PILDAT DISCUSSION PAPER

A Blue Print for Creating Think Tanks in Political Parties of Pakistan

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS | September 2012

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Pakistan Institute of
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PREFACE

As engines of developing policies and institutionalising decision-making, think tanks, or research institutes, attached to political parties are an essential requirement for parties that are serious in delivering good governance to the public. It is this firm belief which led to PILDAT requesting **Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed**, a scholar and a thinker, notwithstanding his identity as a well-known politician, Secretary General of Pakistan Muslim League, and currently Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Defence, to pen down this Discussion paper proposing **A Blue Print for Creating Think Tanks in Political Parties of Pakistan**.

Traversing Pakistan's political history for policy decisions, which he sometimes refers to as '*policy blunders*' or those that have had '*disastrous repercussions*' for Pakistan, Senator Sayed builds the case in this paper on how institutionalized, well thought out decision-making, anchored in dedicated research and broad consultation, can help political parties, representing the interests of the people of Pakistan, serve Pakistan better.

Looking at the emergence and existence of think tanks around the world, how these have helped countries' decision making and how all established democracies promote centres of study and research in parties through state funding, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed argues that it is time that parties in Pakistan also focus their energies and resources on establishing dedicated think-tanks to support their work.

Even though Senator Sayed belongs to a political party, his reform ideas and policy proposals are neither politically partisan, nor these are to be taken in that sense. The paper provides an honest analysis of how Pakistan, and its political parties eager to represent Pakistan, can endeavour to perform better through establishing research and study centres to support policy-making that is rooted in "*intense, sustained, in-house debate about pros and cons of a course of action in an environment of free thinking and candour*." He supports state funding for these endeavours on the pattern of established democracies, through a legal, transparent mechanism.

PILDAT, as an indigenous institute, led by citizens of Pakistan, hopes the policy advice and reform proposals contained in this paper are carefully considered, discussed, debated and accepted and adopted with or without modifications by all political parties of Pakistan, especially those, which, over many decades, have come to represent Pakistanis in the Parliament and in successive Governments.

We gratefully acknowledge Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed's scholarship, his dedication and his time in putting together this Blue Print.

Islamabad
September 2012

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed
Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence and Defence Production

Elected un-opposed as a Senator for his third term on February 21, 2012, Mushahid Hussain Sayed is Secretary General of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML). On June 4, 2012, Senator Mushahid Hussain was elected as Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Defence and Defence Production for a 3-year term.

He has been a Cabinet Minister, a journalist, a university teacher and a political analyst. In 1982, at age 29, he became the youngest Editor of a major national newspaper in Pakistan, The Muslim, an independent, English daily published from Islamabad. In his capacity as a journalist, he wrote extensively on civil-military relations. Prior to that, he served on the faculty of the Pakistan Administrative Staff College as Member, Directing Staff, training new Foreign Service officers, as well as Lecturer in International Relations at the Punjab University, Pakistan's oldest seat of learning.

He has served as Information Minister from 1997 to 1999 and also Leader of Pakistan's delegation to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva in 1993. After October 12, 1999, he was held without any charges as a political prisoner for 440 days, including a period in solitary imprisonment. The world's leading human rights organization, the Amnesty International, declared him a 'Prisoner of Conscience' making him the first Pakistani to be so honoured for the year 2000.

He was elected co-chairman of the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) Media Conference of 100 countries, held in New Delhi in December 1983 and, starting 1989, he was the first Pakistani journalist to have a syndicated column in the Indian media, writing regularly in the 'The Times of India', 'The Hindustan Times' and 'The Telegraph'. As Editor of The Muslim, he organised the first Track II dialogue between Pakistan and India in Islamabad in April 1984. His columns have been published in leading international newspapers including The New York Times and The Washington Post.

Mushahid Hussain Sayed is the author of three books. He is member, board of governors of Islamabad Policy Research Institute, a leading think-tank, which he founded in 1998. He is Pakistan's Representative to the 12-member Commission of Eminent Persons formed to reform and restructure the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC). He is also founder and Chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute, a private, independent think-tank devoted to fostering regional cooperation based on expanding the bilateral bond between the two neighbours.

