

Foreign Policy Think Tanks: Challenging or Building Consensus on
India's Pakistan Policy?

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Abstract

Foreign policy think tanks are now an accepted part of policy making in most democratic societies, yet literature on think tanks is largely limited to American and European case studies. It fails to account for the development of these institutions in other political contexts and while globally think tanks are gaining recognition as policy actors, there is a lack of scholarship on foreign policy think tanks in India. The limited literature on Indian think tanks so far, is ambiguous and does not adequately examine their role in the formulation of India's foreign policy. It does not take into consideration India's unique political context and its various institutional structures, that have had an impact on the growth and position of think tanks within the policy landscape. This thesis seeks to problematise the assumptions about foreign policy think tanks in India through a detailed examination of their role within policy processes. It critically examines the policy discourse of Indian think tanks and their specific role in promoting and challenging policy narratives set by the state. The focus of analysis, in particular, is think tank engagement with one of India's most volatile foreign policy issues - its relationship with Pakistan and the conflict over the disputed territory of Kashmir. It is argued that the Composite Dialogue process which was initiated in 2004 provided avenues for policy change in India's relations with Pakistan and encouraged active civil society engagement, giving think tanks the opportunity to influence policy making.

Developing a novel framework that combines Discursive Institutionalism and Gramscian analysis, the thesis has considered think tanks' interactive processes – their coordinative and communicative discourse on Pakistan – and a critical analysis of their role and relative position within policy structures in India. The thesis argues that the institutionalisation and patronage to government think tanks such as Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses and Centre for Air Power studies has enabled the Indian government to build consensus on policy directions and perpetuate security centred government thinking on Pakistan. The infusion of foreign funding and relative independence from the government has also enabled the development of non-governmental think tanks. While some of these like the Observer Research Foundation, Centre for Policy Research and Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies are able to articulate ideas that challenge government positions, support from the government is crucial and is directly linked with their ability to retain relevance as non-state policy actors. While dominant literature on India's foreign policy has criticised think tanks for their lack of policy relevant formulations, the evidence in this thesis will show that policy recommendations from think tanks are extensive, particularly on key issues of the India-Pakistan relationship. They have

been active participants in the policy process, particularly during the Composite Dialogue. However, the predominant influence of the Indian state on policy making and the significant structural and material constraints on think tanks have collectively curtailed their influence – presenting significant challenges to their evolving role in foreign policy.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

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This thesis began with a hope for peace between India and Pakistan, I hope the knowledge I have gained will help me further in this journey.

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List of Abbreviations

AFSPA	Armed Forces Special Powers Act
AGPL	Actual Ground Position Line
AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
APAO	Alternative Policy Advisory Organisations
APHC	All Parties Hurriyat Conference
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
CAPS	Centre for Air Power Studies
CBM	Confidence Building Measures
CD	Composite Dialogue
CDR	Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
CLAWS	Centre for Land Warfare Studies
COSATT	Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks
CPR	Centre for Policy Research
CRPF	Central Reserve Police Force
CSA	Centre for Security Analysis
CT	Conflict Transformation
DGMO	Director General of Military Operations
DI	Discursive Institutionalism
DND	Draft Nuclear Doctrine
DPG	Delhi Policy Group
DRDO	Defence Research and Development Organisation
ECCP	Economic Cross Cultural Programme
FCRA	Foreign Contribution Regulation Act
FNS	Friedrich Naumann Stiftung
GOI	Government of India
HM	Hizbul Mujahideen

IAF	Indian Air Force
IBSA	India Brazil South Africa
ICRIER	Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations
ICSSR	Indian Council for Social Science Research
ICWA	Indian Council of World Affairs
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IDSA	Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses
IF	India Foundation
IFS	Indian Foreign Service
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IPCS	Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies
IPRI	Islamabad Peace Research Institute
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
IWT	Indus Water Treaty
JATM	Joint Anti-Terror Mechanism
JEM	Jaish-e-Mohammed
JNU	Jawaharlal Nehru University
JUD	Jamaat-ud-Dawa
KRC	Kargil Review Committee
LET	Lashkar-e-Taiba
LoC	Line of Control
LSR	Lady Shri Ram
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MFN	Most Favoured Nation
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMF	National Maritime Foundation
NRRM	Nuclear Risk Reduction Measures
NSA	National Security Advisor

NSAB	National Security Advisory Board
NSC	National Security Council
NSCS	National Security Council Secretariat
NTI	Nuclear Threat Initiative
NTS	Non Traditional Security
ORF	Observer Research Foundation
PAI	Pakistan-Afghanistan-India
PAK	Pakistan Administered Kashmir
PIPPFD	Pakistan India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
POK	Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing
RCSS	Regional Centre for Strategic Studies
RIS	Research and Information System for Developing Countries
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
TNW	Tactical Nuclear Weapons
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
USI	United Service Institution of India
VIF	Vivekananda International Foundation
WHAM	Winning Hearts and Minds
WISCOMP	Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace