

**CITIZENS REPORT**

# Performance of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet

March 2012 - March 2013

**CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS | MARCH 2013**

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PILDAT is an independent, non-partisan and not-for-profit indigenous research and training institution with the mission to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions in Pakistan.

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# CONTENTS

*Preface*

*Executive Summary*

Introduction	09
Structure of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet	09
Existing Secretariat of the DCC	09
Meetings of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet: March 2012-March 2013	11
- DCC Meeting: April 17, 2012	11
- DCC Meeting: May 15, 2012	11
- DCC Meeting: July 03, 2012	12
- Cabinet Approved DCC Decision	12
The Defence Committee of the Cabinet under PPP Government	15
Year wise Analysis of DCC Meetings	15
Need for Reforms	19
Comparative Examples: India, UK & Turkey	19
A Pro-Active Forum with a dedicated Secretariat	19
Conclusions	21
<b>Figures and Tables</b>	
Figure 1: Year-wise DCC Meetings: 2008-2013	15
Table 1: A Snapshot of DCC Meetings: 2008-2013	16
Appendix A: DCC Meetings: 2008-2013	22



## PREFACE

The Citizens report on **Performance of Defence Committee of the Cabinet** during the period of **March 2012 to March 2013** is prepared by PILDAT in the backdrop of principle of democratic oversight of national security. It is the continuation of PILDAT's previous report which examined the performance of DCC during March 2008 to March 2012.

The report closely examines the publicly-available data, reports in the media regarding the meetings and performance of Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC). The Military wing of Cabinet Division, which acts as secretariat of DCC, also confirmed the dates of the meetings held during this period.

The objective of the report is not to offer a critique of the work of DCC but to analyse the performance in the backdrop of peculiar security needs of Pakistan and the role DCC is playing with respect to defining and influencing policy and principles of defence and national security.

The report is part of PILDAT's larger focus on improving civil-military relations in Pakistan in the light of the Constitution of Pakistan and assisting Parliament, Cabinet and other institutions in undertaking well-researched, objective and non-partisan control and oversight of defence and security sector.

### **Acknowledgments**

This report has been prepared by PILDAT team including **Mr. Khurram Malik**, Projects Manager-PILDAT, and **Ms. Aasiya Riaz**, Joint Director-PILDAT, under the supervision of **Mr. Ahmed Bilal Mehboob**, President PILDAT.

### **Disclaimer**

PILDAT and its team have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the contents of this report and do not accept any omission or error as it is not deliberate.

Islamabad  
March 2013



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In keeping with its past trend of being reactive rather than proactive, the Defence Committee of the Cabinet met only three times in 2012-2013. A look at the 5 year performance of the DCC shows that despite serious internal and external security challenges facing Pakistan, the Defence Committee of the Cabinet met on an average only a little more than twice in a year from March 2008 to March 2013. The DCC held one meeting in year 2008-2009, two meetings in 2009-2010, one meeting in 2010-2011, five (5) meetings in 2011-2012 and three meetings in 2012-2013.

The DCC is the highest body in the country in which top civil and military leadership sits together to discuss important issues of Defence and National Security. It signifies the supremacy of elected civilian leaders in interpreting national interests and in laying down the broad parameters of defence and foreign policy.

To the credit of the outgoing coalition Government led by the Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarian, the Defence Committee of the Cabinet was activated in keeping with the pledges made by late Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Chairperson of PPP and Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, leader of the PML-N, in the Charter of Democracy (CoD) in May 2006, in which the two parties had agreed that the “National Security Council will be abolished. Defence Cabinet Committee will be headed by Prime Minister and will have a permanent secretariat.”<sup>1</sup>

Earlier, the National Security Council (NSC) was set up, under the autocratic rule of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, in April 2004 through an act of Parliament. While the NSC Act stays on the statute books, the outgoing PPP Government did not form the NSC but instead re-activated the Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC).

Three (3) meetings of the DCC were held during the one-year period between March 2012 to March 2013 and all of the meetings focussed on one issue, i.e., re-opening the Ground Lines of Communications (GLOCs) for Afghanistan-bound NATO supplies which were shut down in response to NATO's unilateral attacks on Pakistani check posts at Salalah in November 2011. The GLOCs were re-opened nearly 8 months after their suspension. This was the first time in five year history of current Government that important decisions of closure of NATO supply and its resumption were taken in the DCC. July 3, 2012 marks the third and the last meeting of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet in the last year of the PPP Government in which decision to re-open the GLOCs was taken after the US issued conveyed that it was 'sorry' for the Salalah incident.

The DCC, however, failed to meet in response to major incidents including a high-profile security breach in which militants infiltrated into Minhas Air Base at Kamra, on August 16, 2012<sup>2</sup> as well as an attack on Peshawar airport on December 15, 2012.<sup>3</sup> Reportedly, defence installations have been attacked sixteen (16) times in the country since 2009.<sup>4</sup> Militants have attacked across the country at will and despite their increasing ease and efficiency to target defence installations, in addition to civilian sites, the DCC has failed to develop and approve a National Security Strategy in 5 years since 2008.

