

5th **Pakistan Dialogues with the World**
IWLS

5th International Workshop For Leadership & Stability

17-22 Feb 2025

Post Workshop Report





WORKSHOP SPONSOR

Brigadier Qasim Kayani

Director, Keystone Capstone and Pinnacle Programmes Branch

REPORT COMPILED BY

Keystone Capstone and Pinnacle Programmes Branch

EDITED BY

Colonel Tanweer Ahmed & Research Team

Keystone Capstone and Pinnacle Programmes Branch

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5th International Workshop for Leadership & Stability (IWLS)

The 5th International Workshop for Leadership and Stability (IWLS) was organized by ISSRA, NDU from 17 February - 22 February 2025. This workshop provided a credible platform where open, candid and informed discussions took place for mutual sharing of ideas and perspectives on subjects related to global, regional and national security. The participants of the workshop comprised individuals from all walks of life including Business Executives, Diplomats, Government Officials, Academia, representatives from international community, media etc. This year workshop involved 48 international participants who flew in especially to attend this workshop. Moreover, 11 international participants joined us from various Embassies and the High Commissions located in Islamabad. In addition, 32 local participants from across Pakistan. A total of 90 participants representing 46 friendly countries attended the workshop.

The workshop covered a wide range of subjects under the overall theme of “Pakistan Dialogues with the World”. Effort was made to bring together the best possible subject matter experts from Pakistan and abroad to discuss subjects ranging from evolving global geo-strategic environment to the contemporary trends and their impact on global, regional and national security. ISSRA, NDU conducts this workshop on annual basis and next workshop will be organized in February / March 2026 (tentatively).





NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
Established by the Government of Pakistan
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Phone: 37330000



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Inaugural Session

17 February, 2025





Spotlight Session

17 February, 2025



Workshop For Stability

17-22 Feb

ISSRA
INSTITUTE FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES, RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

5th
IWLS

Pakistan
Dialogues
with the
World

International Workshop For
Partnership & Stability



DAY 1

17 February, 2025
Session I

Contours of Evolving Global Order



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani



SPEAKER - I
Mr Victor Gao



SPEAKER - II
Ambassador Robin Raphael



SPEAKER - III
Ambassador Zamir Akram



MODERATOR
Ms Ayesha Malik

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The global order has been transforming in the 21st century, with China emerging as a formidable power that is challenging the long-standing dominance of the West.
- The world is becoming increasingly multipolar, moving toward a new Cold War dynamic. Competing powers are shaping global politics in unpredictable ways.
- US must balance competition, collaboration, and confrontation with China, a dynamic that will define global economic and security policies.
- China's advancements in AI, exemplified by innovations like Deep Seek, are rapidly disrupting global markets, positioning it as a leader in technological innovation and digital infrastructure.
- Institutions such as NATO, UN, and ICC have lost credibility, as their effectiveness in addressing modern global challenges is increasingly questioned.
- Unlike traditional diplomacy, which is characterized by gradual negotiations, Trump's approach is disruptive, leveraging economic and political pressure as primary tools.
- The trajectory of Trump's political influence could reshape US by 2029, though it remains uncertain whether this shift will result in renewed strength or deeper divisions.
- Internal divisions fragment Europe's strategic unity, making collective decision-making increasingly difficult. Europe must prioritize stability and economic development rather than entangling itself in external geopolitical conflicts that could weaken its global influence.
- While being an enemy of US is dangerous, history reveals that being its ally can be even riskier, as alliances are often subject to shifting geopolitical priorities.
- Under international law, Israel has no legal ownership or sovereignty over Gaza, reaffirming that the occupied territories remain a central issue in global diplomacy.
- US President's claim that Gaza could be transferred to US administration is legally flawed, underscoring ongoing misconceptions about sovereignty and international law.
- US-India strategic partnership has significantly enhanced India's military and security capabilities, intensifying regional competition, particularly with Pakistan.
- US is leveraging India to counterbalance China, creating a complex web of strategic rivalries that influence Pakistan's foreign policy.
- While theoretically, Pakistan could maintain balanced relations with US and China, this remains a formidable challenge due to geopolitical pressures from both sides.
- US perceives Pakistan primarily through the lenses of its relationships with India, China, and Afghanistan, restricting Pakistan's ability to shape its independent narrative in Washington.

