



International Seminar

Pakistan in 21st Century- Perception Management

18 April, 2017



Sponsor

Commodore Ahmed Shujah, SI (M)

Director Internal Studies Branch, ISSRA- NDU

Prepared by

Ms. Khadija Younus

Research Associate, Internal Studies Branch, ISSRA-NDU

Coordinated by

Major Ahmad Rauf

Assisted by a team of Interns

Ms. Tahreem, Ms. Nabgha and Ms. Shakila

Graphic Designer

Yasir Malik



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PREFACE BY PRESIDENT NDU



Military prowess alone does not constitute power in the contemporary world. 'New media' that is the world-wide web, in the 21st century, plays an important role in executing the 'soft power' elements to get the message across and project positive image of a state. Hence, notion of power has transformed into the concepts of tolerance, persuasion, cooperation, participation, integration and egalitarianism. At the same time local dynamics of a state are shaped by globalization, crisis and public perception. In order to meet desired objectives, media needs to be treated not with notions of derision and control but with evolving notions of power. Easier accessibility to multiple mediums of information at the household level accentuates the shaping of public opinion as countries which don't manage perception risks irrelevance.

Within this purview, the seminar on 'Pakistan in 21st Century – Perception Management' focused on the emerging trends and the tools used by international community in managing perceptions and how Pakistan can learn from their experiences. I strongly believe that this platform has provided us an opportunity to share our thoughts and experiences that may serve as a vital input for any policy-relevant practicable solution to shape narratives. Not only this, it was very encouraging to see that whether or not we adopt same approaches to achieve our cherished dreams, we all do share commonalties of interest in many ways and dimensions. We all envisage same ideals for our people and want, with all the sincerity of our hearts, to do the best for our people and for the world in general. Keeping this vision alive, the attendance of scholars and practitioners, from home and abroad, has helped us to carve out ways and means for a brighter future. I extend my profound gratitude to DG ISSRA and his team for organizing such an intellectually rewarding exercise.



The 21st Century is marked by technological advancements; states are managing the perceptions using the tools presented to them in the current era. The role of big data and machine learning can help to attain greater results in perception management. Mao Tse-tung once said that in order to win victory one must try his best to seal the eyes and ears of the enemy, making him blind and deaf, and to create confusion in the minds of enemy, driving them insane. Perception management is not limited to the enemy; in fact, it is equally important in shaping the opinion of domestic and international audience and in projecting narratives. When perceptions are not managed, all that one hears is repeated lies, there comes a time when reality, even if told, is not believed and is overcome by fallacies. Therefore, in today's environment the way forward is 'Perception Management.'

It was in this framework, NDU organized an International seminar titled as 'Pakistan in 21st Century – Perception Management'. The seminar was intended to deliberate upon devising possible strategies needed to shape and manage positive narratives for Pakistan with the expertise of the world's well-known perception management experts so that appropriate set of recommended policies could be contributed towards national discourse on the subject. I am sure this compilation carries scholastic information on the subject and will help all stakeholders not only to re-visit but also upgrade policy papers on perception management in order to ensure that all possible measures and strategies are employed to counter the mainstream media myths about Pakistan. I commend the efforts of all those who converged to this deliberative forum and rendered scholarly inputs on various aspect of the issue. I am confident that this will serve as a useful reference material for us all.

Overview of the Seminar

The contemporary era is generally called the 'Post Truth Era', which is defined as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief”. The present media is fueling this era in politics because it allows users to bypass traditional fact checkers - reporters and debate moderators - to communicate directly with people. Hence, the world these days is all about perception and image as it can often mislead and undermine rationality. In this age of information and media, a state's political, economic and social claims flow freely across the world, which is constantly in the grip of media war. Pakistan, despite being a democratic and constitution- driven country suffers from credible perception within the international community. Notwithstanding, it has paid an enormous price for being the frontline state in the war on terror. But at the same time, it is often argued that there is much more going on in Pakistan, which is positive in terms of its diversity, culture, heritage and multi-ethnicity. As Pakistan is being recognized as a prospective member of the club of Next-11 economies of the world, there is a need to set forth such an enabling environment which can bring Pakistan at par with other flourishing countries of the world. In this regard, it is all the more important to have perception management strategies in place to tackle all those elements waging misleading war against Pakistan by undermining its soft image and sacrifices for world peace and stability.

Owing to these changing dynamics in terms of perception management and its implications for Pakistan, an International seminar on 'Pakistan in 21st Century- Perception Management' was organized by the Internal Studies branch of Institute for Strategic Studies Research and Analysis (ISSRA), NDU, on 18 April, 2017. This international seminar was held in consonance with the already planned National Media Workshop (NMW). The aim for this deliberative exercise was

to provide a special opportunity to the audience at home, particularly from media community, to interact and learn from world-renowned personalities and opinion leaders of the 21st century who have influenced and helped shape opinions of millions of people across the world on a variety of issues. At the same time, the seminar provided an opportunity to formulate concrete findings about perception management so that appropriate and practicable policy recommendations could be formulated.

The profile of the seminar in qualitative terms was mirrored in the standing of its guest speakers which included world's renowned perception management experts: Nick Gowing, BBC World News legendary presenter and journalist, Dr. S. Gulden Ayman, professor of International Relations at Istanbul University, Turkey, Mr. Chen Xiang, a well-reputed China Radio International (CRI) presenter and journalist and, the young and energetic Mr. Andrew Korybko who is an internationally acclaimed political analyst and commentator from Russia-based think tank Sputnik International. To apprise the audience of Pakistani perspective, the veteran Pakistani journalist and mass media professor Dr. Mehdi Hassan spoke eloquently on Pakistan's challenges of perception building. The seminar being entirely an academic exercise was comprised of three sessions in addition to the inaugural and the closing session. The inaugural session started with the welcome remarks of DG ISSRA Major General Ghulam Qamar, HI (M). The welcome remarks were followed by the keynote guest speaker from Russia Mr. Andrew Korybko who quite persuasively highlighted Pakistan's stature and status as 'The Zipper' of Eurasia' and how CPEC has provided a remarkable opportunity to finally achieve the goals of prosperity, investment, development and socio economic growth for Pakistan. On top of it, the gracious presence of the Federal Minister of State for Information

Broadcasting, & National Heritage, Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb, as the Chief Guest Closing Session speaks volume of the significance of the exercise. Amidst this, the guest speakers deliberated upon various dimensions and aspects of perception management by discussing at length on current international trends in perception management, Pakistan's challenges of perception building: Devising practicable policy prescriptions and how

media collaboration is vital in this new transforming world. Nonetheless, this report provides the summary of the deliberations and detailed account of the one-day long exercise along with mutually agreed major findings and subsequent recommendations. The event's thematic sessions were geared towards distinct, yet corroborative issues of perception management in today's fast-paced, globalizing world.