In January 2013, media reports suggested that Pakistan Army has undergone a paradigm shift in its decades-old policy by describing homegrown militancy as the “biggest threat” to national security. According to media reports, a new chapter has been added to the Army Doctrine that would now also include threats posed by sub-conventional warfare, ongoing activities of Taliban militants in the restive tribal regions and unabated terrorist attacks on government installations in major cities are posing a real threat to Pakistan's security.<sup>5</sup> However, since the DCC last met in July 2012, nothing has been reported of its meetings held during the period to have discussed or approved Army's 'paradigm shift'. Key questions have resultantly emerged of the authority and democratic control on defence. If the Military's doctrine, and its reported 'paradigm shift', have not been

1. Charter of Democracy, May 2006

2. Shaheryar Popalzai and Nabil Ansari, "Tehreek-i-Taliban claim 'revenge' attack on Kamra airbase," Express Tribune, August 16, 2012, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/422821/attack-on-paf-airbase-live-updates/>

3. Militants attack at airport in Peshawar, nine killed, Dawn, December 15, 2012, <http://dawn.com/2012/12/15/three-blasts-heard-in-peshawar/>

4. 16 defence installations attacked since 2009, The News, February 07, 2013, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-86977-16-defence-installations-attacked-since-2009:-Defence-Secretary->

5. New doctrine: Army identifies 'homegrown militancy' as biggest threat, Express Tribune, January 03, 2013, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/488362/new-doctrine-army-identifies-homegrown-militancy-as-biggest-threat/>



thoroughly deliberated and decided upon, what is the legitimacy of the reported change and the democratic control on defence which is supposed to be exercised by the DCC?

For the highest decision-making body on defence, the DCC has remained largely dormant and under-utilised throughout the past 5 years. One of the major weaknesses of the DCC has been lack of a dedicated permanent secretariat of the DCC as pledged under the CoD by the ruling PPP. Its re-active posture, that too only for selective incidents, does not indicate an effective role of the DCC.

Recognising that an effective Defence Committee of the Cabinet is the key to establishing democratic control on defence and the only forum to arrive at a civil-military consensus on sensitive issues of defence and national security in Pakistan, PILDAT, together with its Dialogue Group on Civil-Military Relations, reiterated the following recommendations to the Government, Parliament and leadership of major political parties for strengthening the DCC:

- i. A periodicity must be set for the meetings of the Committee. Minimum essential periodicity should be once in every two months. It is preferable, though, to meet every month. Similar bodies in other countries meet on a weekly basis and meetings are chaired by the Prime Ministers
- ii. 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
- iii. Appointment of a full-time civilian National Security Advisor (NSA) 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 DCC must be placed under the civilian National Security Advisor
- iv. A dedicated think tank comprising eminent national security experts from the field of defence and national security 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.
- v. 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 Council should also be coordinated by the National Security Advisor to ensure that the two Councils work in tandem with each other.
- vi. The proposed secretariat of the DCC would also set up a coordination and oversight mechanism for the intelligence agencies in the country.
- vii. 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 agencies should only attend the meetings of the DCC upon invitation.
- viii. The Cabinet Committee must set a periodicity to conduct a ***Defence and Security Review of Pakistan*** based on a ***National Security Strategy of Pakistan***.<sup>6</sup>

As Pakistan faces a General Election in May 2013, PILDAT recommends that activating the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, assisted by a permanent and dedicated secretariat, should be one of the first agenda items of the elected Government which will take charge after the Election. In view of the complex internal and external threats faced by Pakistan, it is imperative that policies and decisions relating to these are arrived at based on research-based deliberations.

6. PILDAT Recommendations that were shared with the Government, Parliament, Leadership and Manifesto committees of major political parties in September 2012 can be accessed at:  
<http://www.pildat.org/publications/publication/CMR/PILDATRecommendationsonImprovingCMRSeptember2012.pdf>

## Introduction

Cabinet Committees are usually formed to allow greater focus in a particular area. Through these Committees, government business is processed more effectively by relieving pressure on the Cabinet as a whole. Committee structure also supports the principle of collective responsibility ensuring that policy proposals receive thorough consideration without an issue having to be referred to the whole cabinet. Cabinet Committee decisions have the same authority as the Cabinet.<sup>7</sup>

Decision-making in matters of defence is to be a coordinated effort between the civil and the military elements in democratic countries. However, in Pakistan, civilian hold over matters related to Defence and National Security has been minimal owing to its peculiar history of civil-military relations. It is commonly believed that the decision making in Pakistan on issues like Indo-Pak relations, war on terror, nuclear weapons, etc. has been the prerogative of the military.

In the Charter of Democracy (CoD) signed between late Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Chairperson of PPP and Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, leader of the PML-N in May 2006, the two parties had agreed that the "*National Security Council will be abolished. Defence Cabinet Committee will be headed by Prime Minister and will have a permanent secretariat. The Prime Minister may appoint a Federal Security Adviser to process intelligence reports for the Prime Minister.*"

In its Election Manifesto 2008, the PPP also pledged to abolish the National Security Council and replace it by the Defence Committee headed by the Prime Minister.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the National Security Council, which was set up in Pakistan in April 2004 under an act of Parliament, was not formed by the PPP Government after it took power in March 2008, although the NSC stays on the statute books. Instead the Government re-activated the Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC).

## Structure of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet

The DCC is chaired by Prime Minister and consists of the

following members:

- i. Federal Minister of Defence
- ii. Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs
- iii. Federal Minister for Finance

The following officials also routinely attend the meetings by invitation to assist the committee. Additional officials may also be invited on an as-needed basis:

- i. Secretary, Ministry of Defence
- ii. Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- iii. Secretary, Ministry of Finance
- iv. Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee
- v. Chief of Army Staff
- vi. Chief of Air Staff
- vii. Chief of Naval Staff

Some of the other officials who have regularly attended meetings of the DCC include Girector General Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and Director General Intelligence Bureau (IB).

