



Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies
1/46 Old Elephant Road, Eskaton, Dhaka 1000

National Seminar
on
Good Governance in Bangladesh: A National Security Priority

03 March 2010

SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Since its independence in 1971, Bangladesh has been encountering a number of challenges in its governance front. According to the basic governance indicators such as accountability, political stability, institutional effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption, Bangladesh scores one of the lowest amongst the developing countries. Major donors and international financial institutions, on the other hand, are increasingly basing their aid and loans on the condition of ensuring good governance. In a recent workshop on “National Security and Civil Military Relations in Bangladesh” jointly organized by Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) and Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) with the support of Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS), Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, the participants identified absence of good governance as the primary security concern of Bangladesh. Alongside, they listed a wide range of challenges in ensuring good governance.

As a follow-up step, BIISS decided to make further deliberations on these challenges and determine the responses along with policy recommendations for the government. On 03 March 2010, BIISS organized a national seminar on “**Good Governance in Bangladesh: A National Security Priority**” at the BIISS Auditorium. This report summarizes highlights of this discussion with the aim to present a summary of the main issues and arguments.

The objectives of the Seminar were to:

- Identify key issues and priorities of good governance in the context of Bangladesh;
- Understand the correlation between good governance and national security;
- Evaluate the state of good governance in Bangladesh in terms of accountability, transparency and rule of law; and
- Explore and focus on opportunities to allow good governance to take firm root in Bangladesh.

The Seminar was chaired by **Major General Muhammed Firdaus Mian, psc**, Chairman, Board of Governors, BIISS. The Address of Welcome was delivered by **Major General Sheikh Md Monirul Islam, ndc, psc**, Director General of BIISS. **Brigadier General Shahedul Anam Khan, ndc, psc, (Retd)**, Editor, Strategic Affairs, the Daily Star, presented the first paper on “*Correlation between Good Governance and National Security*”. The second

paper was on “*Accountability and Transparency*”, presented by **Dr. Iftekharuzzaman**, Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB). **Dr. Borhan Uddin Khan**, Professor, Department of Law, Dhaka University, presented the third paper on “*The Rule of Law*”. **Air Commodore Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury, ndc, psc, (Retd)** Registrar, BRAC University, Dhaka, **Dr. Abdur Rob Khan**, Associate Professor, North South University, Dhaka and **Mr. Abul Hasan Chowdhury**, Former State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh were the designated discussants of the three papers respectively. Next to them, **Major General Eric Olson (Retd)**, Defence Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI), USA, had a presentation on “*Relation between Governance and National Security*”. The presentations were followed by an open and interactive discussion across the floor. A cross section of the society including representatives from government agencies, experts, representatives from the foreign missions, non-government organizations, academicians, media and members of the civil society participated in the discussion.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME

In his Address of Welcome, **Major General Sheikh Md Monirul Islam, ndc, psc**, stated that, in the midst of today’s emerging challenges that came up with the package of democratization, globalization and advancement in information technology, the government’s ability to govern had been challenged in many ways. For decades, governance had been exclusively associated with the role of the state, ignoring other social actors like NGOs, research institutes, associations, cooperatives, religious leaders, influential persons, financial institutions, political parties, the military etc. However, it was widely recognized today that the interaction between the state and these actors/institutions could assist and influence healthy and positive decision making process.

The Director General hoped that the discussion would be able to address queries, such as, how did good governance or the lack of it impinge on national security? What were the challenges of good governance? Should good governance be considered as an essential security strategy? Could good governance ensure security as understood in a comprehensive sense? In the context of Bangladesh, the Director General said that Bangladesh had always been pursuing in implementing the features of good governance, which he reminded the floor, was a long process. Bangladesh had historically overcome many crises, and therefore, there was definitely hope to achieve good governance and march towards progress.

PRESENTATIONS

In the first presentation on “Correlation between Good Governance and National Security”, **Brigadier General Shahedul Anam Khan, ndc, psc, (Retd)** said that governance had become a predominant issue today as it was a catch phrase for the development partners. In the cases of developing countries like Bangladesh, each and every donor-driven activity had to fulfill the good governance criteria. According to him, good governance enables governments to ensure good quality of life to its people and rule out the possibility of unrest and violence. After elaborating on the definitions and characteristics of governance, he highlighted the challenges of good governance in the Bangladesh context, including the rule of law, lack of democratic practice, weak state institutions, ineffective parliament, corruption, lack of accountability and transparency, devolution of power/ effective local government, separation of power and politicization of administration.