Concept Note

The 21st Century is being widely discussed all over the world as potentially a century of Asia's renaissance, hence termed by many as the “Asian Century”. However, this 'Asian century' is marked by a complex interplay of Geo Political and Geo economic realities in the International arena. Amidst ensuing dynamics, many Asian countries, still treading the paths of Socio Economic development while at the same time constrained by internally inhibiting factors, aspire to be a vibrant part of the emerging environment. This compulsion to shift from geo-strategy to geo-economics compels the countries to devise new pragmatic narratives and strategies to embrace the future, for the future indeed holds a vast array of hopes and opportunities to remodel a bright, positive, progressive and prosperous perception for countries like Pakistan. Pakistan needs to learn from great nations of the world, lessons regarding image building and harnessing positive perceptions in order to help steer it progressively to a brighter tomorrow.

Objectives

The objectives of the seminar were:

- To discuss and review image building lessons from great nations of the world and harnessing positive perceptions to steer Pakistan to a brighter tomorrow.
- To devise possible strategies in shaping and managing positive perception for Pakistan.
- To contribute towards national discourse on perception management and inform the stakeholders about action areas and relevant measures.

Findings and Recommendations

The day-long seminar entailed two thematic sessions with a wide range of speakers from different countries of the world. There was almost unanimity in views expressed during the seminar, by the speakers and participants both. The following is an account of mutually agreed findings followed by policy relevant recommendations for Pakistani setting.

FINDINGS

- Perception management is the transmission of objective world into subjective world through senses that brings forth reality to human beings. This shows that managing the 'Narrative' and its aftermath is the most important factor in perception management.
- Perception Management is about timely management of controlled information with all available means and resources.
- The world at present is about digital subversion, therefore, to believe that one can control the perception without countering onslaught and can take charge and control, are flawed notions.
- The new media advancement gives people power and the information space which help them in formulating their own perceptions.
- The evolution in smart phones' technology has changed the way incidents are perceived. The on-spot recording of incidents allow them to be public property. The negative impact of such developments needs to be checked and managed.
- The vulnerabilities of power politics and systems explain what previously took eight years to build, can be destroyed now probably in eight months, eight days or eight hours. Any government can thus be strengthened or weakened based on the image that surrounds it.
- Perception in today's setting is far more important than reality and needs to be continuously managed. Hence, the profound challenge is to manage what is being communicated and what is being seen in order to ensure that public sentiment is not affected.
- Projection of a country through its soft power components constitutes the real power and helps it gain credibility in the world.
- Perceptions of countries stem not only from the media reports but also through the representation of its culture, politics and trade. Citizens of a country are its ambassadors as every nation has a story and its citizens' narratives give meaning to its practices and policies.
- Institutional strengthening and political stability are important factors for the process of state building. Hence, without recognizing, restructuring and developing the required dimensions of state institutions, credible perception of Pakistan may not be generated in the world.
- Media organizations of friendly countries

should support each other's developmental projects, spread positive energy, and jointly confront negative propaganda against CPEC in particular.

- In order to counter negative narratives against CPEC at national, regional and, global level, a consultative process of all stakeholders is desirable which nullifies the confusions in creating the negative perceptions about CPEC and Pakistan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pakistan needs to urgently embark on a fresh marketing campaign in national and international media employing all the relevant state institutions in order to dispel traditional and inaccurate stereotypes about it.
- The ministries of Information Broadcasting & National Heritage and Information Technology and Telecommunications are to devise perception management policy jointly, dealing with all the elements of perception crisis, cyber warfare, and discouraging adversaries to take advantage. These ministries to play the role of an enabler and facilitator, providing necessary guidance where required while other federal ministries and key departments to take the lead role for the implementation of policy falling within their domain.
- Government representatives, its foreign office and especially- constituted delegations should push forward perception management assignments for communicating effectively to the global audience the successes of Operation Zarb-e-Azb, as well as the ongoing operation Radd-ul-Fassad.
- Extensive and innovative media derives to be initiated to promote and reinforce fresh narratives by advocating Pakistan's new outlook vis-à-vis CPEC. Public and private media outfits to constitute comprehensive media outreach strategies which could seep through all the levels of general public and project the image of Pakistan as a stable and developing country by highlighting the multiple development projects of CPEC.
- Full spectrum engagement of all levels of the public and private entrepreneurs is to be ensured by all stakeholders including the government and the military establishment.
- There should be a brand-new, high-level, much-publicized, and annually international forum in order to attract the necessary global attention that Pakistan is looking for, and to begin with 'Gwadar' may be chosen as the location to host this prospective event.
- Pakistan's global image is likely to improve in the coming years as more and more people would become receptive to the allure of CPEC related development projects. For successful completion and positive projections of CPEC projects, the recommendations are as under:
- Media groups of Pakistan and China should enhance strategic international cooperation on global communication based on the construction of the CPEC.
- Media organizations from both countries should comprehensively converge on

communication platforms centering upon the CPEC to enlarge its impact.

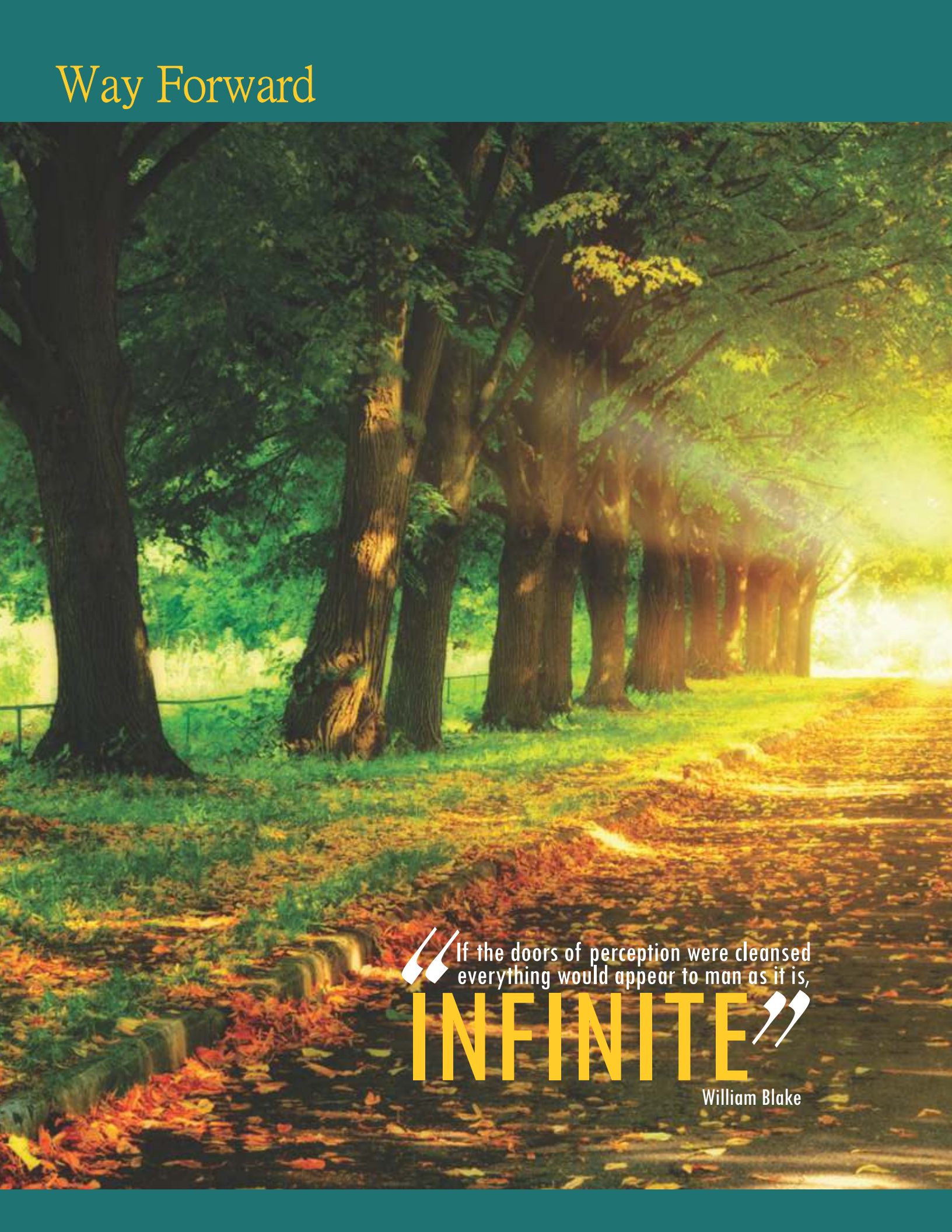
- Media organizations from both countries should share contents and strive for both countries' practical cooperation with focus on Gwadar Port, energy, infrastructure

