MINUTES

3rd Coordination Meeting of Think Tanks

March 14, 2019

Venue: Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad

Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted the 3rd Coordination Meeting of Think Tanks on March 14, 2019. The agenda items at the meeting included:

1. **Follow up of the second meeting hosted by NDU**

    i. **List of focal points.**
    ii. **Identify Institution's core capability.**
    iii. **Setup of web portal.**

2. **Exchange of views on global and regional situation.**
3. **Any other matter**

AGENDA ITEM ONE: FOLLOW UP OF THE 2nd MEETING

- A total of 13 think tanks attended the meeting. (*Appendix-I*)

- Each participating Think Tank has been asked to nominate a focal person and to share the area of their expertise and core capability.

- The list of nominated focal persons including one IT expert and web addresses of all the participating Think Tanks attached as *Appendix II.*

- The proposed web portal will be established by National Defense University (NDU). This portal will carry the schedule of planned activities provided voluntarily by each Think Tank in order to avoid clashes between dates of events and to carry all relevant information of the event.

- This forum should serve as a cross pollination of ideas on issues of concern/interest to Pakistan.

- Need for grassroots research and to develop caucuses on different areas. Focus on empirical research. Linkages with government, universities and international Think Tanks must be strengthened.

- Think Tank forum meetings to be held on quarterly basis, while the focal persons can meet once a month.

AGENDA ITEM TWO: EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON GLOBAL AND REGIONAL SITUATION

Following emerging global and regional trends were highlighted:

Global Trends:

- A growing New Cold War between US and China.
- New arms race that has picked up with the collapse of US and Russia understanding on arms control.
- Several countries, including India and Israel, are picking momentum in arming themselves.
- Rise of populist nationalism – Ethnicity, race and religion are being used to push back the inclusivity and globalization.
- President Trump's approach to pull back from wars like Syria and Afghanistan is also impacting the security calculus.

Regional Trends:

- Continuing tilt of the US towards India.
- Pakistan and China's cooperation in the economic field deepening, and the rise of new regionalism of which Pakistan is the hub.
- Emergence of greater South Asia beyond the geographical concept to more of a geo-economic concept linking South Asia with China, Iran, Afghanistan, Central Asia and the Gulf countries.
- A growing Pakistan-India conflict and the growing international attention on Kashmir post Pulwama.
- Hindutva and its increasing impact on internal Indian politics.
- Regional efforts for Afghan peace process.
- US pullout from the JCPOA and re-imposition of sanctions on Iran and its impact on regional politics and cooperation.
- Saudi-Iran tensions.

Core Critical Issues for Pakistan:

1. The Kashmir cause.
2. Nuclear deterrence.
3. CPEC.
4. Countering terrorism and extremism.
5. Hybrid warfare and anti-Pakistan propaganda.

Themes of Concern/Interest to Pakistan:

1. Strategic stability in South Asia.
2. Grave human rights violations in IOK.
3. Strategic coercion through hybrid warfare.
4. The Afghan peace process.
5. Non-traditional security threats including cyber security, water, climate change, population, human resource development, food security and environment.
6. Pakistan-China cooperation.
7. Pakistan's relations with the Gulf countries, KSA, UAE and Iran.
8. Economic diplomacy.

Other Points Raised During Discussions:

- The participating think tanks must prepare contingencies on current scenarios.
- The battle at hand is a war of perceptions and this Think Tank forum can deliberate on it through policy recommendations.
- Organize workshops and seminars abroad in order to develop a soft image, send young researchers, academics to foreign think tanks for interaction to disseminate ideas.
- Communication between think tanks and policy decision making mechanisms of the government and its institutions is key for effective implementation of positive recommendations to policy making.
- Policy recommendations need to be made in a rapid response manner with 2-3 pager factsheets on key response approaches with bullet points. Inputs must be timely otherwise they become redundant.
- There is a need to look into the causes of why the hybrid war has been imposed on Pakistan.

- Develop counter responses to hybrid warfare. Identify areas and issues which can be targeted by detractors.

- Demobilize non-state actors on the grounds and constrain the space for their operations, as per National Action Plan.

- Majority of issues in Pakistan have external dynamics but the solution is purely internal. The current governance structures and the governance culture must be improved to respond effectively rather than transactionally.

- Expand policy outreach in terms of greater South Asia.

- More focus needs to be put on the drivers of strategic evolution in the 21st century.

AGENDA ITEM THREE: ANY OTHER MATTER

- **Pakistan-China Institute offered to host the next coordination meeting (fourth) of the think tanks forum.**

- **IPRI has offered to host the fifth meeting of the think tanks forum.**

APPENDIX I

Participating Think Tanks

1. Center for Global & Strategic Studies (**CGSS**)
2. Center for International Strategic Studies (**CISS**)
3. Center for Research & Security Studies (**CRSS**)
4. Islamabad Policy Research Institute **(IPRI**)
5. Institute of Policy Studies (**IPS**)
6. Institute of Regional Studies (**IRS**)
7. Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (**ISSI**)
8. Institute for Strategic Studies, Research & Analysis (**ISSRA**), NDU
9. Pakistan-China Institute (**PCI**)
10. Research Coordination Cell (**RCC**)
11. South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (**SASSI**)
12. Strategic Vision Institute (**SVI**)
13. Sustainable Development Policy Institute (**SDPI**)

Confirmed, <u>but did not attend</u>:

1. Centre of Excellence on CPEC, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform
2. Research Society of Internal Law (**RSIL**)

Invited, <u>but regretted:</u>

1. Pakistan House (**PH**)
2. Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (**PIDE**), QAU
3. Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (**PIPS**)

Invited, <u>but did not respond</u>:

1. Jinnah Institute (**JI**)
2. Strategic Studies Institute Islamabad (**SSII**)

NOTE: Following institutes have expressed their desire to join the think tanks forum:

1. *National Institute for Maritime Affairs (**NIMA**), Bahria University*
2. *Centre for Pakistan and Gulf Studies (**CPGS**)*
3. *Centre of Pakistan and International Relations (**COPAIR**)*