## Existing Secretariat of the DCC

The Military Wing of the Cabinet Division serves as the secretariat of the DCC. It was originally established in 1956 as the Defence Planning and Coordination Wing, but was re-designated as the Military Wing in 1972 with the mission to "coordinate and implement war efforts in the civil sector." The wing has the following functions:<sup>9</sup>

- i. Assist the Defence Committee of the Cabinet in coordination of the war effort at national level
- ii. Provide Secretarial Assistance to a number of Defence Planning Committees of Ministries and Divisions
- iii. Planning and implementation of Provisions of Federal War Book
- iv. Affairs of the Central Pool of Cars at the Federal Government
- v. Formulation and implementation of Staff Car Rules
- vi. Intelligence Bureau (IB) affairs

In theory, the DCC is an important defence policy-making body. Its role was formally acknowledged in the White

7. The Cabinet Manual, United Kingdom, Link: <<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/cabinet-manual.pdf>>

8. *Towards Peace and Prosperity in Pakistan, Manifesto 2008*, the PPP Manifesto: <http://www.ppp.org.pk/manifestos/2008.pdf>

9. Military wing, Cabinet Division, Link: <<http://www.cabinet.gov.pk/>>

Paper on Higher Defence Organisation (May 1976). However, it has rarely functioned as an effective body. During the decade of 1990s, it met on a couple of occasions but the key policy decisions were taken by the troika of the President, the Prime Minister and the Army Chief.<sup>10</sup>

Analysis of the performance of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet shows that even though a democratically-elected Government has remained at the helm of affairs for a 5 year term from 2008-2013, it has not been able to evolve the DCC into an effective forum of decision making on national security issues under the civilian control.

10. Dr. Hasan-Askari Rizvi, Charter of Democracy and the Military, Daily Times, [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006%5C06%5C11%5Cstory\\_11-6-2006\\_pg3\\_2](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2006%5C06%5C11%5Cstory_11-6-2006_pg3_2)

## **Meetings of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet: March 2012-March 2013**

The DCC met 3 times during the preceding and final year of the PPP Government in office. Of the three meetings of DCC during the year, all three were held to review Pak-US relation and re-opening the Ground Lines of Communications (GLOCs) for Afghanistan-bound NATO supplies which were suspended in November 2011 in response to NATO's unilateral attacks on Pakistani check posts.

After the resumption of NATO supply in July 2012, there has been no further meeting of the DCC in the last 8 months of the term of the outgoing Government.

A brief of each meeting, based on newspaper reports, is presented below:

### **DCC Meeting: April 17, 2012**

Parliament of Pakistan approved guidelines regarding Pakistan's foreign and security policies on April 12, 2012 on the recommendation of Parliamentary Committee on National Security (PCNS). The meeting of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet was held on April 17, 2012 to discuss the restarting of negotiations with the US in the light of guidelines given by the Parliament.

Reportedly at the meeting, the DCC gave a go-ahead for starting negotiations with the US for resetting ties in the light of Parliamentary review. In the statement issued simultaneously by the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister's office, the conclusion of the meeting was reported as:

"The DCC discussed the guidelines approved by parliament on April 12, 2012, with regard to Pakistan's foreign and security policies. It was decided that a work plan may be developed for effective implementation of parliamentary guidelines based on Pakistan's national interests."<sup>11</sup>

The meeting was attended by the Ministers of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Interior and, Information, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, , Services Chiefs, Secretaries of

the Cabinet, Defence and Foreign Affairs, Director General Inter-Services Intelligence, Director General Military Operations, and Director General Intelligence Bureau.

The then Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani announced the key "policy parameters" for re-engagement with the US in his opening remarks:

"Negotiation on new terms and conditions for resumption of the Ground Lines of Communication (more commonly referred to as Nato supply routes), joint counter-terrorism cooperation, greater inter-agency coordination, transparency in US diplomatic and intelligence footprint in Pakistan, strengthening of border security and non-use of Pakistan's territory for attacks on other countries and expulsion of all foreign fighters from Pakistan's territory, are our fundamental policy parameters."

The DCC also discussed the terrorist attacks in Kabul blamed on the Haqqani network:

"The DCC condemned the recent terrorist attacks in Kabul and other Afghan cities and reaffirmed Pakistan's support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned inclusive peace and reconciliation process," the statement said.

The DG Military Operations also gave a detailed briefing about the tragic incident in Gayari sector at Siachin and efforts in the ongoing rescue operation.

### **DCC Meeting: May 15, 2012**

Another meeting of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC) was held on May 15, 2012 to decide about the resumption of NATO supply and review of PAK-US relations. However, no final decision reportedly could be reached in the meeting.

After the meeting, Federal Information Minister, Mr. Qamar Zaman Kaira, said that the DCC meeting ended inconclusively and that final decision regarding resumption of NATO supplies will be reached after further consultations:<sup>12</sup>

"No final decision has been taken about re-opening of the NATO supply routes by the committee," said the information minister while briefing the media

11. DCC go-ahead for resettling Pak-US ties, Dawn, April 18, 2012: <http://dawn.com/2012/04/18/parliaments-guidelines-discussed-dcc-go-ahead-for-resetting-pak-us-ties/>

12. DCC remains indecisive; decision after consultation: Kaira, Dawn, May 15, 2012: <http://dawn.com/2012/05/15/gilani-chairs-dcc-meeting-over-us-ties/>

representatives regarding the meeting.

However, the committee urged the concerned ministries to 'finalise' the terms and conditions regarding resumption of NATO supplies, which is renamed as "ground line of communication," on a priority basis.