DAY 1

17 February, 2025
Session II

Contemporary Global Trends



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Ambassador Masood Khan



SPEAKER - I
Maj Gen Inam-ul-Haq (Retd)



SPEAKER - II
Ms Linda Hyokki



SPEAKER - III
Ms Kahmala Kakakhel



SPEAKER - IV
Mr Asad Rahim



MODERATOR
Ms Naila Shuja

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Energy (25%), transportation (14%), food production (24%), and industries (21%) are the key contributors to greenhouse gas emissions. A shift away from fossil fuels toward solar and hydropower is essential.
- Given Pakistan's climate vulnerabilities and the growing challenges at the intersection of climate and trade, the private sector has prioritized sustainability. The agriculture sector, in particular, is highly sensitive to changing climate patterns, which are contributing to declining revenues.
- There is growing concern over the decline of the rules-based international order and human rights amid the rise of right-wing ideologies.
- The theory of economic reintegration suggests a slight reduction in conflicts, however, a more pragmatic approach emphasizes moderation over coercive measures.
- Since October 7, Europe has witnessed an unprecedented rise in hate crimes targeting both Jewish and Muslim communities.
- Some claims suggest that Muslim immigrants may bring anti-Semitic sentiments with them, a narrative that has been widely exploited since October 7.
- Germany's citizenship test serves as a governance tool that portrays Muslim immigrants as both an immediate and potential threat, subjecting them to heightened scrutiny.
- In Germany, three distinct forms of antisemitism have been observed, with incidents ranging from traditional prejudices to modern manifestations linked to geopolitical issues: Classical Antisemitism is often manifesting in discriminatory beliefs and actions; Secondary Antisemitism usually suggesting that discussions about the Holocaust are exaggerated or exploited for personal gain.
- Criticism of Israel crosses into antisemitism when it employs harmful stereotypes, denies Israel's right to exist, or holds all Jews collectively responsible for Israel's actions.
- Terrorism is driven by clashing narratives: religious versus secular, Islamist versus non-Muslim, and the West versus Islamist movements, along with internal ideological debates.
- Modern terrorism increasingly involves lone-wolf actors, making violent incidents more unpredictable.
- The APS attack marked a turning point, prompting Pakistan to implement integrated kinetic and non-kinetic counterterrorism measures.

DAY 2

18 February, 2025
Session I

Dynamics of Post Truth Era



SPEAKERS



SPEAKER - I
Ms Nadide Benan Kepsutlu



SPEAKER - II
Mr Asad Baig



SPEAKER - III
Ms Mahreen Aziz Khan



MODERATOR
Ms Zunaira Azhar

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming integral to daily life, requiring societies to adapt and learn how to coexist.
- Information is both a global currency and a shared resource, making its protection and accessibility vital for fostering a well-informed society.
- Protecting journalists is crucial to safeguarding freedom of speech and access to information, as independent reporting is under constant threat.
- Social media is an extension of traditional media, significantly influencing how information is consumed and disseminated.
- While social media fosters political activism, state policies often regulate its reach, shaping narratives in alignment with government interests.
- Influential leaders bypass censorship by communicating directly with the public through alternative platforms like podcasts. For instance, Donald Trump used podcasts to reach audiences without media filtration.
- Content creation has emerged as a powerful tool on social media, primarily driven by monetization opportunities. However, traditional journalism is losing financial incentives as monetization remains selectively controlled.
- Mainstream media operates with multiple biases, including Western bias, corporate influence, and advertisement-driven agendas.
- Islam and Muslim communities are frequently misrepresented in the media through labeling, stereotyping, and biased narratives.
- Social media has transformed into a global platform where nothing remains local, as language translation tools allow content to spread across borders instantaneously.
- Pakistan must develop a consistent national narrative to strengthen its international image and effectively counter misinformation.
- Pakistan needs a unified vision to generate hope and promote a positive image domestically and internationally.
- Projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Pakistan-China relations require better media promotion. Leveraging local influencers and producing Urdu-language content with compelling visual storytelling can enhance engagement with Pakistani audiences.

DAY 2

18 February, 2025
Session II

Regional Cooperation and Stability



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Ambassador Abdul Basit



SPEAKER - I
Ambassador Asif Durrani



SPEAKER - II
Ms Erfa Iqbal



SPEAKER - III
Mr Jamal Aziz



SPEAKER - IV
Dr Maria Sultan



MODERATOR
Ms Sumera Khan

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan has consistently sought to maintain cordial relations with its immediate neighbors despite fluctuations caused by extraterritorial dynamics and foreign interventions.
- The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan has significantly contributed to rising unemployment, poverty (97%), and crime in Afghanistan.
- Pakistan's policymakers must remain vigilant, as a deteriorating situation in Afghanistan could make Pakistan the primary destination for Afghan displacement.
- To improve regional stability, avenues for economic cooperation and joint ventures should be encouraged between Pakistan and neighboring countries.
- The dynamics of Pakistan-China relations have evolved into a strategic partnership due to shared interests.
- However, CPEC's progress has not been as significant as anticipated due to several challenges on Pakistan's end; including weak policy implementation, a stagnant pace of industrialization, all of which are slowing down project execution.
- Post-9/11 counterterrorism frameworks require reassessment, particularly in light of countries like India violating international human rights laws on a large scale. While Pakistan has made efforts to comply with global regulations, it remains concerned about India's adherence to such rules, particularly regarding Kashmir.
- India portrays Kashmir as a bilateral territorial dispute and accuses Pakistan of fostering trouble in the region. In contrast, Pakistan highlights historical injustices and human rights violations committed by Indian occupying forces, arguing that the conflict remains an international dispute under UNSC resolutions.
- The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is of immense significance due to its strategic oil reserves and critical trade routes. One of the world's largest untapped oil reserves is widely believed to be in the IOR. Therefore, the region must be analyzed through a geostrategic lens, considering power competition over resources.
- India's growing naval and strategic deterrence capabilities, bolstered by alliances such as QUAD, pose a challenge for Pakistan, necessitating the development of effective response mechanisms.
- Pakistan should pursue multilateral cooperation to maximize economic benefits from the \$4 trillion in international trade flowing through the IOR.
- Pakistan must remain vigilant regarding developments in the IOR and respond accordingly. While Pakistan is mindful of its regional obligations, it expects major global powers to refrain from actions that threaten regional peace and stability.

DAY 3

19 February, 2025
Session I

Trade, Investment and Entrepreneurship in Pakistan



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Arif Habib



SPEAKER - I
Syed Aftab Haider



SPEAKER - II
Dr Zeelaf Munir



SPEAKER - III
Ms Ambreen Iftikhar



MODERATOR
Ms Musarat Jabeen

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The global trade volume, currently hovering around \$30.8 trillion, necessitates a robust digitization process. In response, the Government of Pakistan has undertaken several initiatives to digitize and integrate the trading system to enhance the ease of doing business in the country.
- The biggest challenge to a fully digitized system is the lack of accessible infrastructure and widespread digital illiteracy across various sectors.
- Pakistan requires an economic renaissance, which can be achieved by fostering domestic entrepreneurship and strengthening its global economic stature.
- Despite multiple government efforts to boost trade, the trade deficit widens. This is primarily due to Pakistan's reliance on "raw trade," which involves exporting unprocessed commodities such as raw cotton and raw leather instead of value-added products.
- A robust foreign policy is the only viable solution to creating a more enabling trade environment and attracting domestic and foreign investment.
- The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and Board of Investment (BOI) have identified allied industries as a key sector for enhancing trade and creating an attractive investment landscape.
- International political shifts have significantly impacted Pakistan's economy. Rising energy and production expenses have also placed immense pressure on producers, forcing many to the sidelines.
- Rising taxes and stringent regulatory frameworks have discouraged investor interest, necessitating urgent policy measures to restore investor confidence.
- Reducing interest rates and energy costs is crucial for economic revival. These two factors are key to revitalizing Pakistan's trade and investment ecosystem.
- Trade rules must be updated to align with global standards (e.g., GS1) and Pakistan's economic objectives.
- A multi-stage, collaborative approach is essential to fostering awareness, optimizing shared resources, and coordinating reforms, from the initial trade processes through the entire supply chain.
- Addressing economic crises requires financial resources and institutional and policy strengthening. Failure to undertake these reforms risks isolating Pakistan, as similar economic challenges impact other nations; therefore, a comprehensive and cooperative overhaul is urgently needed.