development and industrial cooperation with the CPEC as a frontrunner.

- Media houses from both countries should advance the cause and timely completion of CPEC projects through continuous collaboration and cooperation.

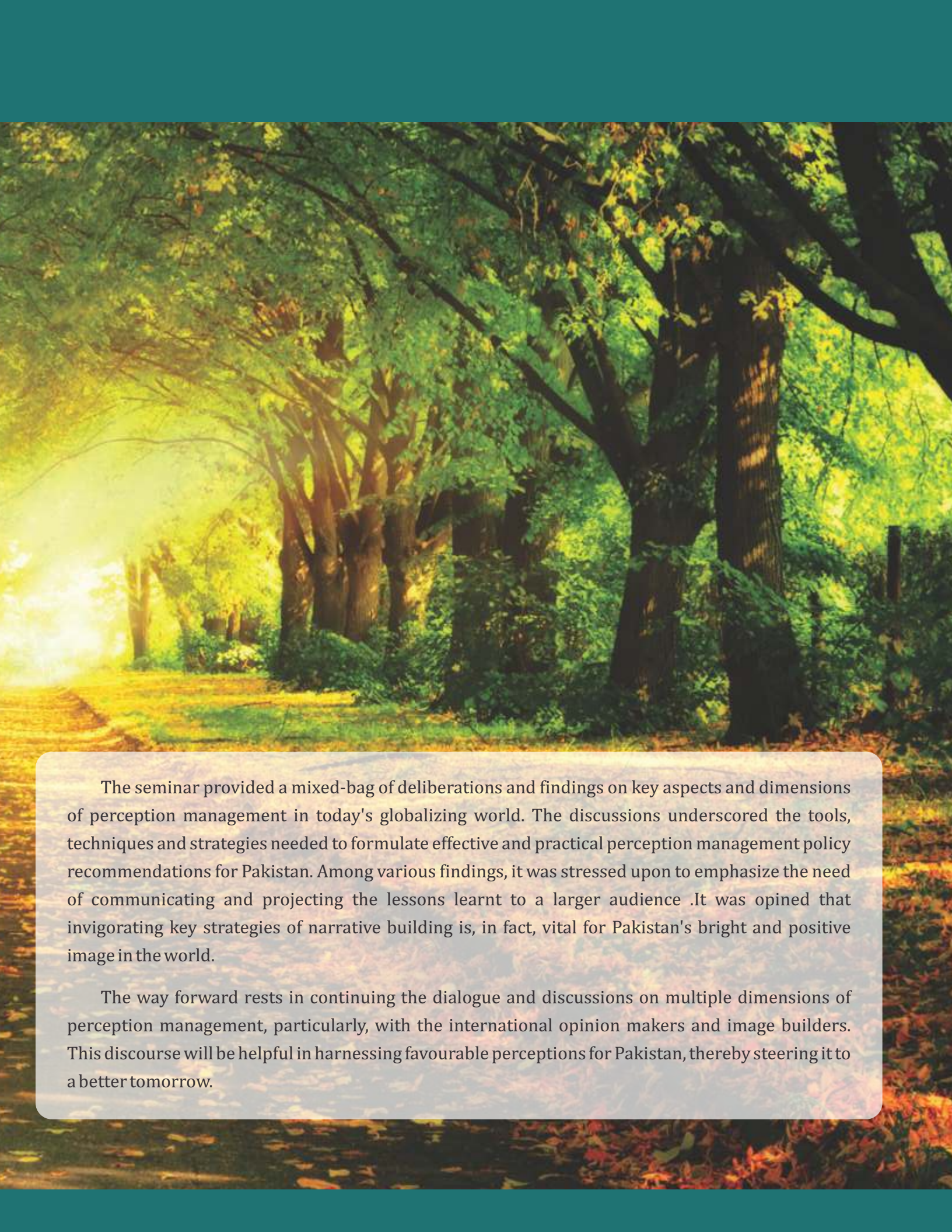


Way Forward



“If the doors of perception were cleansed
everything would appear to man as it is,
INFINITE”

William Blake

A photograph of a forest path. Sunlight filters through the dense canopy of large, leafy trees, creating a warm, golden glow and dappled light patterns on the ground. The path is covered with fallen leaves and grass. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

The seminar provided a mixed-bag of deliberations and findings on key aspects and dimensions of perception management in today's globalizing world. The discussions underscored the tools, techniques and strategies needed to formulate effective and practical perception management policy recommendations for Pakistan. Among various findings, it was stressed upon to emphasize the need of communicating and projecting the lessons learnt to a larger audience .It was opined that invigorating key strategies of narrative building is, in fact, vital for Pakistan's bright and positive image in the world.

The way forward rests in continuing the dialogue and discussions on multiple dimensions of perception management, particularly, with the international opinion makers and image builders. This discourse will be helpful in harnessing favourable perceptions for Pakistan, thereby steering it to a better tomorrow.

Opening Session



Introduction

The international seminar started with a captivating opening session which entailed welcome address by DG ISSRA, Major General Ghulam Qamar HI (M), followed by the keynote address of Mr. Andrew Korybko, an international political analyst and commentator from Russia-based think tank, Sputnik International.