The DCC also directed the military leadership to re-negotiate border security issues with the NATO and ISAF forces at the Afghan border in order to avoid untoward incidents like Salala check post attack in future.

It was also decided to form a committee which will re-negotiate Pakistan's terms of engagement with the United States regarding new conditions, transit fee, and surcharge. It would constitute representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and the GHQ.<sup>13</sup>

The DCC meeting was chaired by then-Prime Minister, Yousuf Raza Gilani, while it was attended by Federal Ministers of Defence, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Finance and Information as well as three Services Chiefs, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and DG ISI.

#### **DCC Meeting: July 03, 2012**

On July 3, 2012, after months of negotiations and consultations, the Defence Committee of the Cabinet decided to re-open the Ground Lines of Communications (GLOCs) for Afghanistan-bound NATO supplies after the US issued 'sorry.'

The decision of the defence committee, which serves as the highest national security policy coordination forum, was announced by the Federal Minister for Information Mr. Qamar Zaman Kaira, at the conclusion of the meeting. He said the decision had been taken in accordance with a mandate given by the Parliament and aspirations of people.<sup>14</sup>

The "DCC decided to re-open the Ground Lines of Communication (GLOC) through Pakistani territory to and

from Afghanistan to facilitate the transition and the subsequent transformation process in that country," a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office later said.

Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf had, in his opening comments, made it clear that the decision to open the transit routes, which remained suspended for over eight months, had already been taken as he said: "The continued closure of supply lines not only impinges on our relationship with the US, but also on our relations with the 49 other member states of NATO/ISAF."

While the session was presided over by Prime Minister, Raja Pervez Ashraf, the meeting was attended by the Deputy Prime Minister and Federal Ministers of Defence, Foreign Affairs, Finance and Information. Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and all three services chiefs were also present.

#### **Cabinet Approved DCC Decision**

On July 04, 2012, Pakistan's Federal Cabinet approved the decision reached in the DCC to re-open GLOCs.<sup>15</sup>

Following the decision, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been inked between Pakistan and United States which establishes "*principles and procedures for the quick and efficient transit of U.S. cargo to and from Afghanistan through the territory of Pakistan for the purpose of supporting international efforts for ensuring the security, stabilization, and reconstruction of Afghanistan.*"<sup>16</sup>

Although entering into a formal written MOU on the question has been seen as commendable, it was somewhat strange that the supply line was restored much before the formal deal was signed.

That Pakistan eventually agreed to resume NATO supplies without any increase in the container fee was also seen as a cause of concern. Not only did the US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton say that Pakistan will "continue not to charge transit fee,<sup>17</sup>" the Associated Press of Pakistan also

13. DCC remains indecisive; decision after consultation: Kaira, Dawn, May 15, 2012: <http://dawn.com/2012/05/15/gilani-chairs-dcc-meeting-over-us-ties/>

14. DCC approves accord after US says 'sorry' over Salala attack: Nato supply routes reopened, Dawn, July 04, 2012: <http://dawn.com/2012/07/04/dcc-approves-accord-after-us-says-sorry-over-salala-attack-nato-supply-routes-reopened/>

15. Cabinet gives nod to Nato supply restoration, Dawn, July 04, 2012: <http://dawn.com/2012/07/04/cabinet-gives-nod-to-nato-supply-restoration/>

16. See: "Memorandum of Understanding Between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the United States of America for the Transit of U.S. Cargo to and from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan through the territory of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan."

17. Statement of US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton: <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2012/07/194502.htm>

released a press statement which “reconfirmed [that] Pakistan will continue not to charge any transit fee” as “the issue in the first place was not of financial gains but of the principle of sovereignty.”<sup>18</sup> This position was at odds with the earlier reported scenario in which increase in the container fee appeared as one of the main deadlocks in Pak-US relations. In May 2012, US Secretary of Defence Panetta had blamed Pakistan for “price gouging” for transport of supplies to Afghanistan.<sup>19</sup> Even Pakistan’s parliamentary Committee on National Security, in March 2012, had recommended that “taxes and other charges must be levied on all goods imported in or transiting through Pakistan, for use of infrastructure and to compensate for its deterioration.”<sup>20</sup>

Even though the MoU signed between Pakistan and US on re-opening GLOCs did not entirely correspond to the Parliamentary Resolution, nonetheless, the newly-acquired role of the Parliament, particularly the Parliamentary Committee on National Security presenting new policy guidelines on issues pertaining to security and foreign policy has also been noteworthy in this regard.

18. [http://app.com.pk/en/\\_/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=200797&Itemid=1](http://app.com.pk/en/_/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=200797&Itemid=1)

19. Panetta objects to fees for containers: Nato urges Pak to work for Afghan stability, Dawn, May 20, 2012: <http://dawn.com/2012/05/20/panetta-objects-to-fees-for-containers-nato-urges-pak-to-work-for-afghan-stability/>

20. See Parliamentary Committee on National Security’s recommendation 11: [http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/PerformanceoftheParliamentaryCommitteeonNationalSecurity\\_Report\\_March2012.pdf](http://www.pildat.org/Publications/publication/CMR/PerformanceoftheParliamentaryCommitteeonNationalSecurity_Report_March2012.pdf)



## The Defence Committee of the Cabinet under the PPP Government

While the National Security Council law remains on the statute books, it was expected that after assuming power the People's Party Government would resume the DCC immediately in keeping with its manifesto pledges and the Charter of Democracy. However the first DCC meeting was held only after November 26, 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks, 8 months after Prime Minister Gilani's government took oath.