Mushahid Hussain is also the Secretary General of the Centrist Asia Pacific Democrats International (CAPDI). On January 27, 2006, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Achievement by the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines, and in December 2010, he received an Honorary Doctorate from the Royal Academy of Cambodia. In the 2008 Presidential Elections in Pakistan, he was the PML candidate for the office of the President.
He has been the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in his previous tenure, during which period the Committee produced a record 25 reports of its work and activities. He has also been member of the Senate Standing Committee on Defence and Defence Production. He chaired the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Balochistan, whose report was unanimously adopted by the Senate in 2005.

He has been a guest lecturer at the U.S. State Department's Foreign Service Institute, the Harvard University, the MIT, the Middle East Institute, the US Institute of Peace, the Stimson Centre, the Oxford University, the Cambridge University and the Georgetown University's Centre for Christian-Muslim Understanding. Since 1978, Mushahid Hussain has been lecturing

regularly at leading military training institutions in Pakistan including the National Defence University, the Command & Staff College, the Naval War College, the School of Military Intelligence, as well as the GHQ.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed has penned down an exclusive paper for PILDAT that is published and available under the PILDAT banner titled Parliamentary Oversight of Security Sector in Pakistan, focusing on civil-military relations: http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/PILDATBPParliamentaryOversightoftheSecuritySectorinPakistanOctober2010.pd October 2010

Introduction: Global Context of Think Tanks

Globally, think tanks are an integral part of decision-making, opinion formation and policy formulation, especially in Western democracies. Almost 6300 think tanks currently exist in the world, almost 1900 in the United States, nearly 1800 in Europe, and fully half of these think tanks emerged in the last 30 years alone, after 1980. This means there is a direct correlation with the international situation, new forces emerging that necessitated fresh studies (end of the Cold War, collapse of communism in Europe, unravelling of the Soviet Union, the 9/11 events and new kinds of military and non-military threats, rise of China, fear of 'Islamic fundamentalism,' a new focus on economy, environment and energy, etc.).

At a global level, Think tanks can be broadly classified in three categories:

1. Research-oriented, focusing on areas of academic and general interest, with no current policy implications necessarily;
2. Advocacy-oriented, pursuing an agenda to push a particular policy either supporting (e.g., pro-Israeli policy, enhanced military spending, European integration) or opposing (e.g., gun or pharmaceutical lobby in the US);
3. Party-affiliated, promoting a political party's view and line on various issues.

According to the UNDP's definition of think tanks: "*These are organizations engaged on a regular basis in research and advocacy on certain matters related to public policy. **The think tanks are a bridge between knowledge and power in a modern democracy**.*"

According to an article by a German writer, Dr. Ronald Meinardus, on '*Think tanks and political parties*' published in 'Korea Times', January 20, 2005, he views think tanks in political parties engaged in "three main functions:"

1. "First, they give policy advice to leadership of political parties they are allied with.
2. Second, they train and educate party members and candidates for public office.
3. Third, they provide a network of politically like-minded individuals and experts."

Although nearly 60% of the think tanks are either in the United States or in Europe, there is a big disparity in terms of their size, funding and role. For instance, the top 12 think

tanks in the United States have a funding budget of over US $ 20 million. Conversely, amongst the top 12 think tanks in Europe, only one has that level of budget. In the United States, for instance, the top 10 think tanks are staffed by at least 300 personnel or more, while only one think tank in Europe has that high number of staffing. The tradition of think tanks, however, is more long-standing in Europe particularly in the UK, where, for instance, the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), a defence think tank, was established way back in 1831, while the Fabian Society, a socialist think tank linked to the Labour Party, came into being in 1884. All the US think tanks emerged within the 20th Century, and today in Washington D.C. alone, there are at least 375 think tanks.

However, the think tank culture has caught on in other parts of the developed world as well. Writing on "**The rise of think tanks in Australian politics**," in The Conversation blog of August 5, 2011, Navelle Miragliotta says: "*What is instructive about the existence of publicly funded think tanks is what they reveal about the state of Australian political parties. Party think tanks are increasingly carrying out this critical linkage and educative roles that were once undertaken within (formally vibrant) political parties*."

