



# PSYCHOLOGY IN THE SERVICE OF NATIONAL SECURITY

*A secure mind for a  
secure community*

# OVERVIEW

- ✓ Why a public debate/dialogue on Psychology and National security
- ✓ Psychological implications of individual and group behaviour in a radically changed national security environment:  
Psychological perspectives
- ✓ Personal and group dynamics at play in terrorism and political conflicts
- ✓ Psychological foundations in the behaviour of political actors and their consequences for security
- ✓ The role of psychology in the institutions of security

# WHY A PUBLIC DEBATE/DIALOGUE ON PSYCHOLOGY AND NATIONAL SECURITY?

- In the twenty first century, the nature of threats to a country's national security has significantly changed
- As Mangelsdorff, A. David (2006) rightly observed, external security threats have changed from the forces of other nation-states to cyberterrorism and urban warfare by terrorists who can strike anywhere.
- Whereas the military was the first line of defense, today multifaceted response plans are more important to the success of the military and national security than in the past
- As such, there is a growing interest in exploring and utilizing all the elements of national power, including so-called "soft power"
- In the new national security environment, psychologists have much to offer
- The purpose of this public debate/dialogue therefore is to highlight the role of psychological insights in promoting national security and peace, and how understanding human behavior is key to preventing and mitigating the consequences of the worst human behavior.

# PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES TO NATIONAL SECURITY

For the purposes of the debate/dialogue taglined **A secure mind for a secure community**, elements of national security psychology are addressed under the following specialties in psychology:

**individual differences** - focusing on variation in people's personality and social behavior due to differences in their experiences. This strand addresses such questions as Why are some people fearful and others bold, some conscientious and others careless? Knowledge in this area helps in personalized interventions customized for an individual's response profile

**applied social psychology** - how social influence, social perception and social interaction influence individual and group behavior.

**clinical and counseling psychology** - understanding, preventing, and relieving psychologically-based distress or dysfunction and to promote subjective well-being and personal development

# PSYCHOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP BEHAVIOUR IN A CHANGED NATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Persistent political violence and conflicts have in psychological foundations such as a sense of humiliation, perceptions of unfairness and injustice.

Psychological security such as sense of self esteem and trust affect how individuals and groups interact and are tolerant to others