In all there have only been twelve (12) DCC meetings held during the five-year tenure of the PPP Government from March 2008 to March 2013. Most of these meetings were reactive in nature and were held to respond to an issue or crisis.

Peoples Party Government also did not fulfil its manifesto pledge of establishing a permanent secretariat of the DCC.

In view of the national security issues facing Pakistan, the Government, unfortunately, has not been able to set-up a serious, pro-active forum that could meet regularly, prepare a national security strategy and serve as a forum

where civil-military minds, under the civilian authority, could work out matters of national security.

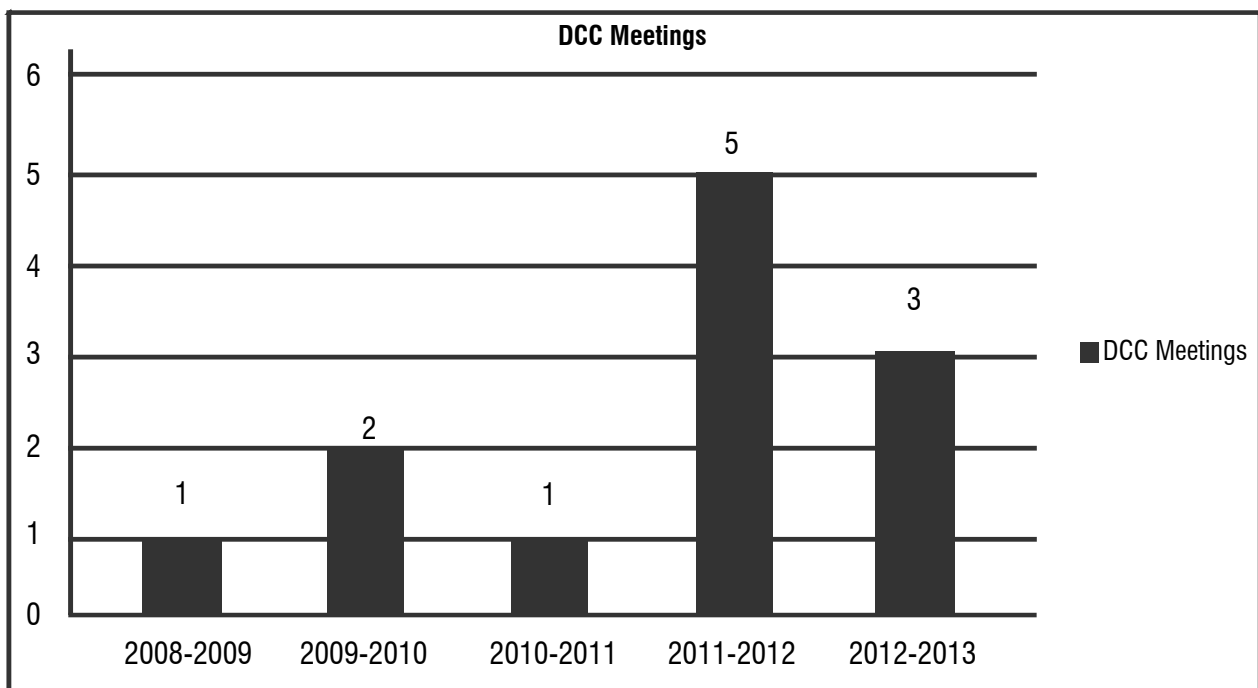
### Year wise Analysis of DCC meetings

The Defence Committee of Cabinet held one meeting in year 2008-2009, two meetings in 2009-2010, one meeting in 2010-2011, five meetings in 2011-2012 and in the last year of the Government, 2012-2013, only three meetings were convened in five years, therefore, only a total of twelve (12) DCC meetings were held with an average of merely over 2 meetings a year.

A snapshot of DCC meetings is contained in Table 1 while the year wise analysis of DCC meetings is provided in Figure 1.

Analysis of the meetings of DCC shows that the prime body on national security in Pakistan continued to work without a set target and was only convened hurriedly each time there was a crisis. Instead of being a pro-active forum, the DCC has been reactive and short-sighted. For most of the issues it discussed, there has been no reported follow-up. The only issue which was discussed at length was closing down the NATO supply and then its re-opening and five out of twelve meeting were held on this issue.

Figure 1: Year-wise DCC Meetings





**Table 1: A Snapshot of DCC Meetings**

No.	Date	Issue (s) Discussed	Follow-up
1.	December 08, 2008	Situation after Mumbai terrorist strikes	No reported major Decision or follow up
2.	March 21, 2009	i. Dimensions of National Defence and Security ii. Review of the Armed Forces Development Plan 2025	No reported major Decision or follow up
3.	January 05, 2010	i. Review of the security challenges ii. Counter-terrorism campaign iii. Indian Army Chief's remarks about pursuing a proactive strategy to simultaneously wage wars against Pakistan and China	No reported major Decision or follow up
4.	December 03, 2010	Leakage of sensitive information by Wikileaks	No reported major Decision or follow up
5.	May 12, 2011	i. May 2 unilateral US military action in Abbottabad ii. Security situation lii. Pakistan's relationship with the US	No reported major Decision or follow up
6.	May 26, 2011	Security situation in the aftermath of the PNS Mehran base attack	No reported major Decision or follow up
7.	August 18, 2011	De-radicalisation plan to combat fundamentalism and extremism	No reported major Decision or follow up
8.	November 26, 2011	Aftermath of NATO attacks on border posts in Mohmand Agency	i. Closed down supply routes used by western forces in Afghanistan indefinitely. ii. United States was asked to vacate the Shamsi airbase which was vacated in 15 days. lii. To carry out a thorough review of its cooperation with the US and NATO; Parliamentary Committee on National Security was assigned the task of review.
9.	January 14, 2012	Review of US Investigation report into the deadly NATO air strikes on Pakistani border posts	i. DCC strongly refuted the US and NATO's official version. ii. DCC decided to continue blocking G-LoCs through Pakistan.

