POST VISIT REPORT
ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE
ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN RESOLVING INTERNATIONAL CRISIS
(25 JANUARY 2012)

INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, RESEARCH & ANALYSIS (ISSRA)
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General
1. Mr. Peter Kim Laustsen along with Mr. Ole Kvaernoe and Dr. Peter Viggo Jakobsen from Royal Danish Defence College visited NDU on 25 January 2012, from 1000-1440 hrs to participate in a Round Table Conference on a subject titled, “Role of International Institutions and Organizations in Resolving International Crisis”, arranged by Institute of Strategic Studies, Research Institute (ISSRA), National Defence University (NDU).
2. The session started at 1015 hrs with the recitation of the Holy Quran. DG ISSRA, Major General Ziauddin Najam chaired the session. In his welcome address, he warmly welcomed Royal Danish Defence College delegation. Mr. Peter Kim Laustsen, the Head of Danish delegation introduced his team and also highlighted the purpose of his visit. In addition to ISSRA faculty, the event was also attended by large number of participants from the Faculty of Contemporary Studies (FCS).

Salient Features of the Proceedings
3. After the welcome remarks by DG ISSRA, Lt. Col. Dr. Saif ur Rehman introduced the speakers. To begin with, Ms Arshi Saleem made a presentation on the topic “The Experiences with Participation in Peacekeeping Operations”, and briefly explained the conceptual framework of the peacekeeping and later on, talked about Pakistan’s role in peacekeeping operations. The gist of her presentation includes:-
   a. Historical Perspective of Peacekeeping
      (1) Peacekeeping is an activity that aims to create the conditions for lasting peace. Peacekeepers monitor and observe peace processes in post-conflict areas and assist ex-combatants in implementing the peace agreements. UN peacekeepers can include soldiers, police officers, and civilian personnel.
      (2) Historically, concept of peacekeeping came from Canadian diplomat Lester Bowles Pearson who was awarded the Nobel
Peace Prize for his role in defusing the Suez Crisis through the United Nations.

(3) The UN Charter gives the UNSC the power and responsibility to take collective action to maintain international peace and security. UN has authorized more than 60 operations since 1940s. The 1990s saw the most UN peacekeeping missions.

(4) There is a distinction between peacekeeping operation and peace enforcement. NATO's intervention in the Kosovo War was peace enforcement. Currently Peacekeeping missions are actively carried out in Congo, South Sudan and Libya.

(5) While highlighting the challenges to the UN peacekeeping, Ms Arshi explained the expectations to maintain the trajectory of past successes, imperatives of forging coherent and coordinated responses to conflict situations and challenges to conceive a seamless transition from peacekeeping to peace building. She explained that the peacekeeping mechanisms are generally criticized for hypocrisy, neo-colonialism, and potential for harm to troop’s and long-term problems including cultural barriers.

b. **Pakistan and UN Peacekeeping**

(1) Pakistan has been actively participating in peacekeeping operations since 1960. Today, Pakistan stands at the top with 10,175 troops and observers serving in current missions across the globe. Some of the major contributions in peacekeeping operations include Somalia, Sierra Leone, Bosnia, Congo and Liberia.

(2) Pakistan’s contribution towards the UN peacekeeping missions has been repeatedly appreciated and recognized at all levels. Leaders like UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Kofi Annan and the China’s Premier Chou en Lai have acknowledged and valued Pakistan’s participation and constructive role in UN peacekeeping operations.
4. In response to the NDU speaker, Dr. Peter Viggo Jakobsen appreciated Pakistan’s role and made a brief presentation on the role played by Denmark in the peacekeeping operations. The salient points of his brief speech are listed below:-

a. There is a similarity between Pakistani and the Danish approach with regards to a firm belief in the UN Charter and resulting participation in peacekeeping operations. He said that the Danes contributed hugely during the Cold War as 25 percent of peacekeepers in UN were Danish at that time similarly Pakistan is playing a major role in peacekeeping operations across the globe. He drew a comparison between the security challenges that the two countries are currently facing and confessed that Pakistan’s security challenges are much more serious than the Denmark which currently does not have enemies around.

b. A new concept of peace enforcement emerged with the Balkan crisis where NATO intervened on the directive of UN. Dr Peter said that the Danish interest in NATO and Afghanistan stems from her security concerns. Being a small state, its national interest lies in cooperation with the major powers. He suggested that the UN needs to be strengthened and UNSC should be reformed with the emergence of new powers. And finally, he proposed that after withdrawal from Afghanistan, UN has to be very active, at least for the next 5 years.

Afghanistan Focused Debate

5. While the agenda for the Round Table Conference was “The Role of International Institutions and Organizations in Resolving International Crisis”, however, major part of the discussion revolved around Afghanistan issue and the main topic remained sidelined during the whole session. Peter Kim Lausten, Director of Royal Danish Defence Institute, developed a narrative on sub-regional and sub-national actors in Afghanistan. He said that being part of NATO forces, Denmark is concerned about building and training of Afghan National Army and police and their possible role in post Afghanistan war scenario. The salient points of his talk are as follows:-

a. Afghanistan issue should be seen in the sub-regional context. The solution of Afghanistan not only lies ‘within’ but equally ‘outside’ the country. The Bonn Agreement of 2001 was a major mistake as it was a
one dimensional approach, which only focused on national governance. In case of Afghanistan, the issue of governance and insurgency is at the center of gravity.

