



Dialogue Group on Civil-Military Relations

***Recommendations for
Leadership of Major
Political Parties of Pakistan on
Improving Civil-Military
Relations in Pakistan***

1. Create Think-Tanks inside the Political Parties

- i. Political parties must create dedicated think tanks inside the parties, devoted, among other policy issues, on civil-military relations in Pakistan, Defence and National Security
- ii. Think tanks must be staffed by professionals
- iii. A mechanism of converting proposals into policy must be clearly articulated and put in place in parties

2. Designate a Focal Person on Defence/National Security

- i. In keeping with the importance of the issues of civil-military relations and national security, parties must designate a Focal Person each on Defence/National Security
- ii. The Focal Person, notified publicly to the public and media, can be tasked with formulating policies on National Security issues as well as serve as party's spokesperson on issues relating to Defence/National Security and Civil-Military Relations

3. Develop a National Security Strategy

- i. Each Political Party must develop a comprehensive **National Security Policy of Pakistan** from which *National Security Strategy* could be derived.
- ii. Other than Defence, food security, energy security and other important issues of National security should be part of National Security Strategy.
- iii. Key contours of the strategy must be presented to the public ahead of next General Election through Election Manifestoes of political parties

4. Prepare an Election Manifesto that Effectively Addresses Civil-Military Relations

The proposed Manifesto may include the following key components:

a. Strengthening Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC)

- i. Since National Security does not just include defence, the Defence Committee of the Cabinet be re-named as **Cabinet Committee on National Security and Defence**.
- ii. The scope of the renamed Cabinet Committee be enlarged to include strategic areas such as *human security, food and energy security*, etc. in addition to national defence.
- iii. A periodicity must be set for the meetings of the Committee. Minimum essential periodicity should be six times in a year. Similar bodies in other countries meet on a weekly basis under meetings chaired by the Prime Ministers
- iv. The Cabinet Committee must have an independent and dedicated secretariat under the office of the Prime Minister of Pakistan as pledged in the Charter of Democracy
- v. Appointment of a full-time civilian National Security Advisor by the Prime Minister of Pakistan could be useful to coordinate National Security-related functions in the Prime Minister's Secretariat and establish its coordination with other security agencies within the government. The secretariat of the

- Cabinet committee must be placed under the civilian National Security Advisor
- vi. A dedicated think tank comprising eminent national security experts from the field of defence, economic security, human security, energy security, food security, etc. must be set-up to support the work of the Committee. A multi-tier approach may also be useful to include private sector in the consultative process.
 - vii. Apart from an Eminent Persons Council there should be another Support Council coordinated by the National Security Advisor comprising the Services Chiefs, the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, the Cabinet Secretary, the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission and the Finance Secretary. The Eminent Persons Councils should also be coordinated by the National Security Advisor to ensure that the two Councils work in tandem with each other.
 - viii. The proposed secretariat of the Cabinet Committee on National Security would also set up a coordination and oversight mechanism for the intelligence agencies in the country.
 - ix. As is the practice with cabinet committees, apart from cabinet ministers of Finance, Defence, Foreign Affairs and Interior, etc. as members of the DCC, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Services Chiefs and heads of civil and military intelligence should only attend the meetings of the DCC upon invitation.
 - x. The Cabinet Committee must set a periodicity to conduct a ***Defence and Security Review of Pakistan*** based on a National Security Strategy of Pakistan.

b. Strengthening Ministry of Defence

- i. Democratic control on Defence can only be established through an effective Civilian Ministry of Defence (MoD). The Ministry needs to be the sole authority in all matters of policy and finance and budget of defence
- ii. An empowered defence minister should head the MoD who is not by-passed by direct meetings and links between the Head of State and the Head of Government, on the one hand, and the Service Chiefs on the other
- iii. MoD should be manned, in the main, by civilian bureaucrats except where the nature or duties of the post mandate that it should be filled by a serving officer of the armed forces
- iv. Ministry of Defence, Joint Headquarters and Cabinet Committee on Defence should develop close coordination in terms of policy input and strategic thinking
- v. Defence Council should be strengthened by regular meetings (at least once a quarter) of the Defence Council chaired by the Defence Minister to co-ordinate the defence, foreign and finance policies of Pakistan, and to approve major works including induction of new weapon systems proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee.
- vi. A spokesperson of the Ministry of Defence should speak on behalf of the ministry on all defence and security affairs including those relating to the Armed Forces of Pakistan
- vii. MoD must review and oversee industrial, business & commercial interests of the Armed Forces and bring these in line with the rules and practices in other spheres of Government
- viii. MoD must prepare proposals to strengthen the higher defence organisation
- ix. All Defence Agreement/MOUs should be presented to the Parliament

c. Parliamentary Oversight on Defence

- i. Political Parties should nominate serious subject-specialists, among MPs, to be part of Parliamentary Committees dealing with Defence and National Security

- ii. As a part of a system where all Committees should review their respective budgets, Defence Committees should be authorised by the Parliament to review Defence Budget in detail and present their respective reports on Defence Budget to the Parliament annually. It is worth mentioning that the Indian Parliamentary Committee on Defence, which includes members from Rajya Sabha as well as Lok Sabha, annually reviews the Demand for Grants by Defence Ministry, alongside other departments, and tables its reports to the Parliament before the passage of the budget.
- iii. Defence Committees should be staffed by research staff with expertise in defence and security affairs
- iv. Regular reports of committees must be presented to the Parliament to uphold needs of transparency and public accountability on defence affairs.
- v. Defence Committees must conduct a legal overview of Army, Navy and Air Force Acts and provide recommendations to the Government and Parliament for revision, where needed
- vi. Defence Committees must review detention laws and Armed Forces Special Powers Act and provide recommendations to the Government and Parliament for revision, where needed

d. Parliamentary Oversight on Intelligence

- i. The system of governance of intelligence agencies should be transparent
- ii. A Parliamentary Committee to oversee the affairs of intelligence must be established. Instead of duplicating the efforts in both Houses of the Parliament, this can be a Joint Committee of the House with senior MPs as its members.
- iii. Like other Committees of the Parliament, the Intelligence Oversight Committee must be empowered to oversee policy, administration, and expenditure of the intelligence agencies of Pakistan.¹
- iv. The example of UK may be of special relevance to Pakistan where a Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) was established by the Intelligence Services Act 1994 to *examine the policy, administration and expenditure* of the Security Service, Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC); the Assessments Staff; and the Intelligence, Security and Resilience Group, the Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) and the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The Prime Minister appoints the ISC Members after considering nominations from Parliament and consulting with the Leader of the Opposition. The Committee reports directly to the Prime Minister, and through him to Parliament, by the publication of the Committee's reports. Unlike Parliamentarians who are part of other committees of the Parliament, ISC members are subject to Section 1(1)(b) of the Official Secrets Act 1989 and have access to highly classified material in carrying out their duties.

¹ National Assembly Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business define powers of the Standing Committees. Clause 201 (4) of the Rules states that: "A Committee may examine the expenditures, administration, delegated legislation, public petitions and policies of the Ministry concerned and its associated public bodies and may forward its report of findings and recommendations to the Ministry and the Ministry shall submit its reply to the Committee."