March 2012 - March 2013

No.	Date	Issue (s) Discussed	Follow-up
10	April 17, 2012	Discussion on Parliament guidelines to revisit Pak-US relations and re-opening of NATO supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Start negotiations with the US for resetting ties in the light of parliamentary review</li><li>ii. A work plan be developed for effective implementation of parliamentary guidelines based on Pakistan's national interests.</li></ul>
11	May 15, 2012	Review of Pak-US relations and re-opening of GLOCs	No reported major decision of follow up
12	July 03, 2012	Review of Pak-US relations and re-opening of GLOCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Re-opening of G-LOCs</li><li>ii. Pakistan and United States signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the reopening of G-LoCs on July 31, 2012, which replaced the existing arrangements.</li></ul>



## Need for Reforms

Analysis of the performance of the DCC necessitates two key areas of reform, namely review of the structure of the DCC and the need for a permanent secretariat for the DCC.

### Comparative Examples: India, UK & Turkey

While in Pakistan the Military high command has a seat at the table, in **India**, the National Security Council, set up since 1998, the Military has no representation at the top-most tier of the National Security Council.

The 3-tiered structure in India includes, at the apex, a six member body, chaired by the Prime Minister and includes the Union Ministers of Home, Defence, External Affairs, Finance, and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission.

The second tier is labelled as the Strategic Planning Group (SPG). It is headed by the Cabinet Secretary and includes the chiefs of the Army, Navy and the Air Force, the Governor of Reserve Bank of India, Secretaries of the ministries of Home, Defence, External Affairs, Finance, Secretary Department of Defence Production and Supplies, Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister, and several other secretaries of union ministries and Director Intelligence Bureau.

The third tier is the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) which comprises eminent persons from outside the government with expertise in external and internal security, foreign affairs, defence and military affairs, science and technology and economics. It acts as a think tank for the policy makers and recommends policy options on the issues under its purview. It is supposed to meet at least once a month.

In **United Kingdom**, another Parliamentary democracy whose system Pakistan follows, the National Security Council, set up in May 2010, includes:

- i. Prime Minister
- ii. Deputy Prime Minister
- iii. Chancellor of the Exchequer
- iv. Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

- v. Home Secretary
- vi. Secretary of State for Defence
- vii. Secretary of State for International Development
- viii. Security Minister

Other Cabinet Ministers, including the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, attend as required. The Chief of the Defence Staff, Heads of Intelligence Agencies and other Senior Officials also attend as required.

The NSC in UK, DCC's counterpart, has been set up to "oversee all aspects of Britain's security."<sup>21</sup> It has been placed within the Cabinet Office. A National Security Advisor has also been appointed as a new role based in the Cabinet Office and his job is to coordinate and deliver the Government's international security agenda.

In **Turkey**, the AKP Government since 2003 has been asserting civilian control over the Turkish military. The NSC (MÝLLÝ GÜVENLÝK KURULU - MGK) in Turkey, which had been the primary channel through which the Turkish military influenced Turkish politics, has gone through fundamental changes under the AKP government.

The NSC has been turned into a civilian-headed advisory body on defense and military issues from being an executive body dominated by the military. The AKP reduced the number of military officers on the NSC from five to one (chief of staff), a civilian holds the office of MGK secretary-general, a position previously reserved for a military officer who reported directly to the chief of staff. The council's budget has also been placed under the prime minister's control.<sup>22</sup>

### A Pro-Active Forum with a dedicated Secretariat

A comparative review of contemporary bodies on national security shows that all the institutions work through dedicated secretariats and think-tanks, a key structural support missing from Pakistan's DCC.

The national security institutions around the world are also required to meet at regular intervals; in UK the period is set at weekly meetings chaired by the Prime Minister; in India, the NSC think tank is supposed to meet at least once a month. In Pakistan, however, there are no such requirements. The preceding analysis shows the DCC only

21. Establishment of a National Security Council, May 12, 2010: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/establishment-of-a-national-security-council/>

22. Steven A. Cook, The Weakening of Turkey's Military, Expert Brief, Council on Foreign Relations, March 1, 2010: <http://www.cfr.org/turkey/weakening-turkeys-military/p21548>

met 9 times in 4 years, an average of a little over 2 meetings in a year.

Despite peculiar internal and external security challenges facing Pakistan, there is no set national security strategy to deal with these challenges.

In the short span of 2 years, the UK NSC can boast of conducting an internal review of counter-terrorism and security powers; the first Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and determining the size and duration of Britain's deployment in Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup>

In comparison, however, neither any milestones have been set for Pakistan's DCC, nor have these been achieved.

23. The National Security Council: Defenders of the realm, The Economist, January 27, 2011: <http://www.economist.com/node/18011808>

## Conclusion

Every state evolves institutional arrangements and procedures for civil-military consultation, sharing of views, deliberations for decision-making, policy coordination and review of national security policy. Given the weaknesses and discontinuity of civilian and political institutions and processes in Pakistan, the top brass have been playing decisive role in policy making.

Pakistan needs a coordinated set-up through which regular input is sought and received. Whether this set-up is named as National Security Council or the Cabinet Committee on Defence is less important than the requirement that it must have a permanent secretariat, support by a dedicated think tank and is pro-active rather than reactive in matters of national security under the overall supervision of the elected civilian leadership.

