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Report – IN-HOUSE MEETING
with
Prof. Dr. Michael Jenson

March 22, 2019



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PICTURES OF THE EVENT



Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, held an informal In-house Meeting with Prof. Dr. Michael Jansen from German University of Technology, Muscat, on March 22, 2019. The meeting was chaired by the Director General Ambassador Aizaz Chaudhry.

Welcoming the guest, Ambassador Chaudhry lauded the achievements of Prof. Jansen who was visiting Pakistan to receive his second award on March 23, 2019, from the government of Pakistan for his valuable research on the cultural and architectural sites in Pakistan. Welcome remarks by Ambassador Chaudhry were followed by a short introduction of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad by Ms. Mahrukh Khan.

With a background of field studies on Harappa culture in India and Pakistan, Dr. Jansen holds deep interest in Indus culture (Mohenjo-daro), colonial architecture in South Asia, archaeology and architecture in Southeast Arabia (United Arab Emirates, Oman Sultanate) and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan), early modern cities and Carolingian architecture. He suggested that since civilizations have the most cohesive feature to promote the core needs of humanity, all efforts must be made to share such sites by piping tourism. Pakistan, being at the heart of the third biggest Indus Valley Civilization must actively participate in the UNESCO campaign of “*Save Mohenjo-daro Campaign*” started since 1984. Managing the culture and civilization sites simultaneously through national heritage strategy would help Pakistan to reinvigorate its soft power perception which has been badly afflicted by the geo-political manipulations.

Dr. Jansen in his illustrated presentation skilfully established the richness of Pakistan’s history. He said that it offers an equally beneficial background to the significance of networking through connectivity at the regional, as well as at the international level. Pakistan has always been a pivot of the dynamic land-to-water transport system which had interacted with many empires. The settlements were encouraged thereby. Mohenjo-daro, as one of the oldest cities of the Indus Valley Civilization, with its precious architectural and structural teachings provide convincing precedence. Similarly, the Mehargarh Civilization in Balochistan from 5-7,000 BC also submit to the same notion. The primary code has always been economy. China’s choice of Pakistan’s Gwadar port in its plans of enormous expansion is spontaneous to highlight connectivity while promoting trade. With 32 littoral states, Indian Ocean is more likely to become a playground in the times to come.

Nonetheless, the power components based on the religion, economy or politics, particularly after World War II have not been able to ensure the required stabilization in the world. They have in fact, pushed the world to the brink and next millennium is more fearful. He held the remains of colonialism more responsible for this. He emphasized on education and tolerance to evade the existing threats. Dr. Jansen appreciated Pakistan's efforts of de-escalating tensions with India in spite of its recent violation of international boundary.

Enriched with its geo-strategic and archaeological configuration, Pakistan can offer tremendous opportunities to promote peace through inter-cultural interaction. Dr. Jansen recommended that awareness of the value of its identity through the treasures of heritage in its people could be very useful. He suggested that Pakistan needs more visitors, and said that the word "heritage" is more open to the world. Dr. Jansen said that he is a strong proponent of the idea of world heritage as it invokes a sense of international responsibility.

During the question answer session, Ambassador Chaudhry highlighted the emerging ineffectiveness of education and tolerance in the backdrop of neo-nationalism and ethnic or faith-based identity. The rise of populist nationalism and exclusive political thinking is presenting lamenting trends even in the developed world.

Mr. Ahmed Saffee, Research Fellow pinpointed the missing link between history and entertainment, which could otherwise prove a sustainable campaign.