In discussing the correlation between governance and security, the speaker boldly stated that good governance was not entirely about wielding power and that there was no direct

correlation between economic strength and security. To emphasize the link between good governance and security, Brigadier General Khan referred to a quote from the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, “**People who feel secure and free, governed by the rule of law and not of men, are much less likely to go to war with each other - either within or across borders – than those who don’t**”. According to the presenter, the issue of governance of the security sector was a sensitive issue seldom delved into with the seriousness it deserves. He argues that, the security sector will fail to deliver if there was lack of good governance in this sector, contrary to common perception that the security sector was more eclectic. Finally, Brigadier General Khan suggested reform of the security sector which included: (1) Developing a clear institutional framework for the provision of security that integrated security and development policy and included all relevant actors, (2) Strengthening the governance of the security institutions and (3) Building capable and professional security forces that were accountable to civil authorities.

As the designated discussant of Brigadier General Shahedul Anam Khan’s presentation, **Air Commodore Ishfaq Ilahi Choudhury, ndc, psc, (Retd)** shared his views on good governance and security concerns of Bangladesh. According to him, Bangladesh had a number of outstanding traditional security issues, but those were not of the magnitude that could lead to armed hostilities. Regarding non-traditional security, he placed the threat of terrorist activities at the top which involved extremists of both right and left sides. He considered the suggestion put forward by Bangladesh’s Prime Minister to create a Regional Counter Terrorism Task Force as a step in the right direction.

However, the discussant noted with regret that, according to the “Failed State Index” brought out annually in the USA by “Fund for Peace”, Bangladesh had been ranked in 2009 as the 19th most vulnerable country of becoming a failed state. While one could argue on the methodologies followed, there was no doubt that people from the world over would take a note of a country’s ranking before making a decision, for example, in the investment sector. Of the 12 areas evaluated in the survey, Bangladesh’s worst performance came from Demographic Pressure, Group Grievance, Human Flight, Uneven Development and Fractionalised Elites. He also believed that the failure to implement the Chittagong Hill Tract Peace Accord had raised concern about the government’s intention and ability to deliver as promised.

Air Commodore Choudhury suggested that the armed forces that provided robust response to traditional security threats could also assist the police and other law enforcement agencies in carrying out internal security duties when called for. He criticized the so-called crossfire killing and custodial deaths and stressed that these extra-judicial measures were not at all effective in enforcing law and order. Rather, he believed these killings had brutalized the society and tainted the image of the country abroad. Referring to the past incidents where the intelligence agencies, neglecting their primary duties had been engaged in activities causing much embarrassment to the state, the discussant reinforced that security forces and intelligence agencies must be under the control of political government with their activities closely monitored. Finally, he urged the government to reform the Bangladesh Army, Air Force and Naval Laws which had been basically untouched since they were formulated during the British colonial period. He finally suggested setting up a Military Law Reform Commission to look into these issues.

Dr. Iftekharuzzaman delivered the second presentation on “Accountability and Transparency”. He began his presentation by giving an account of what Bangladesh had achieved so far despite huge governance deficit and pervasive corruption. The speaker gave an

overview of the characteristics and types of corruption prevailing in Bangladesh, pointing out at the same time that no country in the world was totally free from corruption. According to him, corruption undermined development efforts and democratic institutions, prevented rule of law, and distorted market in a way that hampered economic activities, bred and increased poverty, deprivation and injustice. The poor's access to essential services such as education, health and justice was denied in the process.

Dr. Zaman described corruption as a bias against the poor and provided empirical evidence from Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) National Household Survey 2007. He also identified some institutional and personal factors causing corruption, concluding with the assumption that the benefits of corruption had been higher than its risks/costs, and thus had been a major incentive for corruption to flourish. In addition, fighting corruption was highly challenging because of the links between corruption and power. The speaker did not believe that complete eradication of corruption was a realistic proposition. Fighting corruption needed a comprehensive strategy having four main inter-related elements: (1) Political will, (2) Making corruption punishable, (3) Strengthening the institutions of National Integrity System (NIS), and (4) Citizens' awareness and demand.