Welcome Remarks by DG ISSRA, Major General Ghulam Qamar, HI (M)

At the outset, DG ISSRA accorded warm welcome to the foreign and local dignitaries for joining the important event and highlighted the significance of the occasion by shedding light on the relevance of perception management in contemporary times. Perception management combines truth generation with security operations, concealing and highlighting facts at the same time for the local and foreign audience in order to influence their emotions, motives and objective reasoning. Perception management as a psychological operation aimed at eliciting the desired behavior by manipulating the opinions of both enemies and friends. It was really hard to comprehend the confines of media when it comes to building perceptions. Fortunately or unfortunately, in contemporary times, media has harnessed building perceptions. Worldwide, the media shoulders





similar responsibilities but in a state like Pakistan, where now youth has developed a sense of early responsibility in political dimensions, media has to hold on to greater responsibility of building positive perceptions. In this context, Pakistan needs to devise such a media policy which neither infringes the freedom of speech nor spreads negativity among masses. It is all the more important for the media of a society to be efficient in building positive perceptions. It is acknowledged that Pakistani media has tried to strike a balance between Pakistan's geo-political and geo-strategic goals through positive media coverage. It not only has to lower the risk of ethnic conflicts but also cultural differences. Pakistani media has been instrumental in projecting how Pakistan has successfully fought the war against terrorism and at the same time has achieved the benchmark of

major regional endeavor like the CPEC.

Keynote Address by Mr. Andrew Korybko Russia-based Political Analyst at Sputnik International

Soft power brings respect, which in turn invites investment, development, and socio-cultural growth. These factors improve the lives of ordinary citizens and ensure the country's political stability. Pakistan has a historic opportunity to finally achieve all of these goals at the level at which they're enjoyed by many leading countries today, but it mustn't let this God-given chance slip through its fingers and that is China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This God-given chance is poised to fundamentally transform Pakistan. The world is in the midst of the New Cold War,

which can be simplified as a multifaceted struggle between the unipolar and multipolar forces, the first one led by the US and its traditional allies, and the second one is poised by Russia and China. The world system is undergoing a fundamental transformation as the US' erstwhile dominance over the globe after the end of the Old Cold War is coming to an end. This process is occurring for many reasons, but that mostly have to do with the US' own inefficiency and overreach, but also the inevitable rise of non-Western countries which seek to carve out a more just and equitable world order to accommodate their national interests.

China's 'One Belt One Road' global vision seeks to build a network of New Silk Roads all across the world premised on the belief that interconnected countries are less likely to fight with one another. By increasing the amount of

stakeholders in this new apolitical global system, it's believed that everyone will gain some sort of benefit from each other's development, thereby epitomizing the ultimate "win-win" outcome. CPEC is OBOR's flagship project, and it's much more important than any amount of financial figures would indicate. Since it bridges the mainland and maritime components of OBOR, as well as opening up the prospect for trade to traverse across the entire West-East distance of China, CPEC can be described as the "Zipper of Pan-Eurasian Integration". Considering how Pakistan will be the common ground through which a diverse variety of cultures will intersect – be it Persian, Arabian, Russian, Central Asian, Chinese, South Asian, and even East African – it goes without saying that Pakistan will function as one of the most pivotal locations in the world for civilizational





connectivity.

Socio-cultural, academic, civil society, media, and other sorts of cooperation could flourish so long as Pakistanis recognize the opportunity that they have to transform CPEC's economic attractiveness into tangible soft power dividends. In order to get to this point, Pakistan must accept and work towards attaining its future dual roles in being the Zipper of Eurasia and the Convergence of Civilizations, and after feeling comfortable with these newfound and inevitable responsibilities, the country will then understand its irreplaceably powerful position in being the heart of Greater South Asia at the center of the Indo-Pacific Century. Pakistan must explain these concepts to its foreign friends and work on rebranding its international image in order to intimately associate itself with all of these interconnected

ideas. To reiterate, they are CPEC, OBOR, Multipolarity, the Zipper of Eurasia, the Convergence of Civilizations, Greater South Asia, and the Indo-Pacific Century.

The Negative perceptions need to change if Pakistan is to fully grow into its new 21st-century. Instead of conjuring up outdated and de-contextualized images of terrorist-inflicted devastation along the Afghan border regions, people need to think of the sort of things that are very much part of Pakistan as a thriving, developed, and safe place. It's not by accident that many non-Muslim foreigners think of negative stereotypes when they hear the word Pakistan, as this was all done on purpose as part of a larger US information war against Pakistan, which is nowadays also reinforced by the powerful influence that India exerts on the Mainstream Media's discourse. Pakistan needs to debunk these stereotypes through a

multifaceted approach which combines all elements of soft power, both high and low, and the first place to start is through emphasizing several key points.

Pakistan needs to communicate this more clearly to the global audience, and devise a comprehensive media outreach strategy to seep through to the general public highlighting the brilliant anti-terrorist successes of former General Sharif during Operation Zarb-e-Azb, as well as the recent Radd-ul-Fassad under present Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa Bajwa. Continuing along, Pakistan and its media need to promote the image of a stable and developing country which according to Forbes magazine's recent survey has been termed as one of the best performing markets in the world. All of it should be disseminated through rigorous media campaign in order to debunk the clichéd stereotypes of Pakistan being a terrorist-riddled failing state.

Being located at the geographic center of Greater South Asia and is poised to play a pivotal role in the Indo-Pacific Century, Pakistan's economic and corresponding reputational benefits in the future derive in one way or another from CPEC, which in turn endows the country with strong economic growth potential given its role as the Zipper of

Eurasia. There should be a brand-new, high-level, publicized, and yearly international forum in order to attract the necessary global attention that Pakistan is looking for, and to begin with 'Gwadar' maybe chosen as the location to host this prospective event.

Therefore, Pakistanis need to rethink their country's global geostrategic significance and embrace the interconnected concepts of the Zipper of Eurasia, Convergence of Civilizations, Greater South Asia, and the Indo-Pacific Century which all derive from CPEC in one way or another, and urgently embark on a fresh marketing campaign to dispel old and inaccurate stereotypes in order to promote and reinforce new narratives.

Full-spectrum engagement of all levels of the intended audiences, from high-level experts to the casual man in civil society, needs to be prioritized, and the optimal outreach techniques, strategies, and guidelines should be made operational. The country will be able to successfully rebrand itself in the 21st century by implementing the above-mentioned suggestions, and that the international perception associated with the country will greatly improve in the coming years as more and more people become receptive to the allure of CPEC and everything associated with it.



Introduction

The first session of the seminar entailed world's celebrated journalist and former presenter of BBC World News, Mr. Nik Gowing and Dr. S. Gulden Ayman, International

Relations' professor at Istanbul University, Turkey. The guest speakers spoke diligently on understanding current international trends in perception management and how it is affecting global politics.

The synopsis of the presentations are as following:

Understanding Current International Trends in Perception Management by Nick Gowing

Three years ago, the attack on the army public school in Peshawar forced the command to take immediate and decisive action, allowing for efficient perception management which is vital both for civil and military setups. By definition, it is the transmission of objective



world into subjective world through senses, that is, taking us to reality. This shows that managing the “Truth” of the story and its aftermath is the most important in perception management and is thus an essential element of business and political life since sitting back allows for perceptions to build which can become difficult to negate later on. This is because people begin to associate certain characteristics with a brand and consider them an integral part of it.

It is important to understand that the world is not a career destroyer but a career enhancer, which is why perception management should be taken positively. There are no red lines and the advent of smart phones has changed the nature of incidents and the perception that goes with it. It is closely linked to disruption, where everything you believe and everything you assume comes with a price. The media space is being turned on its head, therefore, what you record and share as an individual makes every aspect of your life a public space.