Notwithstanding, the proliferation of think tanks in the United States, this does not necessarily mean a robust, creative or outof-the-box thinking on issues. Many of them have become conforming to the agendas of their donors and patrons, as Robert Samuelson wrote in The Washington Post on August 1, 2007 in a column "***Making the think tank think***:" "*ideally, think tanks expand the public conversation by seeing things too conventional for politicians to say on their own. Here in Washington, they've abdicated that role*."

Their activist role as advocates, or as aggressive lobbyists, has been best summed up by Bob Barton in his instructive piece on '**How Think Tanks shape the Policy Agenda**' in PR Watch, Volume 12, # 4, 2005, published by the Center for Media and Democracy:

"*Think tanks are the intellectual equivalent of battle tanks, which rely on a combination of speed, defensive armour and offensive firepower to overwhelm opposition forces. The goal of conservative think tanks, in combination with air power provided by conservative commentators, is to clear the way for supporting politicians and officials.*" He also quotes a former deputy head of the Heritage Foundation

as describing think tanks *as "the shock troops of the conservative revolution*."

The ideological and political proclivities of think tanks in the West, both the US and Europe, are well described in two different studies. In a major 107-page study by the University of Pennsylvania in September 2009, Dr James G. McGann analysed the "**Regional and Transatlantic Trends**" of Think Tanks, listing American think tanks according to their political orientation: Center Left, Progressive, Centrist, Center Right, Conservative and Libertarian. This comprehensive study includes a detailed chart of the evolution and growth of think tanks in the 20th Century, as well as an excellent comparison of the contrasting political cultures of the United States and Europe, which also impact on the manner of the functioning of think tanks.

Interestingly, in an article in The Telegraph, on '**The top 12 Think Tanks in Britain**' by Tony Helm and Christopher Hope (January 24, 2008), their identification of the British think tanks ideological and political direction is somewhat straight-forward with these slotted either as '*left of centre*' or '*right of centre*.'

In another useful 43-page study on the "**Organization and Structure of Think Tanks**" by Dr Martin Thunert of Heidelberg University in Germany, talks of various models pertaining to the US/UK, Continental European Model and Asia. His criteria of ingredients of a 'successful' Think Tank include:

i.   "*analytical rigour without getting slowed down*;
ii.   *communication of complex ideas*;
iii. *avoiding day-to-day political conflict*;
iv.   *role in a competitive market of policy ideas*;
v.   *quality of core experts who have good communication skills*;
vi.   *managing Think Tanks differently than any other organisation*."

For a better understanding of the Think Tank world, the *Think Tank-Watch* blog is indispensable since it has a Think Tank Directory, a listing of 'Essential Reading' as well as a 'Think Tank Search' section that focuses on a wide variety of institutions. The Washington Post is perhaps one of those rare national newspapers which carries a blog, *Think Tank Town*, where writings and analyses from 13 different think tanks are disseminated.

The Pakistani Context

Politics in Pakistan is predominantly influenced by the ideology and identity of political parties as well as the charisma of party leaders. At the same time, there is a noticeable policy deficit within both mainstream and regional parties. The establishment of a think tank within each party, tasked with the formulation of informed public policy recommendations based on research and analysis, would strengthen the political party itself and steer the country towards policy-based politics in general.

In the case of Pakistan, the need for think tanks in political parties is also important because of '*cultural*' factors that serve as an impediment to informed, well thought decision-making and good governance.

Regrettably, in Pakistan, there is no real culture of debate, discussion and decision-making based on consultation and consensus. Hence, the proclivity of rulers, both in khaki and mufti, is to take decisions somewhat secretively and unilaterally through a cabal or coterie, often on whims, reacting to rumours, gossip and hearsay, sometimes even on conspiracy theories. Then there are flawed assumptions whose unintended consequences are not really thought through.

Due to the '*Mughal mindset*' of rulers, they often view themselves as the repository of all wisdom, hence, what they say or do, should be State or Party policy. Matters are not helped when decisions are hurried through without a counter argument just because the 'boss' says so.

The absence of institutionalized decision-making is probably the leading, if not the single biggest factor, responsible for wrong decisions that invariably end up having disastrous repercussions.