The speaker observed that corruption today had been at the core of public discourse, a trend that he considered to be a successful development. It showed that people's voice had compelled the government to initiate certain institutional and policy reform in areas such as, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Public Service Commission, Right to Information Act, NGO Governance etc. Apart from government initiatives, the presenter also discussed non-conventional tools used by the people at the local level to prevent corruption, such as Citizens Report Card, Advice and Information Desk, Face the Public programme, street theatre etc. The presenter concluded by giving a set of follow-up measure, since anti-corruption was at the core of government commitment – election and thereafter. These included (i) Continued ownership of commitment at the highest level; (ii) Right to Information Act, and (iii) Good beginning of the Parliament. According to him, the key challenge was to translate commitments into practice without fear or favour.

As the designated discussant, **Dr. Abdur Rob Khan**, said that among all the types of corruption, the two most damaging types were the political and institutional ones. He raised the question whether ensuring democracy necessarily meant ensuring human rights as democracy itself was an imperfect system. The key test of the independence of an institution, be it the Parliament or the ACC, was whether it could charge incumbent people. During the past Caretaker Government, there was a proposal of setting up a Supreme Constitutional Body. According to him, this should be initiated again, involving the Parliamentary Standing Committees in the process.

Dr. Khan expressed his concern about the practice of bribery committed by the rich people. The amount, which was insignificant in terms of percentage of his/her income, was however huge in terms of absolute amount, that acted as a major incentive to encourage corruption in society. The speaker also expressed his concern over the moral or social pervasiveness of corruption prevailing in Bangladesh. People did not appear to mind need-based or small-scale corruption. Optimism was raised during the last Caretaker Government when the government took some sort of concerted, institutionalized and political effort to curb corruption, targeting specially the big hands. Such initiatives and efforts could have a positive effect on the society.

Dr. Borhan Uddin Khan, Professor, Department of Law, Dhaka University, presented the third paper on the "The Rule of Law". The speaker explained the variation of the concept of

rule of law from the classical definition given by AV Dicey and the modern exposition. While the classical notion consisted of the 'equal legal treatment of all citizens', in its modern sense, the rule of law was to ensure a 'just society' or a 'just government' where everyone would get her/his due.

Considering Bangladesh context, Dr. Borhan argued that the existence or absence of rule of law in this country was a contested issue. Hence, the present Bangladeshi society could not have claimed to be enjoying the benefits of rule of law although the preamble to the Constitution made it clear that it would be the fundamental aim of the state to establish the 'rule of law', as well as social, economic and political justice. Elaborating this point, the speaker mentioned Article 7 of Bangladesh Constitution where it proclaimed that all powers of the state belonged to the people and those powers could be exercised on behalf of the people by the representatives only.

Dr. Borhan articulated the embodiment of fundamental principles of state policy, which were essential to the lawmaking and governance of the state. These principles were basically set out to attain an exploitation-free society based on social justice, democracy, human dignity, participation by all, and equal economic development throughout the country. More precisely, the rule of law was synonymous with justice, and it could not be attained unless the people could access justice without hindrance. For that, there should be in place a well functioning system of legal aid, he argued, especially since the Constitution itself contains a number of provisions that defy the basic tenets of the rule of law. To give the examples, the speaker cited the preventive detention exceptions in the Constitution (Art. 33) and the Special Powers Act of 1974 that allowed for executive detention of any person without any formal charge being brought and without any judicial order. In the same breath, the Emergency Provisions in the Constitution, which gave ample and almost unchecked power to the President to promulgate emergency and to suspend enforcement of fundamental rights during such an emergency did not go hand in hand with the ideal of rule of law.

At the level of state practices, the criminal justice system could also be blamed for sustaining illegal practices. In addition to excessive delays in bringing justice to the victims of crimes, the practice of custodial deaths or violence was a glaring example of violating the rule of law. More alarming, in his view, was the continuing culture of impunity being accorded to those who defied the law and abused their legal powers. Dr. Borhan Uddin Khan further said that the continuing existence of corruption, irregularities in public contracts, and keeping of official secrets, that ultimately deny people's right to know and to have open/honest governance, are anti-thesis to a rule of law-based society. Undeniably, these issues should be taken care of to transcend the rule of law. In order to achieve and entrench the rule of law in the society, the speaker gave a set of recommendations. These included qualitative lawmaking, repealing of arbitrary laws, institutions building, enhancing legal aid, educating the public, improving legal education, further consolidation of judicial independence and the integrity of the Bar, expedition of the justice delivery process, free access to information; more effective political participation, political stability, and finally improvisation of means of executive and administrative accountability.