The new media gives people power and information space which help them in formulating their own perceptions. The United airlines incident that happened at the Chicago airport shows how globalized the media has become. The airline delayed its response and made catastrophic errors before aptly countering the incident. By then the situation had already been mishandled and a negative public image around the airline had been built. The negative media coverage of Pakistan has been instrumental in creating an international perception of it being unsafe, thus contributing to the country's declining foreign investments and tourism.

The problem with perception building is that the world is moving very quickly and it

defies what is actually being considered by the relevant authorities. The public is very different and it is important to realize what the public wants and what the public sees because otherwise it will cause great damage to brands, companies and governments. It is important to understand that the control is gone, especially with advent of smart phones; the issues are now far broader than military and government strategy. The world at present about digital subversion therefore, to believe that one can control the perception around itself is flawed. While dealing with any situation one needs to think about the worst case scenario and to provide a counter narrative beginning from the lowest ranks. The conformity which gets people to talk is in many ways is the way to understand what has changed and what is taking place. It is thus important to understand that one cannot simply assume that they can take charge and control perceptions.

It has been written by many authors that vulnerabilities on power politics and systems explain what previously took 8 years to build, can be destroyed now probably in 8 months, 8 days or 8 hours. Any government can thus be strengthened or weakened based on the image that surrounds it. An example of this are the protests in Myanmar which the government did not want the world to know of but still the news got widely disseminated. The movement “Black Lives Matter” became a movement when images of black men being killed by the police became widespread in the USA.

This shows that perception in today's setting is far more important than reality and needs to be continuously managed. Therefore, the profound challenge is to manage what is being said and what has been seen and to ensure that the public sentiment is not damaged.



Global Politics and Perception Management

by Dr. S Gulden Ayman

In today's globalized world, the nature of competition between nations has changed. Countries now compete to attract trade, investment, workforce, to build contacts and enhance cooperation. This raises an inherent understanding and support for their larger interests. Propaganda is nothing new and Perception in the age of globalization has become more important than reality. Therefore, every government now needs to be a brand manager as much as it needs to be a policy maker. It is important for every government to understand how the country and its citizens are perceived globally, thus work on measures to improve its image internationally.

Perceptions of countries stem not only from the media reports but also through the representation of its culture, politics and trade; where its citizen are the ambassadors. Every nation is a story and its public narrative gives meaning to its practices and policies. Hence, it can be said that the traditions, cultures, symbols and practices help solve national dilemmas.

Certain nations have already acquired powerful personalities and labels have been attached to them. The examples include Germany, Britain, France, USA and Italy as these countries have created a legacy for other nations to follow. These countries radiate an image of stable and established institutions in addition to being famous tourist destinations and home to famous international brands. This international image has developed quite passively without any consolidated effort from local actors; however, once the states have solidified such images, the perception is reinforced by national businesses, local citizens and governance.

Countries in their neighborhood often share cultural similarities. Traces of Ottoman Empire can be seen in Turkey and the surrounding region. Therefore, culture and food can be used as a country's brand ambassador to create its positive image globally. An example is 'Baklava.' The delicacy is famous in the Arab world but the one that is produced in Turkey is the most sought after and famous around the world.

There are also nations which are in need of shedding of their past image and creating new perceptions. The stakeholders and the target audience therefore need to work differently and think differently. Many countries are, therefore, in need of erecting new perceptions. It must be borne in view that unlike the domestic public the international audience is difficult to define, however, it can be divided broadly into three groups:

- The business community
- Politicians
- Tourists

The ultimate aim should be to manage the



political perceptions of the populace, at all levels. There are states which try to diminish the skills of the international society especially those which are often the target of terrorist attacks.

Usually it is seen that the widely circulated images represent the ruling elite and not the ways of an average man of the respective country. This also underlines the political agendas of the elites. There is a competition in image viewing. The opposition leaders try to challenge the image presented to the international community whereas the political activists, on the other hand, try to disseminate reality and other significant counter narratives. These groups strive to create different brands under the umbrella of national leaders, opposition leaders, activists, etc.

These brands can create, both; a negative or positive image of the country. Under this category North Korea's example seems fit where the political elite has contributed much to its international perception globally. The image that resonates domestically if not tackled becomes the international perception, and here the role of diplomacy is important to its best capacity.

There are different ways to decipher a message which is why values need to be respected. Countries have made efforts to wipe off their images and come up as investment friendly states. A balance needs to be maintained in the traditional and modern values when dealing with a situation diplomatically. Perception building and management thus helps in dealing with reputation crisis and adversaries. It discourages adversaries to take advantage and in this regard the Central Asian countries fit the best example.

Successful nations manage their images efficiently, both nationally and internationally. The communication strategy is of utmost importance for the progress of the region and the world. The relevant people should be made accountable so that in future the negative incidents are not repeated and the target audience should be defined. It is important to explain what has changed in a country and why, so that perception management becomes in parallel to the remedies; remedies to cure political, economic, security and the social conditions of the country so that the individual state is more integrated with the international community.



Introduction

The second session of the seminar was comprised of two speakers : Professor Dr. Mehdi Hassan and Mr. Chen Xiang. The session was dedicated to Pakistan's Challenges of Perception Management: Devising Practicable Policy Prescriptions and Media Collaboration in the New Transforming World.

The synopsis of presentations by the speakers of the session is as following:

Pakistan's Challenges of Perception Building: Devising Practicable Policy Prescriptions by Prof Dr. Mehdi Hassan

The perception that Pakistan lacks credi-



bility within the international community is a common one among analysts and academics. The image of Pakistan was greatly tarnished after 9/11 and Pakistan is still labeled as terrorist producing country by many nations. Our country went through a long journey of

defeating its enemy in the form of terrorism. Pakistan is now quoted as a country of peace lovers and peace builders as they have strived hard to overthrow their adversaries without any demoralization. The term 'soft power' was coined in 1990 by Professor Joseph Nye to explain how modern states can use positive attraction and persuasion to achieve global influence.

He defined that soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies. When our policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, our soft power is enhanced. Soft power includes propaganda which is considerably broader. It is much more than image, public relations and ephemeral popularity. It constitutes very real power – an ability to gain objectives. By this definition of Joseph Nye countries need to prop up their soft image. Pakistan is blessed with utmost beauty and diversity but negligence in many sectors makes it a nation of terrorists. The image of the country has been discolored due to terrorism mostly propelled by hostile nations not only in our neighborhood but across the borders too. Irony is that the countries which are actually behind terrorism in Pakistan blame our country and try to throw dust in the eyes of the world. Recent events in Indo Pak relations and particularly on Kashmir issue India seemed to have leverage in diplomatic terms with other countries just because of its image of world's largest democracy. Pakistan when earlier could not give matching response to India on political and diplomatic fronts was also stamped as a 'failed state' but with a success in eradicating menace of terrorism largely on its soil now gives the world an image of a courageous nation who can fight with great will and

resolve. A befitting response to India and bringing its true face to United Nations can now help Pakistan to regain its dignified position in global world.