DAY 3

19 February, 2025

Talk by Minister of State for Finance



SPEAKER



SPEAKER
Mr Ali Pervaiz Malik

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan's economy is recovering, and due to the government's ongoing efforts, stability is expected in the coming years.
- The country also focuses on climate-proofing and building a resilient economy to ensure sustainable growth.
- To achieve fiscal consolidation, Pakistan is revising its expenditure structure to enhance government savings and improve financial efficiency.
- Several public sector reforms are underway, including privatization initiatives, petroleum sector reforms, and government downsizing.
- Another government priority is increasing the exports-to-GDP ratio, which depends on enhancing productivity, ensuring power availability, maintaining feasible tariff structures, increasing local investment, and protecting domestic manufacturers.
- Ease of doing business is critical for achieving Pakistan's long-term strategic economic objectives.
- In the current global order, geopolitical flux, shifting alliances, and bilateralism dominate international relations. Pakistan must strengthen its internal economic buffers and adopt adaptive economic policies to mitigate external shocks.
- Pakistan must aggressively secure international financing, which remains crucial for economic stability and growth.
- Improving the people's standard of living is essential, as it will directly impact economic productivity and overall development.
- The textile industry is a vital sector of Pakistan's economy, playing a key role in economic sustainability and development.
- A free exchange policy must be adopted to effectively manage productivity-adjusted cost inflation and maintain competitiveness in global markets.
- The lack of reliable and timely data is a significant challenge in policymaking. Accurate data availability and public release are essential for informed decision-making and strategic planning across all sectors.
- The only way to attract foreign investment is by showcasing successful projects and investment opportunities, instilling confidence among potential investors.

DAY 5

21 February, 2025
Session I

Looking into the Future Technology & Human Society



SPEAKER



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Mr Mushahid Hussain Syed



SPEAKER - I
Lt Gen Amir Riaz (Retd)



SPEAKER - II
Ms Kanwal Cheema



SPEAKER - III
Prof Dr Habib Bukhari



SPEAKER - IV
Mr Zarrar Hasham Khan



MODERATOR
Ms Ayesha Jamil

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Domination is intrinsic to human nature—an instinct deeply embedded in our genetic makeup. As Clausewitz famously stated, "War is a continuation of politics by other means."
- We live in an era of unprecedented global chaos and disruption. War manifests in direct and indirect forms and strategically reshapes existing sociopolitical orders.
- Modern warfare has evolved into a comprehensive phenomenon that permeates all aspects of society. Conflicts today extend beyond the battlefield, influencing social, political, and economic domains.
- Emerging technologies impact all dimensions of modern warfare, transforming how conflicts are initiated, conducted, and resolved in social, political, and economic spheres.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) fundamentally involves knowledge acquisition and processing. Modern AI systems' generative capabilities mark a revolutionary shift in technological advancements.
- The disruptive potential of AI spans all sectors of society, including national security and warfare.
- The intellectual capacity of advanced AI systems is poised to surpass that of humans. From a strategic perspective, achieving dominance in AI capabilities has become imperative for national security.
- Climate change is significantly affecting Pakistan's GDP growth potential and numerous other vulnerable states. A bio-economy offers a viable, comprehensive solution to these interconnected crises.
- A trillion-dollar bio-economy has emerged globally, primarily led by strategic investments from China and the United States.
- Advanced technologies, including synthetic biology, are being deployed to promote sustainable development and maximize economic benefits.
- Pakistan's information technology sector has become a remarkable success story with a significant global impact. The country is now the world's second-largest hub for freelance technology professionals.
- Pakistan has attracted venture capitalists, increasing investments in its thriving technology ecosystem. Major global corporations, including Motorola and BMW, rely on Pakistani engineers for sophisticated software development.
- Pakistan rapidly evolves into a digital corridor connecting China, Central Asia, and global markets.
- The National Digital Act of Pakistan has been successfully enacted, providing a legal framework for digital transformation.
- A comprehensive National Digital Master Plan outlines the strategic roadmap for Pakistan's technological advancement.