The analysis of the performance of DCC in the past 5 years shows that much more effort needs to be put in if the DCC is to achieve the level of efficiency and effectiveness required for such a body. Instead of merely responding to national and international events, there is an urgent need for the DCC to be more alert, active, vigilant and serious. A framework and clear-cut goals need to be identified for the DCC for it to engage in seeking a periodic assessment of the security scenario and offer guidelines.

There is a need to strengthen the Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC) by holding its meeting regularly rather than summoning it only in a situation of crisis. It needs to be strengthened in terms of office support and must have professional research staff for providing intellectual input to security policy making in the form of policy briefs and identifications of possible options to deal with different issues and problems. So it is of crucial importance that the Cabinet Committee on Defence is supported by a permanent secretariat and think tank to support its work.

The committee should meet at least once every quarter and more frequently when the situation demands and should adopt a business-like approach involving intense and frank discussions to evolve a consensus on major foreign policy issues.

As Pakistan faces a General Election in May 2013, PILDAT recommends that activating the Defence Committee of the Cabinet, assisted by a permanent and dedicated secretariat, should be one of the first agenda items of the elected Government which will take charge after the Election. In view of the complex internal and external threats faced by Pakistan, it is imperative that policies and decisions relating to these are arrived at based on research-based deliberations.

## Appendix A

### DCC Meetings: 2008-2013

#### 1<sup>st</sup> DCC Meeting: December 08, 2008

The first meeting of the DCC was held, the first under the PPP Government, on December 8, 2008 to discuss security situation against the backdrop of Pakistan's tense relationship with India in the wake of the Mumbai terror strikes. Reiterating Pakistan's resolve<sup>24</sup> not to allow its soil to be used for any kind of terrorist activity anywhere in the region or the world the DCC renewed the offer of full cooperation to India, including intelligence sharing and assistance in investigation as well as setting up of a Joint Investigation Commission to probe the Mumbai attacks.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> DCC Meeting: March 21, 2009

Almost 3 months after the first meeting, the second DCC meeting was held on March 21, 2009. The DCC, reportedly discussed different dimensions of national defence and security, and reviewed the Armed Forces Development Plan 2025, worth US \$ 24 billion, which was approved during a high-level meeting in Rawalpindi. The meeting reviewed war against terrorism, investigation on Mumbai attacks and attack on Sri Lankan Cricket team. Interior Minister Rehman Malik briefed the meeting about investigations of attack on Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore.<sup>25</sup>

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> DCC Meeting: January 05, 2010

The third DCC meeting was held after a gap of 9 months on January 05, 2010. According to official statement,<sup>26</sup> DCC reviewed the security challenges faced by Pakistan and expressed satisfaction on the defence preparedness. It was reported in the media that the meeting's main focus was on remarks made by the Indian Army Chief General Deepak Kapoor about pursuing a proactive strategy to simultaneously wage wars against Pakistan and China. The DCC sent a message to General Kapoor that a telling response would be given to any act of aggression by the eastern neighbour.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> DCC Meeting: December 03, 2010

Exactly a year after the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting, the fourth DCC meeting was held on December 03, 2010. The meeting was reportedly held to convey to the US authorities the government's reservations over the disclosure of confidential and secret information by WikiLeaks.<sup>27</sup> The committee denounced the leak of sensitive information and warned that its continuation would endanger friendly ties among countries. The DCC rejected the WikiLeaks disclosures regarding Pakistan and termed them false and unauthentic. The military also urged the Government to take up the issue with the US government, expressing concern over the Leaks.<sup>28</sup>

#### 5<sup>th</sup> DCC Meeting: May 12, 2011

The fifth DCC meeting on May 12, 2011 was held 5 months after the previous meeting. Held in the context of May 2 US military action in Abbottabad to kill Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, the one-point agenda of the meeting was to review the security

24. DCC pledges not to allow use of Pak soil for terror attacks, reviews border situation, The News December 09, 2008, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=18876&Cat=13&dt=12/9/2008>

25. PM chairs Cabinet's Defence Committee meeting, The Nation, March 21, 2009: <http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Islamabad/21-Mar-2009/PM-chairs-cabinets-defence-committee-meeting>

26. Press release no 32, DCC meeting, PID, January 05, 2010: <http://www.pid.gov.pk/press05-01-2010.htm>

27. Civilian, military leaders meet Concern over damage done by leaks, Dawn, December 04, 2010: <http://www.dawn.com/2010/12/04/civilian-military-leaders-meet-concern-over-damage-done-by-leaks.html>

28. Cabinet Defense Committee slams wikileaks, Express Tribune, December 03, 2010: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/85421/cabinet-defense-committee-slams-wikileaks/>

situation of the country and redefine Pakistan's relationship with the US following the US attack.<sup>29</sup>

#### **6<sup>th</sup> DCC Meeting: May 26, 2011**

The sixth DCC meeting, on May 26, 2011, is the only meeting of the DCC to have been held in quick succession, in the same month, during the reporting period. The meeting was reportedly convened to discuss the security situation in the aftermath of the PNS Mehran base attack.<sup>30</sup> According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's office, it was decided in the meeting that *"security, defence and law-enforcement agencies will be authorised to use all means necessary to eliminate terrorists and militants."* It also said that *"National Security is the foremost priority and all arms of the government will ensure that terrorist hideouts will be destroyed using all appropriate means."*