Take the example of some key decisions, taken separately in different points in time both by military rulers and elected civilian leaders, where intense, sustained, in-house debate about pros and cons of a course of action in an environment of free thinking and candour was absent, and the result was an unmitigated disaster:

i.   The decision to launch '*Operation Gibraltar*', dispatching Pakistan Army regulars to Occupied Kashmir in August 1965, to foment an uprising assumed that Indian reaction would be confined to the Ceasefire Line in Kashmir. The decision was taken by no more than 5 men, soldiers and civilians, in the cool

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comfort of the Officers' Mess of the 12 Division of the Pakistan Army in Murree;

ii. Nearly a quarter of a century later, the Pakistan Army high command repeated precisely the same mistake with the same flawed assumption in Kargil in the summer of 1999. Like the fatal decision in the summer of 1965, only 5 men, all generals of the Pakistan Army, were privy to this decision.

iii. Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's decision (taken without serious consultation) to dismiss the elected Provincial Government of Balochistan in March 1973, which was composed of opposition parties with a popular mandate, had disastrous consequences for democracy, as ultimately, it polarized the Pakistan polity, into the pro-PPP and anti-PPP camps, a polarization sustained for almost a quarter of a century;

iv. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's decision to freeze foreign currency accounts in the immediate aftermath of the nuclear tests (taken secretively by only four men), shook the confidence of the people, particularly local and foreign investors.

v.   Decisions regarding appointing Service Chiefs, taken in a personalized fashion and based on giving precedence to personal loyalty rather than professionalism, have had similar bad outcomes. Mr. Bhutto's mistake in the case of appointing General Zia as COAS in1976, and Mr. Nawaz Sharif's choice of General Musharraf in 1998, in both cases proved to be politically costly. Both were premised on a presumption of personal loyalty, superseding other qualified seniors. There was no broad consultation in

either case, and both leaders felt enamoured by professions of loyalty and the flawed assumption that both Chiefs had a 'weak base' within the officers corps, showing a lack of basic understanding of the military's disciplined culture, which revolves around the chain of command under the Chief, whoever that person may be.

As these disastrous decisions show, the culture of debate, preceding decision-making, is either absent or virtually non-existent at the highest levels of the political or military leadership.

Linked to wrong decisions without consultation is another bad tradition at the highest levels of Pakistani leadership, that of not reviewing a course of action to examine whether that decision, taken in the past, was the right one. Or, another related element, avoiding or not taking a decision. The result is a drift that leads to a direction-less, reactive approach, because the problem continues to fester without a solution being thought through or sought, since serious strategic thinking is lacking. Some notable examples in this regard:

i.   The failure to evolve a consensus on Kalabagh Dam in the last 30 years has led to no action on any alternative dam and nor there has been a viable energy policy, or to seriously pursue other options like the Thar Coal reserves or wind or solar energy;

ii.   A decade after 9/11, policies towards the 'war on terror' in FATA have not been reviewed or reversed, and no alternative thinking has evolved because there is no serious strategic discussion and policy debate within Government or Army on this issue;

iii. The talk of 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan never really translated into a meaningful policy, and the assumption about the Afghan Jihad in the 1980s turned out to be wrong, as the Western allies of Pakistan on Afghanistan, promptly ditched Pakistan and did a deal with the then Soviet Union, once the Red Army accepted defeat and was ready to exit Afghanistan. From 1982 to 1987, Pakistan's policy was premised on a single point: the Soviet Union must give a time-frame for withdrawal from Afghanistan, while Moscow was insistent on formation of an interim government in Kabul first so as to prevent a 'vacuum' from developing when the Red Army left. When Moscow, after a secret deal between Reagan and Gorbachev in 1987, suddenly gave a time-frame for withdrawal, Pakistan was left high and dry, and promptly did a U-turn, swapping positions with Moscow, now insisting on an interim government in Kabul first, prior to a time-frame for withdrawal.

The purpose of this check-list of flawed decisions is to point out why think tanks are necessary for Pakistan political parties as collective thinking and institutionalized decision-making help in promoting better, well thought decisions by preventing damage to both the party and the country by bad decisions taken without serious thought.

Culture of debate, preceding decision-making, is either absent or virtually non-existent at the highest levels of the political or military leadership. Linked to this is another bad tradition at the highest levels of Pakistani leadership, that of not reviewing a course of action to examine whether that decision, taken in the past, was the right one

Need for Think Tanks in Political Parties

Think tanks have grown immensely important in established democracies around the world as 'idea banks' whereby public policy on various issues can be formed by the expertise of intellectuals in various fields. Their nature and role within the political landscape varies from one country to another.

In the United States and the United Kingdom, think tanks are largely independent of political parties although they may lean towards one or the other in ideological terms (liberal, conservative, etc). Intellectuals in these organizations publish policy proposals, which may then be picked up by the political parties. Most of the think tanks influencing government policy in the US are based on issues of security and defence, although some focus on the economy and social sector.

On the other hand, some parties such as the Congress Party in India now have a think tank working exclusively for them. The Group to *Look into Future Challenges*, founded by Rahul Gandhi for the Congress, for example, advises the party on intra-party reforms, something that a think tank not affiliated with a party is unlikely to do.

In Turkey, after the decade-long good governance of Prime Minister Tayyab Erdogan's Justice & Development Party (AKP), think tanks like the Turkish Asian Centre for Strategic Studies, (TASAM), serve to promote the new Turkish vision in foreign policy, working closely with the government.

However, two aspects of American think tank culture make it quite distinctive and different from other democracies, which were well summarized by The Economist's '**Not for sale**' article (January 20, 2011). It noted that "*the amount spent on lobbying America's federal government has risen from US $ 1.4 billion in 1998 to US $ 3.5 billion in 2009,*" and "*donors often fund think tanks to promote particular causes on specific issues.*"

And then, as The Economist says, there is a '*revolving door*' relationship between think tanks and administrations, which is why '*American think tanks are more influential than those in other countries*.' The think tanks "*helped concoct the Marshall Plan and the Iraq War.*"

As The New York Times influential columnist, Thomas

Congress Party in India has a think tank working exclusively for them. In Turkey, after the decade-long good governance of Prime Minister Tayyab Erdogan's Justice & Development Party (AKP), think tanks like the Turkish Asian Centre for Strategic Studies, (TASAM), serve to promote the new Turkish vision in foreign policy, working closely with the government

Friedman, candidly told the Israeli newspaper, Haaretz, on April 3, 2003, soon after the invasion of Iraq: "*I could give you the names of 25 people, (all within a five-block radius in Washington) who, if you had exiled them to a desert island a year and half ago, the Iraq war would not have happened.*" Most of these 25 persons, all unelected, peddled their views via think tanks and the media, ultimately proving more influential than the elected US Congress on the key issue of going to war against Iraq.

The Economist adds that the American think tanks "*are often well funded, (and) the Brookings Institution, a non-partisan outfit, has an annual budget of US $ 80 million, which is 25 times bigger than that of Demos, a rough British equivalent.*" Since, as The Economist underlines, "*American think tanks are closely entwined with government,*" they are accused of being enablers for government policy, preparing and promoting perceptions that are used to translate into policy, hence they are sometimes derided, in The Economist's own words, of "*forming part of a permanent ruling class.*"

Role of Think Tanks in Pakistan's Political Parties

The primary function of a think tank of a political party in Pakistan should be to:

1. Educate the leadership of the Party on issues, so that the message of the Party or the 'Party line' is disseminated in a coherent and coordinated manner. This would be done through research studies and briefing papers on specific areas of national policy.

2. Policy planning by addressing salient issues and develop policies in accordance with the demands of the people.

3. Develop an election strategy for the party, help in selection of candidates in different constituencies and also conduct public opinion polls at national, provincial and local level on a recurring basis so as to stay in touch with the popular pulse on issues of public importance.

4. Provide guidance to the Parliamentary Party by helping in the formulation of questions in the Question Hour, drafting legislation, adjournment motions, talking points for speeches and do research for parliamentarians.

5. Help in media outreach, particularly Social Media, and also serve as a link with other think tanks, NGOs and civil society organizations, to help build broader coalitions on specific issues.