Experts of diplomacy and international relations suggest that many factors contribute in promoting a nation's soft image to the rest of the world. Not only country's diplomatic relations with other states and politics matter but overall growth in economy, investment, tourism, standard of education, provision of quality medical facilities to its people measure soft power. It is often highlighted that if a country has good justice system, then it also helps in improving its soft image. Promotion of cultural, social and commercial activities also helps in casting real contours of image. In Pakistan several organizations are working day and night to promote soft image of the country through cultural events, expos, exhibitions, arts and crafts activities, sports festivals and many other such occasions have significant impact in bringing not only investments in Pakistan but gives audience an impact of peaceful lively nation.

Undoubtedly, we are the nation with great spirits and we need to highlight exceptional things about Pakistan. But unfortunately, the media in Pakistan instead of setting the agenda for Pakistan is following such agenda which is not in its interest. There is no counter narrative of the propaganda terming Pakistan as an artificial state which has neither yet settled the boundaries with Afghanistan or with India. In this regard, Pakistan's media lacks the knowledge of psychological warfare. Due to inefficient media, since 1947 most of the ground realities are not communicated to the common masses. Besides, the withdrawal of intellectuals from narrative building is one of the major factors hampering agenda setting for Pakistan.

As in modern age the values and culture of a society has changed, but the change that has come cannot be called positive/progressive change. It has resulted in to political instability which ultimately led to the Pakistan's image as "incredible".

Till the time history is distorted, Jinnah's instructions are not followed, and intellectuals are withdrawn from narrative building, no progressive change will occur which is the need of the hour for Pakistan.

Media Collaboration in New Transforming World by Mr. Chen Xiang



C h i n a a n d Pakistan have maintained strong economic ties since 1960s, In view of this relationship, the mutual feelings of trust and brotherhood between Pakistan and China have been translated into economic ties over the past one and a half decade. The Economic Survey of Pakistan (2013-2014) refers to the 122 percent

increase of revenue between the two countries that amounts to US\$ 9.2 billion. The positive connotation of the messages by Chen Xiang, are furthered interpreted by the Chinese scholars who "have used terms and phrases like "common interest", "shared responsibility", "common affection", and "shared intellect" for the community of shared destiny between Pakistan and China"

The current project of CPEC is expected to be completed by 2030; however, due to the conflict of interest, present within and outside the country, the whole matter requires careful monitoring throughout the tenure. In view of the current scenario, media is expected to play a pivotal role in harmonizing domestic and international communities to advocate the cause of CPEC. In the wake of serious issues related to law and order confronting Pakistan may jeopardize this novel opportunity. The security issues faced by Pakistan can be to a great extent resolved engaging the locals by acquainting them with the prospective benefits of the project.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Media Forum was jointly organized by the Chinese Embassy and Pakistan-China Institute in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad. The forum was attended by over 200 media persons from both countries.

The media forum on the CPEC will provide information to different segments of society including students, business enterprises, civil society and private sector. Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong said, "The media forum brings us together to have extensive and in-depth discussions on the China-Pakistan friendship and cooperation, especially the CEPC. I am confident that this forum will help strengthen the media collaboration between the two sides."

Today, Pakistan and China stand at a new height in an era of all-weather friendship and all-round cooperation and contemplate how to enrich the China-Pakistan partnership of common destiny, the construction of the CPEC has undoubtedly created new opportunities for both countries in deepening and strengthening cooperation in such fields as global

communication, platforms, contents, resources and talents. With that in mind, the following aspects are of great importance:

- First of all, media groups of both countries should enhance strategic international cooperation on global communication based on the construction of the CPEC. Media organizations from both countries should uphold justice in supporting each other's development, spread positive energy, and jointly cover topics and subjects about the CPEC and deliver information abroad.
- Secondly, media organizations from both countries should comprehensively converge on communication platforms centering upon the CPEC to enlarge its impact.
- Thirdly, media organizations from both countries should share contents and strive for a win-win situation with respect to the CPEC. Media organizations should actively serve for both countries' practical cooperation with focus on Gwadar Port, energy, infrastructure development and industrial cooperation with the CPEC as a frontrunner.
- Fourthly, media organizations from both countries should actively focus on the CPEC to enhance cooperation in media resources so as to improve public credibility, competitiveness and influences.
- Fifthly, media organizations from both countries should push forward the construction of the CPEC via in-depth cooperation of talents.

China and Pakistan have already stepped into a new era of an all-weather strategic partnership, and their practical cooperation with focus on Gwadar Port, energy, infrastructure development and industrial cooperation

under the CPEC is being implemented. Media organizations are not only witness to such partnership, but should become its guardians and promoters. The need of the hour is to undertake joint efforts and stick to shared social responsibilities, launch more in-depth and influential media cooperation to further enrich the China-Pakistan relationship of win-win cooperation. All the more important is to build stronger public support, as well as better cultural and developmental environment for realizing the visions of the common community of shared destiny.

Interactive Session

The participants were keen in deliberating on issues of; routes and zoning of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and building positive perception for its smooth formulation in order to avoid international propaganda against CPEC, rationale behind perception and reality, role of western media in creating perceptions about 'Islamophobia', media coverage on the killing of university a student on charges of blasphemy, and as how perception management is comparable with that of freedom of speech to devise positive strategies especially in the case of Pakistan.

It was opined, that there are many narratives in way of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) at the national, regional, and global level which are important to tackle. The route is one of the entities but the major concern is to settle provincial perception and stakes and as well as the mindset of the civil society. There must be a consultation process in order to attain desired objectives while nullifying the confusions in creating the negative perception for the project. There is a need to be realistic to achieve certain narratives, as Pakistan is solely responsible to



handle the CPEC project.

However, perception management can be taken as a tool but it should be used as an instrument of confidence building. The notion should be based on reality but the narrative should be more focused to human psychology with positive instrumentation. Formulation of narrative should be based on reality and there is a need to be careful while formulating perception, feedback, and robust dialogue for a particular interest. Positive or negative possibilities are always there but comparative analysis of perception management is mandatory. In case of Pakistan, there is a need to be cognizant of the ground realities while forming the perception management strategies and especially Pakistani media needs to highlight the sacrifices Pakistan has made so far in the war against terror. National interest of Pakistan is an important aspect, therefore individuals and civil society must adopt sensible approach to counter particular narratives.

As far as the international blame game against Muslims is concerned, it can rightly be said that all Muslims are not terrorist but

unluckily most of the terrorists are Muslims. For a small group of people, the whole Muslim Ummah is being disgraced and blamed. Some nefarious elements have been maligning the religion of peace and propagate against Islam on global level. There is a need to identify such practices in order to manage perception in the international media. In such cases, it is very difficult for media to remain neutral because of various factors which include geo-political or economic interests. At certain point in time, they might be vested interests as well. A research conducted in UK concludes that there is no connection between terrorists and Islam. Terrorist is simply an individual having no religion, state or ethnicity and to resolve the issue of terrorism there is a need to address the root causes of particular issue without blame game.