DAY 5

21 February, 2025
Session II

Art, Culture & Heritage of Pakistan



SPEAKERS



Distinguished Visiting Fellow
Ms Feryal Gohar



SPEAKER - I
Mr Shuja Haider



SPEAKER - II
Mr Kamran Lashari



SPEAKER - III
Mr Shahid Nadeem



MODERATOR
Ms Aniqat Nisar

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Pakistan lies at crossroads of ancient civilizations and diverse cultures. Often regarded as the cradle of civilizations, the country's rich heritage spans from Indus Valley sites like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro to its vibrant contemporary art scene.
- Pakistani artists and musicians have demonstrated remarkable resilience despite limited resources and insufficient institutional support. They continue producing outstanding work in music, theater, and other creative fields and thrive even without extensive formal platforms.
- Performing arts, including theater and television, are powerful tools for addressing sensitive or taboo topics. From family planning to blasphemy, such issues are presented in ways that spark rational, constructive debate rather than controversy.
- Pakistan's cultural landscape is shaped by multiple narratives sometimes complementary, often conflicting. Within this mix, artists strive to articulate a vision of the “real Pakistan”, bridging societal divides and highlighting shared values.
- Preserving historical sites has become a priority for provincial governments, particularly in Punjab. Restoration efforts have extended to churches, temples, and Sikh gurdwaras, reflecting a commitment to cultural inclusivity.
- Plans aim to expand these restoration projects, focusing on physical restoration and reconnecting heritage sites with local communities to sustain cultural values and identity.
- Cultural festivals like Lahore's Basant (a kite-flying festival) demonstrate how vibrant traditions can boost local businesses and tourism revenue.
- Pakistan's Buddhist heritage, particularly prominent in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, remains underrecognized. While Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has made significant progress in showcasing Gandara era sites and artifacts, Punjab is increasingly prioritizing similar efforts to preserve and highlight the shared legacy of ancient civilizations.
- Pakistan's image is one of resilience, creativity, and shared history—qualities often overshadowed by conflict-driven media narratives and global misconceptions. This perspective underscores the idea that artistic and cultural endeavours revitalize national identity and forge connections across social and geographical boundaries.
- Pakistan can reclaim and project an authentic, unified national image to the world by investing in heritage preservation, strengthening performing arts, and fostering cultural exchanges.

VISIT - FAISAL MOSQUE



VISIT - MOFA



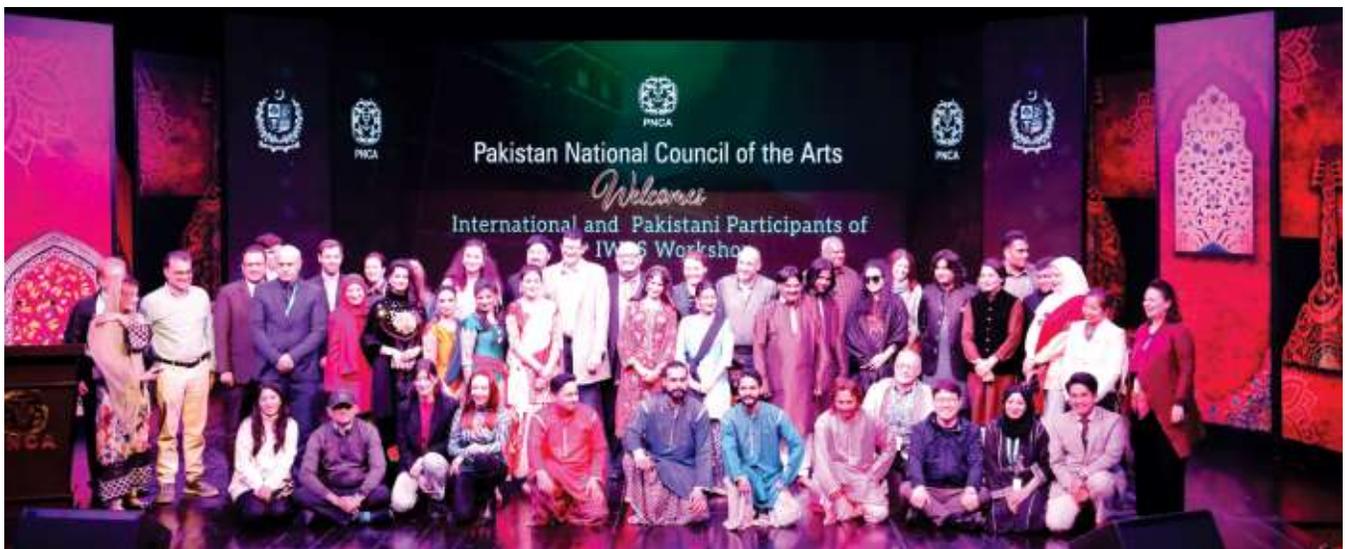
VISIT - LOK VIRSA



VISIT - PAKISTAN MONUMENT



VISIT - PNCA



VISIT - NASTP



VISIT - ABBOTTABAD



VISIT - ABBOTTABAD



VISIT - PRESIDENT SECRETARIAT



BREAKOUT SESSION



Certificate Award Ceremony





















LIGHTER MOMENTS











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IWLS