In discussing the paper of Dr. Borhan Uddin Khan, **Mr. Abul Hasan Chowdhury** said that the paper was a synthesis of well established principles of laws British constitutionalist A.V. Dicey. He, however, disagreed on certain principles of Dicey, saying that some of the concepts were banal. According to Mr. Chowdhury, Dicey believed that a parliament could make and unmake anything except 'a man and a woman and a woman and a man'. Even the British found it not so humorous. The parliament of any country had not been, nor shall it be in future, as

independent and sovereign as to enact legislation which did not directly or indirectly reflect the interests of other unseen and invisible power lobbies. Whether they were benign or counterproductive was again a totally different matter.

Even in the context of Bangladesh, Mr. Chowdhury argued that the parliament was not as sovereign as it used to be; however, it was under pressure now. In the United Kingdom, for instance, 90 percent of the members of parliament who belonged to the Labour Party were directly sponsored by the Trade Unions. Although they did not have any act similar to Article 70 of the Bangladesh Constitution, their influence was immense, and this was the inclusive characteristic of British politics. Giving this glaring example, he recommended that there should be institutionalization of democracy at the grassroots level. He further suggested that power should be devolved and there should be a period of taxation. He also added that the study of civics, liberal arts and humanities were important to bring about the culture of rule of law. Furthermore, 'independence' and 'de-politicization' of judiciary were equally important to ensure law and justice.

Mr. Chowdhury was critical of the implementation of Article 7 of the Constitution. On the issue of the representing the people, he enquired to what extent the parliamentarians played their role as legislators. The former minister also raised his concern about Article 70. Analysing the current situation, he asked whether taking away this Article would make much difference. The speaker said that one could not talk in abstract about the rule of law without enhancing, empowering and strengthening judiciary. He further added that rule of law was an emerging process like life itself. Thus, he recommended establishing a permanent 'Constitution Commission' to bring about the changes from time to time to ensure the rights of the individuals. Mr. Chowdhury held the view that law was not a command by all to be followed by all; nor was it a command by all to be followed by the majority. Law was a command by the majority to be followed by all. He concluded that, only then the rights of the marginal people will be reflected in the legal enactment.

In his presentation on "Relation between Governance and National Security", **Major General Eric Olson (Retd)** gave an overview of the key players and their roles in the defense establishment of the United States, and the many ways the civil and military sectors were related there. He explained that in the US, the President and the Secretary of Defense were collectively known as the national command authority where the Secretary of Defense was the chief adviser of the President on defense matters and at the same time served in the military chain of command. He added, the Services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps) existed as independent entities within the Defense Ministry. There were several military advisors to the national command authority. A senior military advisor worked for the Secretary of Defense and a senior civilian advisor advised the military chain of command. According to him, there was thus a good integration at the top level in their defense establishment.

General Olson pointed out that, US national security involved various other ministries/agencies besides the Defense Ministry, such as the development agencies like US Agency for International Development (USAID) and intelligence agencies. Coordinating and integrating all these agencies were challenging. On the legislature side, there were multiple committees that budget, legislate, and provide oversight and approval of defense matters.

The speaker then shifted his focus on the governance aspect of national security, stating that there were independent oversight agencies in order to ensure that there was no corruption on defense matters. These included the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and several special inspector generals. On civil-military relations, the speaker highlighted the defense

colleges and civilian universities where there was interaction between civil and military officials. He added that there were also civilian organisations, think tanks, universities, and research agencies etc that were dedicated to the study of defense matters.

In his expert opinion, integrating organizations and mechanisms were necessary for achieving civil-military cooperation and coordination. In the US, he added, it was done by the National Security Council at the national level. General Olson cited examples of integration below the national level. At a tactical level, military brigade commanders had civilian members as staff, for example, from the ministry of foreign affairs or USAID. These integrations were in many ways mandated by law, aimed to increase effectiveness of defense mechanism and use expertise in this regard. He also pointed out that planning and budget were the two critical areas where civil-military cooperation was necessary to ensure good governance in the defense sector.

OPEN DISCUSSION

After the presentations and comments from the designate discussants, the floor was open to questions, comments and observations. **Brigadier General S K Abu Baker (Retd)**, MP raised the question on corruption. According to him, corruption was endemic and prevalent all over the world. Since corruption in Bangladesh had become ‘unmanageable’, he asked Dr. Iftekharuzzaman how corrupt acts could be sorted out. **Mr. Mahfuz Ullah**, Secretary General, Centre for Sustainable Development shared his view on the issue. To avoid corruption, he mentioned the importance of Article 8.2 of the Bangladesh Constitution. Dishonest acts could be managed if transparency and accountability as well as an Ombudsman were ensured. He however, believed that there were many good things of the government policies such as compulsory education, local government and rules against corruption. At the same time, he considered Article 70 an insult to the parliament members.

In his comments, **Mr. Anwarul Masud**, Former Ambassador, said that Brigadier General Anam had not mentioned the issue of terrorism and Islamic extremism in his presentation, although these issues were a great concern for the West. On the issue of corruption, the ambassador wondered whether Bangladesh was too bad/wrongly accused of since Bangladesh was known to be a moderate Muslim country.

Referring to the comment made by Mr Abul Hasan Chowdhury on the issue of ‘unseen power lobbies’ in the parliament, **Dr. Mahbubullah**, Professor of Development Studies, Dhaka University argued that power lobbies were not at all unseen, rather very visible in Bangladesh where politicians and bureaucrats demonstrate their wealth in a dirty manner. He also envisaged that the goal of good governance was very ambitious not only for Bangladesh but also for a country like the USA. Thus, the objective should be ‘good enough governance’, to attain which, identifying the symptoms were not enough, rather the diagnoses should be given emphasis. Dr. Mahbubullah stressed on the importance of understanding the accumulation process of wealth; whether it was done ethically or unethically in the society. Considering the huge accumulation of illegal wealth in Bangladesh, he suggested devising strategies including increase in incentives and proper investments to curb corruption.

Going back to the issue of civil-military relations, **Ambassador Humayun Kabir** raised question on how civilian empowerment could be integrated into military aspects. Looking at government structure in Bangladesh, he was in the opinion that the two trends were growing concurrently: The first trend was the centralization of authority and alienation process where centralization was an alienation process within itself; and the second trend was the growing

aspiration process. These two trends were creating a volatile situation in Bangladesh. Considering the issues of good governance and security of Bangladesh, he raised the question on the structure of the state. Was there a need to restructure the state in order to create the opportunities for multiple actors that had emerged from the last 30 years? Was there enough participation in the decision making process? He further enquired whether the people of Bangladesh could create a moral high ground as a nation as they did during the Liberation war in 1971. Finally, he observed that in the modern age, security and sovereignty were no longer exclusive; rather they had become shared domains.

Brigadier General Jahangir Kabir (Retd) talked about the decentralization of the government system which might be the road map to Bangladesh's democracy. With respect to the duty of central government, he said that the government was overloaded with so many policy options. Related to this point, he raised the effectiveness of the *upazila* system, even if it was not yet given the responsibility. In between *upazila* and central government, there were mainly two layers of bureaucratic government. Though divisional government was not very effective, the district government was still powerful since the British rule. He gave a cautionary note, saying that unless the country had strong infrastructure settings and democracy, good governance would be difficult to achieve. Brigadier General Kabir also raised the issue of a 'missing' Defence Minister of Bangladesh. One of his other suggestions was to build the bridge between political government and the military so that budgeting, accountability, defence policy, and procurement policies could be completed. He believed, grievances would be redressed in that way and civilian accountability would also be established to justify the spending in the defence forces.

Ambassador (Retd) Shahed Akthar, talked about two key points that the government should take into consideration. First, the country must have the rule of law, and second, corruption had to be avoided. About the second theme, he further added that 'we have dirty people in the country and the political leaders should clean those'.

Coming back to the issue of corruption, **Lieutenant General ATM Zahirul Alam, rcds,psc (Retd)** enquired about how corruption could be reduced from the society under the prevailing condition. With regards to good governance, he pointed out that good governance meant good delivering government, good deliveries between public and private institutions, good delivering civil societies, security communities and media. All these deliveries should be based on a vision embodied with the aspirations of people and the demand of the time. These should also be based on certain principles such as justice, equity and accountability. Giving the example of this seminar, he expressed his apprehension that there was a clear absence of the representatives of the government who needed to be present in the round table. Regarding security, he mentioned that good governance was absolutely intertwined with security and safety. It was related to injustice, repression, lack of fair play and non-sensitivity. Referring to Chittagong Hill Tracts, he opined that the people of this area did not get rightful share. He underlined that bad governance did not ensure security.

Mr. Tyler Rauert, Professor of International Law and Political Violence, National Defense University, Near East South Asia Centre for Strategic Studies, Washington D.C., said that there was an interesting confluence between security and justice sectors. He agreed with the participants that there should be a separate and independent judiciary system in Bangladesh to establish rule of law. And also, the judiciary should recognize their own role and not be directed by the political leaders.

Mr. John Hansen, Member of the DIRI Team, USA said that the whole notion of the Ministry of Defense as a separate entity where the Prime Minister had a dedicated separate Defense Minister was really a personal decision of the Prime Minister. Referring to the case of the USA, he said that separate Defense Ministry had some virtues for his country. However, in the case of Bangladesh, such decisions entirely depended on the willingness of the government.

Responding to the questions from the floor, **Brigadier General Shahedul Anam Khan** agreed with the participants that, Bangladesh should have a separate Defence Minister, as there was no separate Defence Minister in spite of the portfolio being the core of military sector. It was the President who was running the Defence throughout except during the period of General Osmany who was appointed as a Defence Minister for a short period of time. After 1975, the country did not have any Minister of Defence. Regarding the question related to extremism, Brigadier Khan strongly felt that it was really a big challenge for the government to combat terrorism. He further viewed that terrorism was a substantive tangible threat to the security of the country and good governance was the response to those threats.

In replying the questions from the house, **Dr. Iftekharuzzaman** suggested some key points to eradicate corruption. First of all, he opined that, the country was not that badly off and the situation was improving gradually. Considering the international ranking, he mentioned that Bangladesh was now 137 out of 180 countries in terms of corruption. To improve the situation, he suggested initiatives from the political sector. He added that politics had become an investment to make profit in Bangladesh. This was a zero sum game as the gainers took all and it was a very simple formula. Thus, it was the politicians who could set up different political systems. Due to the concentration of political power, the political will of politicians that was presented during the election period was not implanted in most cases. To put it simply, power belonged to those who it should not belong. Unless the justice system, the rule of law, judiciary and all other pillars could work in a coordinated and effective way, it would be really difficult for the government to work against corruption. He was hopeful saying that the situation could change if people were engaged at the grassroots level.

Dr. Borhan Uddin Khan, in response to questions directed towards him, told the floor that certain rights expressed in the Constitution were not enforceable. Part 2 of the Constitution discussed about social and cultural rights and these rights were enforceable but not directly. These were basically known as the fundamental rights of state policy and primary to the governance of the state. In this regard, he added that the state had the responsibility to legislate necessary laws and to put in effect those social, economic and cultural rights. To understand the situation, he remarked that the country already passed 38 years after its independence, but had not achieved much, if not lagged behind in many respects. He argued that, it is the politicians and legislators who could do everything and legislate the social, political and cultural rights of people. He believed that the state should create a system where people could enjoy their honest income. If people did not pay taxes, they should be charged under the criminal laws and acts.

On the matter of “doable”, **Mr Abul Hasan Chowdhury** remarked that the important element was the journey of the Standing Committee of the parliament. His own feeling was that the committee’s public hearing system could be a very good conduit for the think tank, civil society and to connect the legislators. Mr. Chowdhury emphasized the importance of dedicated Defence Minister. According to him, it was not easy to get this done as the Prime Minister held that portfolio. In this regard, he mentioned three types of views that prevailed. Some believed that the Prime Minister should be the Defence Minister; second group believed that it should be under a dedicated Defence Minister; and the views of the third group was that the armed

forces might not take a dedicated one easily. Considering all those, he expressed his satisfaction about the Prime Minister's position as the Defence Minister.

CLOSING REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

Major General Firdaus Mian, psc, Chairman, Board of Governors, BISS concluded the session saying that the current seminar on **Good Governance in Bangladesh: A National Security Priority** was not an isolated event; rather it was the continuation of a previously held workshop in November 2009 on "National Security and Civil Military Relations in Bangladesh" jointly organized by BISS and BEI with the support of APCSS, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA. From the workshop, five priority security concerns were brought out and this seminar was the first one on which further deliberations has been made in this seminar. The second one was going to be held in next June. He also intimated that in April next, BISS was going to organize a regional seminar on counter-terrorism. At the end, General Firdaus thanked the paper presenters, discussants and the guests for a fruitful discussion.