b. The security transition process which is scheduled to be completed by 2014, the emphasis should be on security. Therefore, Afghan security forces should be tailored accordingly. However, balance has to be drawn between governance and security. Afghanistan needs national security hierarchy which could take over security mechanism after the planned withdrawal.

c. Continuation of aid to the future government after withdrawal is necessary for the stability. He said that one of the reasons for Soviet defeat in Afghanistan was the lack of Soviet support to Najibullah government. After being installed, he was left alone. Currently, Karazi’s government also derives 80 percent budget from external donors. Can it be maintained for an indefinite duration?

d. For Afghanistan security solutions, regional players have to work on development of regional institutionalism. Mr Peter Kim was very candid in his opinion and said that Pakistan has a larger role in the future scenario, now seen as a separate construct from Afghanistan. He also emphasized that the UN has to play more important role in coming decades.

6. After the presentation, DG ISSRA opened the interactive session for the participants. In an answer to the question raised by Mr Ali from FCS, Peter Kim emphasized the importance of legitimacy of sub-national governance. Any possible power structure is impossible to draw up without popular legitimacy. Taking lead from Mr Kim, Dr. Peter Viggo Jakobsen highlighted the possible shift from unipolarity to multipolarity, citing the role of Arab League in intervention of Libya, and new interpretation of sovereignty. He said that the NATO/US Afghan policy remained lopsided and that needs to be reviewed.

7. During the course of discussion, Brig Kamran gave his vision about the future of Afghanistan and made a number of suggestions. He suggested that Afghanistan being a tribal society needs to be organized at all levels. He also proposed that unless proportionate representation of people of different ethnic
groups is made in Afghan armed forces, chances of their failure cannot be ruled out after the ISAF/US forces leave the country. He also pointed out that there is a lack of people centric approach and the stakeholders remains outside the loop.

8. Brig. Kamran also raised the point that Afghan land is being used to promote low intensity war in Pakistan right under the nose of NATO forces and therefore, Pakistan has a strong cause to doubt ISAF/US for their double standards. He concluded that while Pakistan has suffered both in terms of human and economic loss, but its sacrifices have never been appreciated/recognized and finally, he suggested that since ISAF/US forces are considered as occupation forces therefore, for a long term peace in Afghanistan and in the region, the UN and possibly OIC may be brought to take the lead role in Afghanistan. In reply to Brig. Kamran upon division of Afghanistan, Mr. Peter Kim emphasized the need of power brokers. However, concern was shown about the stake holders on their being directionless over post 2014 scenario.

General Comments

9. The first interaction with Danish delegation remained very fruitful. Both sides managed to understand each other’s point of view especially in the context of Afghanistan issue. Mr. Peter Kim having the field experience of Afghanistan was very open in his opinion and expressed his country position on Afghanistan issue and proposed that Pakistan’s role in Afghanistan cannot be sidelined. There was a consensus that role of regional countries be encouraged and accepted so as to achieved long term peace in Afghanistan as well as in region at large. There was also a consensus that maintenance of over 3, 50,000 troops in the aftermath of the US withdrawal by 2014 would be a huge challenge because Afghan economy would not be able to sustain such pressure especially when international donors withdraw their economic support. Even if Afghanistan issues is resolved amicably, it would still need foreign support to sustain its economy for the over next one decade. Such a long term economic support is not likely to be maintained.

10. The debate remained inconclusive with regards to the future course of action in Afghanistan. It is very difficult to predict as to how Northern Alliance would behave if Taliban are also included in evolving future plan of Afghanistan. While the US has shown flexibility to remain in contact with Taliban through their site office in Qatar but unfortunately, Pakistan is not on board. In fact, it may not be incorrect to say that the
West led by the US seems unable to evolve a plan which might create win-win situation for all stakeholders. And therefore, unless, political process takes lead over the military way of settling the issue, the current mess is likely to remain in foreseeable future as well. Thus, possibility of drawdown of the US forces from Afghanistan by 2014 seems unlikely which might create problems for keeping the ISAF and the US forces intact because of two main factors, namely, domestic political pressures and economic constraints of the member states. Individual countries of the European Union bloc including the France have already started exerting their pressure on the US. Thus, to conclude, it is sufficed to say that Afghanistan is likely to remain in a messy situation in the coming years.

Concluding Remarks

11. In his closing remarks, DG ISSRA highlighted the divergence of perceptions between developed and underdeveloped world. He said the resources are enough but there is a problem of inequitable distribution of the resources. He opined that we need to bring people together by getting advantage of the globalized communication and suggested that think tanks can actively participate in bridging the gaps. He viewed that Pakistan’s repeated stance that Taliban and Al-Qaida are two different entities and therefore, both should be dealt separately, has now been accepted by the international community. Accordingly, Taliban are being contacted by the US and they are likely to get due role in future road map of Afghanistan.

12. DG ISSRA also made a point that Taliban represents 40 percent of population. So, they can’t be sidelined in post withdrawal power structure. He said that the present Karazai government is not true representative of Afghan people. He suggested that the regional approach is important for peace. With regards to the role of NGOs, he opined that their role mostly revolves around their respective states' interest.

13. At the end, DG ISSRA thanked Royal Danish Defence College for visiting NDU and sharing their vision about peacekeeping and Afghanistan. He also thanked participants of the conference for their extremely enlightened discourse with the distinguished guests.