

Concept Note of the National Seminar on **THE SILVER LINING - BEYOND PREVALENT PERCEPTIONS**

Background:

The Centre for Peace, Security and Developmental Studies (CPSD) has conceived three themes for the year 2018. These are the **Silver Lining: Beyond Prevalent Perceptions, Learning from the Learned** and **Living the Age**. The Silver Lining series initiated in November 2017 has already concluded two of its three sessions in Karachi. The final consolidation of the thought process through a national seminar is set to take place on 30th March.

The Silver Lining theme revolves around identifying and utilizing available opportunities to benefit the economically impoverished and adversely impacted regions of Pakistan. Through optimum utilization of opportunities like CPEC, we can enact plans to initiate and sustain socioeconomic revival.

In the post-cold war era, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11, the international relations and peace and conflict spectrum diametrically transitioned towards a paradigmatic shift in the nature of statecraft. This has translated into serious implications for the Middle East and South Asia, and especially Pakistan.

Pakistan has been subjected to prolonged proxy applications which compounded its challenges in the international relations and domestic socio-economic scene. The Pakistani nation has endured death and destruction as multifaceted forces of terrorism, extremism and violence confronted each other to ravage the psycho-social and economic fabric of society. As a consequence, Pakistan suffered adversely in terms of human fatalities, development and placement, economic capital, infrastructure, industrial health and social development. The concentrated terrorism endured post 9/11 has unleashed a significant economic slowdown, with capital flight and a phenomenal increase in social polarization in society on ethnic, religious and sectarian lines.

Sindh, KPK, Balochistan and particularly the city of Karachi has been negatively impacted by these challenging circumstances. This volatile situation magnified by rampant political cult violence, a wave of extortion, gang wars, human catastrophe and deindustrialization has induced a state of economic regression.

However, in spite of the devastation, the conditions began to change in the year 2013. An environment of relative stability and security has prevailed. A plethora of opportunities that hold great potential for economic progress such as CPEC/OBOR, TAPI, IPI, GSP plus, QATT, Trilateral Connectivity Networks, Pakistan-Uzbekistan Transit Trade Agreement, PITCC, APIBM, PIN, Indus River Trade Corridor, CASA 1000, Pak-USA Knowledge Corridor, Gharo-Keti Bandar Wind Corridor and others have emerged. Utilizing these opportunities can unleash immense benefits for the nation.

On the diplomatic front, Pakistan too has achieved some successes. It was inducted in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as well as, the Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process and the Quadrilateral Coordination Group. Moreover, there has been a renewed engagement with Cold War adversary Russia on multiple fronts.

Through this seminar, CPSD aims at boosting hope and optimism, and reenergizing the efforts of Pakistani entrepreneurship to reap the benefits of emerging geostrategic alliances and burgeoning economic opportunities.