Furthermore, the cases of blasphemy should be addressed with justice and equity. The society becomes nostalgic and aggressive over the issues of blasphemy but there is a mechanism of trial through the courts instead of taking laws into own hands which needs to be implemented in letter and spirit. In this way,

such cases should be sent to courts and the necessary evidence may also be sent before the court for a fair trial of a particular case. Moreover, the law of blasphemy needs procedural amendments because most of the time it has been used to attain the hidden objectives and settle personal scores. The most recorded cases under this law are against Muslims, which is ironic. The incident as that of Mardan university student, created hype on national and international level and became an instrument of negative propaganda for media handlers. The negative elements are always ready to enact and sell their story for their desired objectives. They use every tactic to make a story attractive and infuse more negativity while deteriorating the positive side of the story.

Last but not the least, every sovereign state has a right to adopt the policy that suits to its national interest. The state also controls media and helps to work out frames for specific issues. Media sometimes represents one side of the coin hence painting one-sided picture of the story hence, happens to be weapon of mass destruction. The role of media in case of Pakistan is quite typical and the concerned

people have been working on stereotypes. The contents are not properly researched and analyzed and the essence is always mixed with irrelevant incidents. Freedom of speech is one of the inalienable rights of human beings and this actually becomes the narrative once shaped as content. Thus, narrative should not be misused and one must be careful while formulating the global narratives. The counter narrative also expresses the freedom of speech and it should be well organized and balanced too for argumentation. We should create positive norms for freedom of speech and media should be used as a tool of enlightenment and knowledge helping in building up positive narratives for noble causes.

In the end, the Chair Mr. Andrew Korybko concluded the interactive session by elucidating that perception management as a subject is diverse in nature. It opines different dimensions, but one has to shape narratives in accordance with ones national interest and national security. The objectives of any narrative and strategy should be tailored with positive perception management so that media could emanate it nationally and internationally.





Introduction

The one-day long international seminar provided an enthralling opportunity to the participants from home and abroad for deliberating on key aspects of perception management. It gyrated around notions of further enhancing mutual cooperation with the international community by organizing interactive exercises in future as well as learning from one another's experiences, skills and

knowledge. The seminar was concluded by a closing session which entailed speeches from the Chief Guest Honorable Minister of State for Information Broadcasting & National Heritage Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb and Vote of Thanks by President NDU, Lt.Gen. Rizwan Akhtar H.St. HI (M). Excerpts of the speeches are given below:

Address by the Chief Guest Honorable Minister of State for Information Broadcasting & National Heritage, Ms. Marriyyum Aurangzeb,

One of the fruits of modern day democracy is freedom of expression which is recognized as a fundamental human right in most of the constitutions of the world. However, quite often nations find it difficult to grapple with the idea of allowing complete freedom of speech to individuals due to a variety of inter-



nal socio—political and economic dynamics. Nonetheless, an ideal society in the 21st century must strive hard to achieve this long cherished dream. As Pakistan is being perceived as a prospective member of the club of Next-11 economies of the world, there is a need to set forward such an empowering environment in the country which can bring Pakistan at par with other thriving nations of the world.

The world these days is all about perception and image as it can often beat logic and rationality. In this age of information and media, a state's political, economic and social claims flow freely across the world – which is constantly in the grip of Media War. Pakistan, despite being a democratic and constitution - driven country suffers from lack of credible perception within the international community. People from other parts of the world think of Pakistan as a place full of bearded men brandishing their swords. In spite of the fact, that Pakistan has paid an enormous price for being the frontline state in the war on terror both in terms of men and material, the international media focuses on negative aspects of Pakistan and has a preconceived mindset that negative stories on Pakistan sell better.

Following from this, it is often argued that there is much more going on in Pakistan, a lot of which is positive, and that a single-minded focus on what is bad is both disingenuous and symptomatic of a broader conspiracy to malign and undermine the country at the behest of hostile, largely foreign interests.

This is an established reality that Pakistan, with a population of almost 200 million people, harbours diversity and contradictions that defy generalization. Indeed, it is difficult to find anything more unintentionally entertaining

than breathless, wide-eyed accounts of how people in Pakistan have parties, attend cultural events, host fashion shows, and manage to go about their lives without bombing someone or being bombed themselves – just like the vast majority of people around the world.

In the words of Richard O Neill, and I quote, “The beauty of a perception management effort is that it is a "soft" tool. "It needs not cost large sums of scarce fiscal resources to be effective. And, even if it is unsuccessful, it is likely to go undetected leaving a clean image in international relations.” unquote..

A country without a perception building and management strategy risks irrelevance in this fast-paced, globalizing world. The present government is focusing on a soft policy approach that complements and counters its standards for those who will listen. Pakistan is engaged in what is perhaps the most defining war in its history. The national consensus against violent extremism that we have today has not been easy to achieve. There is every reason to be mindful of the sensitivities of this consensus, which require more transparency in our national security priorities and policy. We are confronted with a war of ideas – between tolerance and extremism, democracy and anarchy.

We believe that after the success of Operation Zarb-e- Azab and retreat of terrorists, we need a new national narrative with the help of which we could bring changes in our society by promoting virtues of patience, harmony and love so that Pakistan's image deficit could be bridged. In order to be persuasive we must be plausible; to be plausible we must be credible and this is evident through our measures and in this context the mention of National Action Plan is imperative which is

devised to regularize religious seminaries, choke the funding of terrorists, curb hate speech and glorification of terrorists in the country and illustrates the fact that Pakistan is a peace-loving and peace-promoting country that wants a peaceful coexistence and cordial relations with all the neighboring states focused on cooperation and mutual respect rather than conflict.

As a democratically elected government, it is our utmost responsibility to have an information policy which ensures such public laws that regulate the creation, use, access, communication and dissemination of information. In this connection, Pakistan Media Regulatory Authority is trying to improve the standards of information, education and entertainment; to enlarge the choice available to the people of Pakistan in the media; to facilitate the devolution of responsibility and power to the grass roots by improving the access of the people to mass media; and to ensure accountability, transparency and good governance by optimization in the free flow of information. At the same time, to prevent online harassment, blackmailing, cyberstalking and terrorist activities, the Pakistan Prevention of Electronic Crimes Bill has been initiated.

Our government believes that investing in projecting Pakistan as a peace-loving and culture-loving nation that embraces its artists and musicians, funds literature and art programmes to ensure that it can represent parts of its identity that reflects its diversity, tolerance, innovation, multi-ethnicity and

beauty. Pakistan of today represents diversity, colorful culture, literature and heritage. Building a national narrative which could lead the youth to take pride in Pakistan's national character and its diversified culture and traditions is all the more important. In this regard, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has launched a 'National Campaign' to address the matters of perception management and has included it in the syllabus of the Information Services Academy of Pakistan.

I would like to thank the NDU for inviting me at such a well-organized forum. We need to carry forward the deliberations and discussions and analysis of this day-long international seminar. I was going through the topics and agenda items which are very comprehensive and must be reduced to writing may be in a report form and should be carried forward for the policy makers and practitioners. I am confident that today's seminar has provided us some policy prescriptions which would help us in generating fresh ideas and indigenous solutions for a better perception management policy of Pakistan. I would like to invite the NDU to join hands with the government's campaign of positive image building of Pakistan by telling the world what Pakistan is all about, by celebrating the success stories of its armed forces' sacrifices, courage and resilience in the global war against terror. I am convinced that that by joining hands with its foreign friends, Pakistan would be successful in harnessing a positive perception in the world.

Vote of Thanks by President NDU



We have just finished with a thorough and fruitful academic discussion that enabled us to deliberate on some of the current International trends on perception management and the challenges faced by Pakistan and how Pakistan requires to keep up with the technological advancements. It was a brief session which generated a great debate on perception management. A thought provoking contemplation was done on the international trends in perception building and the local challenges faced in Pakistan.

This seminar covered some of the most important aspects of understanding the current international trends in perception building and the policy challenges of perception building faced by Pakistan and how the role of Artificial Intelligence can have an impact on national security. I was really pleased to note that the speakers with their wide ranged experiences delivered talks that enabled the participants to brainstorm on the key issues that came underway of the goal of perception building in the 21st century in Pakistan. I would like to congratulate the speakers and participants in successfully undergoing the intellectual discourse which proved to be an intense intellectually reward-

ing exercise. As the society is becoming intractable, it becomes difficult to exist in isolation. Narratives are built using the current communication technologies. The 21st century is marked by technological advancements; states are managing the perceptions using the tools presented to them in the current era. The role of big data and machine learning can help to attain greater results in perception management. In this regard, Pakistan is on its way to manage the narrative through media management but lessons from other countries need to be incorporated as the world is becoming integrated. In this light, this seminar was designed to rather focus on the emerging trends and the tools used by international communities in managing perceptions and how Pakistan can learn from their experience.

I strongly believe that this platform has provided us an opportunity to share our thoughts and experiences that may serve as a vital input for any policy-relevant practicable solution to shaping narratives.

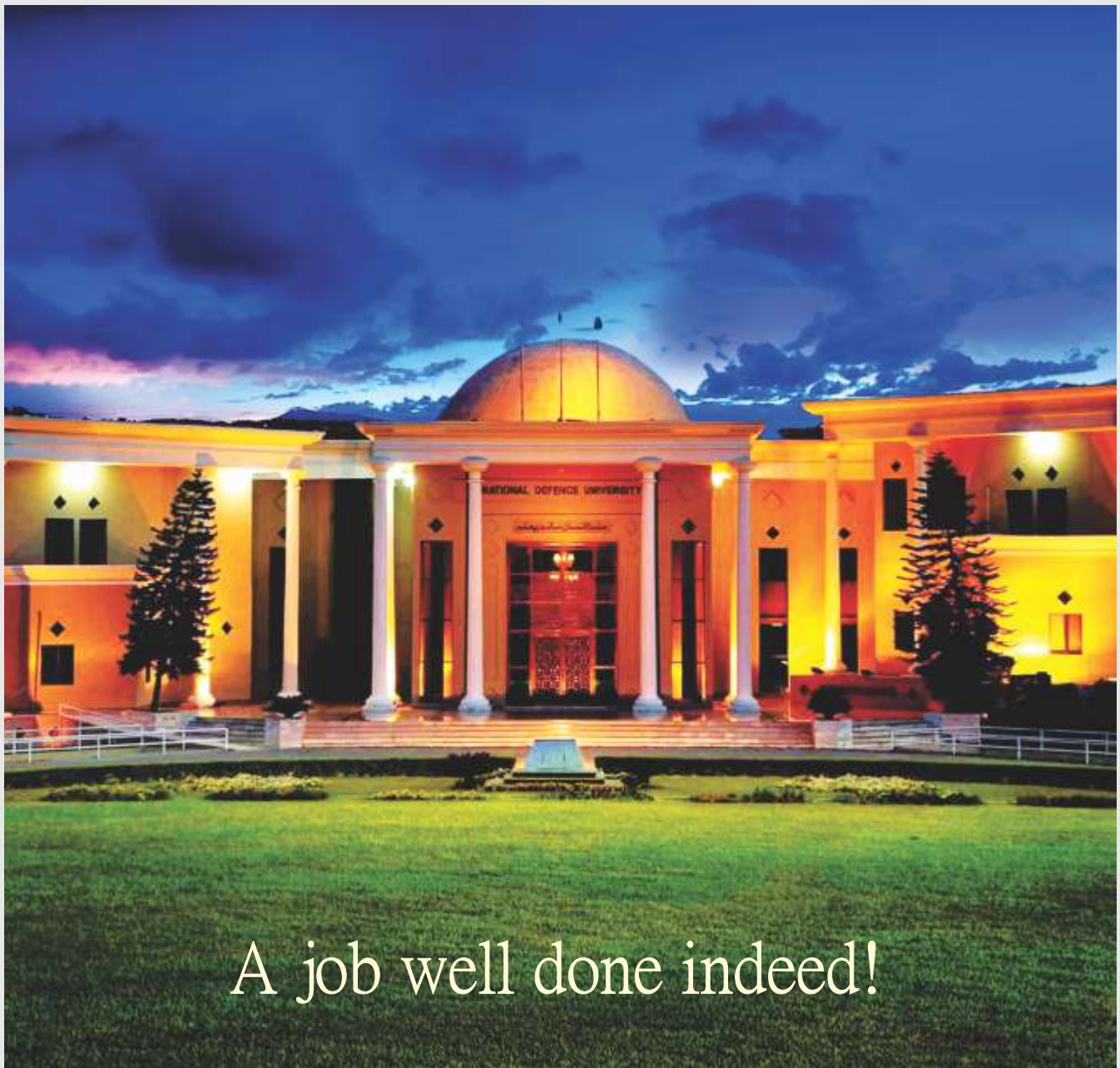
Not only this, throughout the course of discussions, we have also learnt that work is already being done on perception management in Pakistan, but the challenges highlighted can be overcome by adopting the recent measures taken at the international level.

I am deeply encouraged to note the convergence in our opinions. It needs no further emphasis to say that perception building in the 21st century is not an easy task and requires immense attention on the modern technologies. Thus, once again, I would like to thank the distinguished panelists and other guests who joined us today. I am sure that the recommendations made in this seminar will provide the

effective techniques that can be used to manage perception.

In the end, my special thanks to the Honorable Chief Guest Ms. Marriyum Aurangzeb, the Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, for gracing the occasion. I am also thankful to all the excellences and dignitaries both from home and abroad for having travelled especially to attend this event and sharing their invaluable thoughts with us.

The culmination of this international seminar indeed marked the beginning of a journey of knowledge – sharing and learning from each other's skills, knowledge and experience. This successful exercise is the pinnacle of an enriching experience which crystallized new ideas and flagged the importance of innovative approaches on perception management.



Pictures Gallery



















NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY



“The only Thing that will Redeem Mankind is
COOPERATION”
Bertrand Russell



Our Perception of Reality is
Malleable. Everything is Always shifting.

We may not have the Power
to Change an Event, But We do have
the Power to Change our Perspective

Stephane Killen

National Defence University,
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