Mechanism of Introducing Think Tanks in Political Parties in Pakistan

A number of practical steps must be taken in order to establish think tanks within political parties in Pakistan and ensure their operational effectiveness. These would include:

Size of Think Tanks

It is recommended that the size of a think tank should reflect the strength of the party in the Parliament in terms of seats as well as the votes obtained. This serves two purposes:

1. Firstly, it prevents the wastage of resources if these are not in keeping with the party strength in the Parliament.

2. Secondly, this principle covers the strength of the party in the country at large.

Therefore, the number of full-time staff members for think tanks of mainstream parties should be commensurate with the vote-bank, parliamentary strength and national role of a political party.

Areas of Expertise and Think Tank Members' Qualifications

Experts in three major domains of public policy must make the core of the think tank:

i.   Media
ii. Management of Elections
iii. Policy-making in areas such as economy, energy, education, environment, health, poverty alleviation, cultural issues, provincial autonomy, access to justice and rule of law, foreign affairs, defence, counter terrorism/extremism and national security

In view of the fact that law-making activity in Pakistan is conducted primarily in English and that the party-in-government would be in constant communication with the bureaucracy (which is the highest pool of talent in the country), a political party's think tank should recruit intellectuals based on educational merit.

At a minimum, they should be required to have successfully completed a Master's degree, helped by a pool of qualified assistants and interns. In addition, it

Expertise in Media, Management of Elections and Policy-making in economy, energy, education, environment, health, poverty alleviation, cultural issues, provincial autonomy, access to justice and rule of law, foreign affairs, defence, counter terrorism/extremism & national security domains must make the core of a think tank of a Political Party

would be useful if members have valuable professional experience such as in the field of law, the development sector, corporate sector, government, journalism, diplomacy, defence issues or qualified Overseas Pakistanis (who have returned after living and working abroad). Such professional training would allow them to produce documents, reports, briefings and memoranda as required.

Structure

The structure of a think tank should be based, at least initially, on a team of intellectuals and professionals with one person in charge, but with minimal hierarchy. Apart from its administrative department, at its core, it should comprise of four wings:

1. **Research**: where the party's intelligentsia can outsource studies on specific issues, surveys about public opinion, and trends in constituencies and assess various issues.

2. **Documentation**: where the party would maintain its 'products' (achieved through its own research) such as organizational documents, party pamphlets, policy briefs, members 'list, communication with various other political parties and develop dialogue within the party itself through its website by seeking feedback and input from its own membership as well.

3. **Media**: whereby the party can communicate its message through print, electronic media and the internet, particularly Social Media. Many leading parties have already established or are in the process of establishing their media centres in an effort to reach out to the public. This activity needs to be expanded and guided by think tanks as proposed here.

4. **Training/Political Education**: providing orientation, training and political education to party activists, leaders, candidates and parliamentarians through regular briefing sessions.

Why Think Tanks Need to Focus on Defence & National Security?

Ever since the1979 events (Invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union and response by the western world in collaboration with Pakistan) in our region, Pakistan has been in the 'eye of the storm', with foreign policy and national security issues, influencing and on occasion, guiding, not just the debate but also the direction of domestic politics and policies. Decisions and divisions on defence and national security issues sometimes even resulted in 'regime change' in Pakistan, as was the case in 1971 (military action in East Pakistan), 1977 (US turned against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto because of the nuclear programme, although his downfall had strong domestic causes as well), 1988 (Zia's dismissal of Junejo was, in large measure, due to the cleavage over signing the Geneva Accords on Afghanistan) and 1999 (the crisis over Kargil served as a catalyst for the coup).

Given this historical context, and with three new realities evident in Pakistan's political evolution in the 21st century, the need for a Defence and Security Policy think tank focus amongst Pakistani political parties becomes all the more imperative.

First, Pakistan has changed, with the emergence of multiple power centres, and it is no longer a 'one window operation' where decisions, even on defence and national security, are made by one man or a single institution alone. These multiple power centres include the military-security establishment, the political establishment, a fiercely-independent judiciary, a free media and a vibrant and activist civil society.

Second, defence and security issues are no longer a 'no go area' or a Holy Cow, not even to be touched by a pair of tongs. The nature of civil-military relations is evolving into a more balanced structure, with less mutual distrust and greater mutual dependence. In fact, one important reason why the Pakistan Army could launch a successful military operation in Swat in 2009 was that the political forces, through consensus, provided a sort of 'air cover' to the fighting forces through their solidarity and support, an action repeated in 2011, after threatening statements from the Pentagon prompted the government to convene an emergency All Parties Conference that provided unreserved political support to the Armed Forces. And after the Salalah episode as well, in November 2011, the political forces and the armed forces were on the same page regarding ways and means to meet this challenge.

