani channels; the US presidential debate on TV channels; social and political impact of TV; role of TV in war and conflict; role of TV in propaganda; and its role formulation of international relations.

Mr. Hussain gave many suggestions to improve Pakistan's soft image through TV. He suggested that image building is the collective responsibility of every Pakistani inside and outside the country. There is a need to improve the content on PTV World (English Channel) to improve its access to the international audiences. There is also a need to improve our dramas, and increase more partnership with various countries TV networks, both private and public sector. Exchange of programmes should be made with prominent international TV networks, BBC, CNN, and DW. Foreign office should provide more information and research to the broadcast journalist on the major foreign policy issues. Local Media houses and journalists should highlight the positive aspects of Pakistan on the media. There is also need to produce documentaries for international TV channels and pay them to telecast them to project positive aspects of the country, like culture and people. If Pakistan media can sell acid burnt victim footage, it could also present beauty of Pakistan and its diverse culture. The government has to work on highlighting importance of literature, folk music, culture, sports, and drama through TV. He said that sufficient budget for soft power is required.

### **Mr. Raza Khan**

Mr. Khan said that PTV World has made tremendous efforts to promote Pakistan's soft image through its programmes. It was the success of Pakistani visual media that Pakistani dramas were smuggled abroad during past decades. He highlighted that role of the Pakistani institutions is not as effective as it should be. Pakistan lack resources to promote its image abroad. He suggested that organisations like Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), Pakistan Foreign Office and think tanks like ISSI should be part of efforts to promote Pakistan's soft image abroad. He said that India is actively projecting terms like "Incredible India" through its visual media, and questioned why Pakistan cannot launch such campaigns? There is a need to engage Pakistani diplomats who are posted at various Pakistani embassies and mission abroad to take this task seriously. Every Pakistani should make effort to counter negative propaganda projected against Pakistan. Government should adopt an active policy to promote its image through visual media abroad.

### **Mr. Omer Sohail**

Mr. Omer Sohail highlighted that the role of sports has always been an effective tool in promoting Pakistan's soft image around the world. Sports have helped to develop good diplomatic relations between countries and helped to promote a positive image of a country internationally. He gave numerous past and present examples of success of Pakistan's cricket diplomacy with reference to its relations with India. Mr. Sohail said that sports can help build Pakistan's soft image across the international community and Pakistan's sportsmen can help build that image.

### **Ms. Arhama Siddiq**

Ms. Arhama Siddiq said that in a globalised world characterised by increasingly complex relations and interactions, a world that generates an environment of risks and opportunities, the model of the nation state has changed and political governance has opened the door to other socio-political players, like think tanks. Unlike parliaments, universities, state bureaucracies, and think tanks are a relatively recent phenomenon in the policy landscape. In the past few decades, their growth has been nothing short of explosive. Think tanks are emerging at an exponential rate into the debate on and design of public policies in all areas:

health, education, culture, law, economics, security, defence, environment, natural resources, energy and international relations, to name a few. They influence decision making at both national and international levels and are an additional resource for the political management of states.

She further added that modern nation states are confronted with a more complicated international environment. To meet the resultant challenges, policy-makers are in need of think tanks more than ever before. These think tanks exist as a team and could provide high quality advice on policy initiatives so that the policy makers have an additional source of advice and input in addition to their individual advisers, aides and staff. This is what explains the growth in the number of think tanks and their influence in most countries. Think tanks now are becoming an increasingly significant actor in the modern national governance. They are becoming an important factor in international competition, have an irreplaceable role in international relations and are important carriers of national soft power.

Soft power has become part of the process of a renewed and global diplomatic exercise directed at the entire population and no longer simply at the elite. As mentioned previously, think tanks are a soft power instrument and represent an alternative for a state to be able to develop its leadership at the international level. It has been proven that American, German and French think tanks have managed to export themselves beyond their national borders using on site offices and teams. For example The United States and its think tanks can be found in Brussels, Ankara, Berlin, Paris, Bucharest, Warsaw, Tunis, Cambridge, London and Doha, running the global intellectual arena. The Chinese government has tried to promote China's soft power through think tanks. President Xi Jinping has said on several occasions, that think tanks are a vital element of a nation's soft power and are an important part of advancing the modernisation of any nation's governance and ability.