#### **7<sup>th</sup> DCC Meeting: August 18, 2011**

On August 18, 2011, at the seventh DCC meeting, a de-radicalisation plan was considered to combat rising fundamentalism and extremism in the country.<sup>31</sup> Prime Minister while chairing the meeting said that *"we need to clearly identify the threat posed by terrorism, including the underlying factors such as ideological, motivational, funding, weapon supply, training and organisational support for terrorist groups and those aiding and abetting the terrorists."* It also took a number of other decisions, like strengthening coordination between provinces and the federal government on security issues and establishment of a National Crime Database, in addition to deliberating on loopholes in the criminal justice system and various incidents of terrorism.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> DCC Meeting: November 26, 2011**

At the eighth DCC meeting, held on November 26, 2011 after the pre-dawn NATO attacks on border posts in Mohmand Agency, it was decided to close down supply routes used by western forces in Afghanistan indefinitely. The United States was asked to vacate the Shamsi airbase previously used for drone operations. The Government also said it would carry out a thorough review of its cooperation with the US and NATO.<sup>32</sup> According to a statement issued from the Prime Minister House, the DCC decided that the Government will revisit and undertake a complete review of all programmes, activities and cooperative arrangements with US/NATO/ISAF, including diplomatic, political, military and intelligence.

#### **9<sup>th</sup> DCC Meeting: January 14, 2012**

The ninth DCC meetings under the current Government was held on January 14, 2012 in which a US military investigation into the deadly NATO air strikes on Pakistani border posts in November was rejected.<sup>33</sup> The Director General of Military Operations presented a point-wise riposte to the US findings and insisted that the attacks were intentional.

#### **10<sup>th</sup> DCC Meeting: April 17, 2012**

The meeting of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet was held on April 17, 2012 to discuss the restarting of negotiations with the US in the light of guidelines given by the Parliament. Reportedly at the meeting, the DCC gave a go-ahead for starting negotiations with the US for resetting ties in the light of Parliamentary review. In the statement issued simultaneously by the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister's office, the conclusion of the meeting was reported as: *"The DCC discussed the guidelines approved by parliament on April 12, 2012, with regard to Pakistan's foreign and security policies. It was decided that a*

29. Pakistan to define anti-terror cooperation with US, Dawn, May 12, 2011: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/05/12/pakistan-to-define-anti-terror-cooperation-with-us.html>

30. Military asked to wipe out terror and sanctuaries, Dawn, May 26, 2011: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/05/26/military-asked-to-wipe-out-terror-and-sanctuaries.html>

31. De-radicalisation plan under study, Dawn, August 18, 2011: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/08/18/de-radicalisation-plan-under-study.html>

32. US told to vacate Shamsi base; Nato supplies stopped, Dawn, November 27, 2011: <http://www.dawn.com/2011/11/27/us-told-to-vacate-shamsi-base-nato-supplies-stopped.html>

33. US report rejected, Dawn, January 15, 2012: [http://epaper.dawn.com/~epaper/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=15\\_01\\_2012\\_001\\_004](http://epaper.dawn.com/~epaper/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=15_01_2012_001_004)



work plan may be developed for effective implementation of parliamentary guidelines based on Pakistan's national interests.<sup>34</sup>

The DCC also discussed the terrorist attacks in Kabul blamed on the Haqqani network. The DG Military Operations also gave a detailed briefing about the tragic incident in Gayari sector at Siachin and efforts in the ongoing rescue operation.

#### **11<sup>th</sup> DCC Meeting: May 15, 2012**

Another meeting of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC) was held on May 15, 2012 to decide about the resumption of NATO supply and review of PAK-US relations. However, no final decision reportedly could be reached in the meeting. However, the committee urged the concerned ministries to 'finalise' the terms and conditions regarding resumption of NATO supplies, which is renamed as "ground line of communication," on a priority basis. The DCC also directed the military leadership to re-negotiate border security issues with the NATO and ISAF forces at the Afghan border in order to avoid untoward incidents like Salala check post attack in future. It was also decided to form a committee which will re-negotiate Pakistan's terms of engagement with the United States regarding new conditions, transit fee, and surcharge. It would constitute representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and the GHQ.<sup>35</sup>

#### **12<sup>th</sup> DCC Meeting: July 03, 2012**

On July 3, 2012, after months of negotiations and consultations, the Defence Committee of the Cabinet decided to re-open the Ground Lines of Communications (GLOCs) for Afghanistan-bound NATO supplies after the US issued 'sorry.' The decision of the defence committee, which serves as the highest national security policy coordination forum, was announced by the Federal Minister for Information Mr. Qamar Zaman Kaira, at the conclusion of the meeting. He said the decision had been taken in accordance with a mandate given by the Parliament and aspirations of people.<sup>36</sup> The "DCC decided to re-open the Ground Lines of Communication (GLOC) through Pakistani territory to and from Afghanistan to facilitate the transition and the subsequent transformation process in that country," a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office later said.

34. DCC go-ahead for resettling Pak-US ties, Dawn, April 18, 2012: <http://dawn.com/2012/04/18/parliaments-guidelines-discussed-dcc-go-ahead-for-resettling-pak-us-ties/>

35. DCC remains indecisive; decision after consultation: Kaira, Dawn, May 15, 2012: <http://dawn.com/2012/05/15/gilani-chairs-dcc-meeting-over-us-ties/>

36. DCC approves accord after US says 'sorry' over Salala attack: Nato supply routes reopened, Dawn, July 04, 2012: <http://dawn.com/2012/07/04/dcc-approves-accord-after-us-says-sorry-over-salala-attack-nato-supply-routes-reopened/>



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