Third, the Parliament has now also emerged as an important political player on defence and security issues. For instance, the Parliamentary Committee on National Security was tasked by the government, with the full support of the Armed Forces, to prepare recommendations about the relations with the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan that were later translated into state policy after approval by the Parliament; the first time that Parliament played such a role on defence and national security areas. And the Senate Defence Committee has planned public hearings and official briefings, which will then form part of an annual Defence Policy Strategy document, with ideas, proposals and recommendations from parliamentarians on how best to redefine some of the contours of national defence.

Had such public debate and parliamentary input been included in the past, perhaps some major policy blunders on defence and national security issues could have been avoided. Some prominent examples in this regard include:

i.   Pakistani planners always assumed that the 'defence of East Pakistan lies in the plains of the Punjab', a myth

> **Ever since 1979, foreign policy and national security issues in Pakistan have influenced and on occasion, guided, not just the debate but also the direction of domestic politics and policies. Given this context, and realities of Pakistan's political evolution in the 21st century, the need for a Defence and Security Policy think tank focus amongst Pakistani political parties becomes all the more imperative**

that badly exploded in the1965 War, which actually laid the basis of the separate state of Bangladesh, as in 1965 with only division, East Pakistan was left defenceless, but for the Chinese support acting as a deterrent to any Indian military action;

ii.   On Afghanistan, Pakistani policy-makers botched up three times: in seeking 'strategic depth' in a country that revels in resisting foreign domination and which is too fractious to control, in getting Soviet and American intentions wrong in the 1980s, and in seeking a 'go it alone' policy through the Jalalabad Operation in March 1989 after the USSR's Red Army had decided to withdraw;

iii.   Then there were the mistaken assumptions, discussed earlier, that lay behind 'Operation Gibraltar' in 1965 and the Kargil adventure in 1999;

iv.   Despite the decade-long close association with the Americans on the 'war of terror' since 9/11, there has been an abysmal failure to formulate a workable Counter-terror strategy, with attacks on the Sri Lankan cricketers, the assault on the GHQ, the Mehran naval base, the Kamra Air base and the successful American violation of Pakistani sovereignty and territory in the OBL Abbottabad operation, with Pakistan unable both to trace OBL's presence on our territory and to stop the US from acting with impunity;

v.   Pakistan's flip-flops on such a key issue as nuclear policy, first, by not opposing the Indo-US nuclear deal in 2005, which is a violation of both the U.S. laws and the NPT, and then in 2008, by suddenly withdrawing opposition to it in the IAEA in Vienna in 2008.

Priority Issues for Think Tanks regarding Defence and Security

For any political party think tank, priority areas to focus on a new defence and security approach would have to include:

1.   Incorporating key civilian components in our defence strategy which can no longer rely only on military factors like armies, tanks, F-16s, submarines, nuclear weapons, missiles, etc., but must include the role of Parliament, political parties, rule of law, provincial autonomy, education, economy and energy as factors that strengthen national defence by binding the

Federation together.

2.   Identify the new emerging non-traditional and non-conventional threats to national defence and formulate a strategy to combat these new threats, like climate change, cyber warfare, anti-Pakistan propaganda, bad governance and corruption, sectarian terrorism, weak economy, energy shortfall and declining educational standards.

3.   Absence of a counter-terror strategy, since the right to life is the most fundamental of human rights and the state's first responsibility is to protect the life and liberty of its citizenry. The terrorists today are free apparently to strike at will, at a time, target and territory of their own choosing with the Government reacting in a helpless manner, as there is no viable counter-terror strategy, and the much-vaunted National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), announced with much fanfare in 2009, remains a still-born child.

4.   Defence procurement, particularly purchase of expensive military equipment for the three services of the Armed Forces, is congruent with the overall defence and security strategy of the country so the process is both transparent and relevant to the country's defence needs. Now that the defence budget is no longer a 'holy cow', and its broad contours are discussed in Parliament, purchases and procurement of new, expensive weapon systems must also meet the tests of transparency and accountability, which are the norm in any democracy.

Role of Think Tanks in Decision-Making Structures of Political Parties and Parliamentary Wings

A major plus of political parties having their own think tanks will be to provide, as the eminent political scientist, Dr Muhammed Waseem aptly put it, "*a necessary link between the cumulative, comprehensive and institutionally operative thinking of various state institutions such as the judiciary, the executive and the security apparatus on the one hand, and the public opinion, the media and the political parties' thought and practice on the other*." Most often, political parties, once in government, tend to preside over the pre-existing policy structure and are incapable of steering fresh policy in any new direction in a meaningful way.

A think tank can help connect the lawmakers inside the Parliament and their colleagues and other leaders outside in the party organization. In this way, the think tank's working would be in sync with the party's thinking as well as the thinking of other parliamentary parties, and avoid the pitfalls of a radical break with the prevalent framework of opinion.

In addition, a think tank can hold or organize annual seminars and conferences to present their report or other research findings, which are an effective way of promoting debate and developing consensus within the parties by bringing the party leaders and workers on the same page about policy. This would help minimize differences between the divergences of opinion within a party.

Best Practices of Political Think Tanks in Established Democracies

Given the variation in the size, structure, role and nature of political think tanks among various established democracies, Dr Muhammed Waseem has identified various sets of 'best practices' followed by think tanks in different countries, which include:

1. The adoption of an innovative and creative approach towards policy research and analysis. A process of peer review should be instituted to improve the quality of policy recommendations produced.

2. The engagement of the intelligentsia with the public, the press and policy makers through various forms of media, particularly social media.

3. The recruitment of highly qualified intellectuals and a system of rewards through recognition of an individual's contribution, and opportunities for development within the think tank in order to keep the members motivated.

4. Contextualizing the think tank's policy research in the prevailing political and bureaucratic agendas in the country, so that it has practical relevance to current policies.

5. The development of a dedicated research teams focusing on different domains of public policy, each headed by a team leader if funding is available.

6. The publication and extensive dissemination of policy research and analysis, so that it serves as a mechanism of greater dialogue within and between political parties and the Parliament.

7. The maintenance of open and strict accounting and auditing standards for funding & spending, so that transparency is apparent.

How Will Think Tanks Help Pakistan's Political Parties

The establishment of think tanks in Pakistan's political parties will serve several important purposes:

1. Education of party leadership, by injecting the culture of institutionalized thinking thereby enriching the political dialogue around which understanding on major issues can be developed;

2. Enhancing credibility of political parties among the people, since formation of public policy can be taken up seriously and the voters who are the parties principal constituency, will feel that political parties care for issues that matter to the people;

3. Encourage inner-Party democracy, through a process of consultation and brain-storming between party leaders, workers, outside specialists and intellectuals, and voters;

4. Enable better relationship and performance of political parties as they will be competing in the 'battle of ideas' on issues, thereby decreasing political polarization, making politics less personalized and

more policy-oriented which would, over time, strengthen the quality and content of Pakistan's democratic political culture;

5. Eliminating possibilities of wrong, impulsive and thoughtless decisions based on personal whims or knee-jerk reactions, thus helping to avoid damage to the national interest.

6. Capacity-building of various levels of party officials, candidates, parliamentarians and elected public officials.

Role of the State in Providing Funding to Political Parties

Funding of think tanks of political parties parties, which are nationally represented in both the National Assembly and the Senate, must be provided by the state, so that these can operate freely and independently.

Such financial assistance can be channelled under a legally-formalised formula based on percentage of votes obtained and the number of seats of political parties in Parliament. As done in the case of *Germany* (where major parties have state-funded Foundations), the *United Kingdom* where allocations are made to opposition parties for parliamentary duties under a system termed as "*Short Money*" or the case of *Turkey*, this should be through direct state funding of parties.

These funds to be allocated by the government should be disbursed via clearly defined criteria listing allowable and non-allowable usage of public money provided to political parties. Auditing of such funds would be done annually by a special team under the office of the Auditor General of Pakistan, and the audit report made public and presented to Parliament.

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