Pakistan also needs to promote its think tanks. In this regard, some suggestions are being made below. Think tanks should be given the opportunity to play a greater role in the formulation of public policy. Pakistani think tanks can play a similar role. Pakistan can particularly benefit from national think tanks' expertise on foreign policy issues. Since soft power is a comparatively recent phenomenon in Pakistan. Think tanks in the country should undertake comprehensive research to help the country fully utilise its soft power. They are equipped with the right kinds of resources to act as the best platform and the best launch pad. Think tanks should organise conferences both nationally and internationally. As academia is a powerful medium of communication around the globe, it can be used to highlight and showcase a country's soft power potential at a global level. Think tanks can publish articles of renowned authors, promoting the country's soft power. Organising book launches are a great way to highlight a country's soft image; showcasing documentaries is another.

She also suggested that exchange programmes, particularly cultural and academic exchanges, also are important means available for Pakistan to showcase its image. Facilitating such exchange programmes are a great way to project the soft image of a country because academics are a country's intellectual ambassadors. The ISSI is a prime example of how think tanks can play a significant role in promoting Pakistan's soft power.

### **Ms. Shamsa Khalil**

Ms. Shamsa Khalil said that it is time to move around and to know each other and to reach out to others. Over the years, tourism has emerged as a promising industry. It is attracting

economic incentives, generates business and employment and can also help to break down barriers. Tourism can also help promote and preserve local culture and traditions and involvement of local people can help build mutual understanding. Tourism will also help generate reasons for protection of environment and can generate resources for related projects. She gave an example of Indian occupied Kashmir that if tourism is prompted there it will help reduce the issues and problem in the valley of love. Similarly, promotion of tourism in Pakistan can help its image building and will help to erase negative perception about the country. She stressed on the need to develop public and private partnership to promote tourism in Pakistan. An active focus on Pakistan's tourism industry will help to promote Pakistan's soft image across the globe.

### **Ms. Ume Farwa**

Ms. Ume Farwa said that Fareed Zakaria challenged the assumption that the power of the USA was fading away when America's decline became a topic of an intense debate. It is the same fact that Joseph S. Nye based his prophecy on; America will continue to lead in international affairs by having information edge. Facebook was created by Mark Zuckerberg, when he was just a college student at Harvard in 2004. That's only 12 years ago. His idea has grown so fast, that in September 2015, it reached a milestone of having 1 billion users log on to it in a single day. This is an example of the incredible power of the knowledge economy. The knowledge economy is largely centred in computer software and the activities that surround it. It enables a person like Mark Zuckerberg, with a great idea, to implement and launch it to a huge audience without the huge factories and assets that would've been required in the traditional economy of a few years ago.

Knowledge economy is a source of power in terms of economy, culture and technology. According to Joseph S. Nye, all these elements are components of soft power. He emphasised the fact that in the information age, the importance of technology, education and institutional flexibility has become more important than that of geography, population and raw materials. To put it together, it appears that having a lead in knowledge-economy will not only help a country gain soft power, but also sustain it. He further said that having an information edge will continue to sustain America's soft power because information edge has enabled the US to show its openness, innovation and productivity to the world. In a way, it is an important element of leading global norms; pluralism, liberalism and autonomy. It will also serve as the force multiplier for its successful diplomacy to engage productively with the hostile nations.

America is deriving its immense soft power from the information-edge that knowledge-economy provides it. But other less powerful states cannot gain and sustain soft power like America does. Such countries are blending elements of knowledge-economy to build themselves as a brand for enhancing their appeal and attraction in the world. Spain has implemented a long-term policy, Marca-Espana, which is aimed at strengthening its image at home and abroad. It is a nation branding campaign that analyses the perceptions of Spain abroad and how they evolved over time. Through this campaign, Spain is showing its thriving knowledge-economy and trying to build its image as productive and innovative nation. Pakistan has the same potential to showcase its thriving knowledge-economy and gain soft power from it.

Pakistan's IT sector is shining bright. Pakistan's IT market has been ranked third for supplying freelance IT programmers and app developers. On Up work, freelance hiring site, it has been ranked in the list of top-ten earning countries alongside Ukraine, India and Canada.

Rozee.pk, a Lahore-based company has succeeded in winning a third round of investments, \$6.5 million, from Piton Capital, Nafta and Vostok. In addition, Pakistani freelance IT programmers and app developers are ranked among the most hired persons by IT companies from USA, Britain and Australia. Every year, 1500 registered IT companies and 10,000 IT graduates enter Pakistani IT market. On average, it means, in five years, 7500 companies and 50,000 graduates would enter Pakistani IT market. These are encouraging signs of progress for Pakistan. Many can envision a day when Pakistan becomes the next soft power hub or maybe the next Brazil.

There are some significant parallels between the IT sector Pakistan and the IT sector of Brazil. Before 2004, Brazil's IT industry was hardly recognized in the world. Other less developed countries like Costa Rica, Ukraine and Vietnam were frequently mentioned in industry research and analyst reports. Brazil was nowhere as an up and coming IT destination. To become a top IT industry in international market, it launched a nation branding campaign, Brazil IT. This campaign was launched in traditional print media, internet and trade show competitions. Through this campaign eighty one sectors of Brazil economy and 10,000 Brazilian companies were promoted. APEX also decided to work with several Brazil IT clusters, domestic and abroad, along with Brazil Information Centre, a non-profit organisation that promotes Brazil exports to US opinion makers and consumers. The results? Brazil is now considered a major player in the knowledge economy.

Pakistan has also launched a nation-branding campaign, and can do the same thing by careful planning, coordination, and focus. Participating in the knowledge economy and gaining the kind of soft power that comes from this, will enable Pakistan to present a positive and appealing face to the world and shed the negative image based on misperceptions and neglect.

### **Ms. Amna Javed**

Ms. Javed highlighted the potential of youth in Pakistan she said that soft power is more than image building. More than 65% of Pakistani population consists of youth and by utilising this youth bulge, Pakistan can help promote its softer image. A lack of utilisation of Pakistani youth is generating negativity, but its positive engagement can help build Pakistan's soft power across the world. She suggested that cultural and educational exchanges with other developed countries are required to achieve progress in this field. The UN Model programmes are already playing a positive role, but there is need to engage Pakistani youth from grass root level. There is also a need to build a youth community at regional level. She concluded that youth is a strategic tool for Pakistan to build its softer imager across the world.

### **Ms. Farheen Ali Khan**

Ms. Khan pointed out that excessive use of social media has both negative and positive social impacts. The proper use of social media as a tool can help promote Pakistan's soft power. One can highlight many negatives aspects of social media but its benefits could be endless. Positive information shared through social media can build public opinion and could be used to expose corruption within the society. Social media is a great tool for the development of the country as it will create demand for change and can strengthen democratic process in the country. She said that Pakistan is a sleeping giant and a proper design and control of social media can help the country to make progress in many fields.

### **Concluding Remarks by the Session Chair**

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG ISSI, said that soft power is not a substitute for hard power, and a country's power is a combination of both hard and soft power. Pakistan needs both hard and soft power. One cannot deny the importance of hard power due to Pakistan's security challenges. Pakistan is making all efforts to maintain its hard power, which has also enabled it to make a space for the soft power. Soft power should not be used for propaganda, but it should be utilised to build a soft image of the country. Pakistan is still facing many challenges which require hard, as well as soft power. Pakistani culture, heritage, sports, media, tourism, think tanks, and all other elements discussed in this seminar can help promote Pakistan's positive image. However, improving the image of Pakistan is not going to be an overnight process and requires patience and dedication. One should have faith in Pakistan and should work to achieve goals of peace and prosperity.

### **Concluding Remarks by Ambassador Masood Khan**

Director General ISSI, Ambassador Masood Khan, in his concluding remarks said that the combination of hard and soft power is what is known as smart power. He said that Pakistan Foreign Office and Pakistani diplomats work very hard and their merits are recognised all over the world. He said that all participants have given very brilliant presentations, and especially the voice of the young participants has taken over ownership to promote Pakistan's soft power in future.

Ambassador Khan thanked the cross section of people including people from media, academia, think tanks, ministries and armed forces who attend the seminar. He thanked the Ambassadors and representative of international organisations in Islamabad who were also present at the occasion. He also appreciated the participation of faculty and students from Roots Millennium School and University, National University of Modern Languages, National Defence University, Quaid-i-Azam University, and the Urdu University for their active participation in the seminar.