

PAKISTAN TIPTOEING ON SECURITY CHALLENGES

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 Analysis

The security challenges facing Pakistan are complex with issues relating to modernization, globalization, as well as regional and geographic perspectives. Being placed in a highly volatile region offers both opportunities and liabilities for the country. Any change in international security environment affects Pakistan's security. The emerging world's multi-polarity, increasing mobility of people, economies and ideas, and the rise of extreme right wing parties pave the way for the analysis of multi-dimensional security in Pakistan. Security is the major concern of a country's politics and development in contemporary anarchic world. Barry Buzan offered a broader concept of security in his book "People: States and Fear". According to Buzan, "Security is a contested, yet fundamental concept which continues to underscore politics of state security and development in the contemporary anarchic world."

Etymologically, security implies the absence of real or perceived threats whether originating from

internal turmoil, external sources, or incumbent economic disparities and inequalities. Nations not only seek (economic, political, and military) power to effectively deal with such threats but take adequate measures either to ward them off or to minimize their perceived adverse impacts. Founder of Pakistan Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah once said, "The weak and defenseless, in this imperfect world, invite aggression from others." While tactics and strategies are devised to effectively handle perceived threats, efforts are also made simultaneously to inculcate a sense of security among the citizens.

Pakistan's inability to build, nurture and sustain effective state institutions due to overwhelming structural and socio-political reasons means that it has remained preoccupied in internal as well as external security crisis. The past decade and a half has been extraordinarily turbulent for Pakistan. It has borne the major brunt of the spillover effects of the American-led war on terror in Afghanistan, which has resulted in



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huge costs to its economy and a loss of more than 40,000 lives.

External challenges

The international security environment remains unstable and uncertain with the emergence of US-China tensions. U.S and China's rivalry, trade wars and other recent events in the immediate neighborhood have had a profound impact on Pakistan's security dynamics. Sandwiched between India and Afghanistan, Pakistan's security perceptions have been influenced by its state of relationships with those countries. Yet, its largest source of security challenges has been with India. Today, Pakistan is confronted with a three-threat scenario—the perennial threat from India, Afghanistan, and the threat emanating from a changing domestic situation.

In external scenario the foremost challenge emerges from India's hegemonic policy to prevent Pakistan from seeking resolution to the Kashmir Issue in accordance with the UN Resolutions on Right to Self Determination. The longest unresolved issue of Kashmir remains the prime bone of contention. Narendra Modi's extreme rightist lineage government has, since oath taking, desisted any overture to normalize relations and to resolve bilateral disputes. In fact, due to objectionable policies of BJP government, the South Asian Association for Regional Corporation (SAARC), which Pakistan was to host, has not been convened for three years. Destabilising Pakistan by sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan is an old Chanakya-policy.

Undoubtedly, the Kashmir dispute has been and in many ways still continues to be, the main source of continued hostility and animosity between India and Pakistan. The people of Kashmir have been consistently striving and enthusiastically raising their voices for independence. More than 100,000 Kashmir people have died along with countless fell injured and feeling scared. The Indian government has consistently refused to read the writings on the wall, and has opted for a military approach to suppress the movement. It is the earnest hope of many South Asians that

dialogue would be resumed and maintained at a desired level of consistency to resolve the dispute.

The second major source of external threat emanates from the current developments in Afghanistan. In view of strategic terms these is not seen as a serious threat to Pakistan's security. But the danger of possible fallout from Afghanistan's political instability into the neighboring provinces of Pakistan cannot be overlooked. Provinces of Khyber-Paktoonkhawa, FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas) and Balochistan are extremely prone to such eventuality, primarily because of dissident elements. There exists sufficient evidence to support the contention that these subversive movements were and continue to be actively encouraged and materially supported by outsiders using Afghanistan.

Pakistan's policies towards Afghanistan shall continue to make extra efforts with a view to a stable and peaceful next-door neighbor. AS a neighbor, Afghanistan houses a substantive Pashtun population and has age-old trading relations with Pakistan. Pakistan's role in reconstructing Afghanistan is extremely important. The United States and India must understand that better relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan are necessary for the security of the region. The recent peace talks between Taliban and US officials has proved once again that without engaging Pakistan peace in Afghanistan is impossible.

Balanced foreign policy also demands good relations with already existing and new emerging poles of power. A good relation with the US, Germany, Russia and other powers is paramount. Pakistan has a long history of friendship with China, which needs to be followed with vigour and determination.

Internal security

At the domestic level various concerns have almost continuously effected Pakistani society. There are issues relating to governance, political instability, sluggish economy, ethnic conflicts,

sectarianism, extremism and terrorism just to name a few. Economic instability, ethnic conflicts and sectarianism are fundamental variables of internal security threats to Pakistan and are likely to persist. The peril of terrorism will remain the most potent and real threat to Pakistan for the foreseeable future. Afghan-based *Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)*, *ISIS*'s acts of terrorism inside Pakistan and the sponsored *Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM)* will continue to pose security challenges in the future as well but their volume is directly linked to the peace talks between the US and Taliban in Afghanistan.

Some positive steps have been taken to address such grave challenges. Pakistan is transforming into a stable democracy by strengthening its democratic and state institutions. Political parties and state institutions are working together to transform the formal democracy into a more participatory democracy. A structural transformation is going on, the existing two tiered governance is being transformed into a three tiered governance system. This is done to address the imbalance in political stability, practice of participatory democracy and voice of people in formulation and implementation of policies related to human security.

The very recent efforts in Pakistan towards strengthening democracy are writings on wall. The country's two elected governments have completed their term in office for the first time without any disruption from strong state institutions. Today Pakistan is politically conscious by supporting democracy as essential political arrangement and expecting political elites to deliver especially on the count of good governance (the verdict of Supreme Court disqualifying Nawaz Sharief former Pakistan premier is an example). This transformation of democracy through different levels will definitely

take time but in the long run will assure political stability and security of Pakistan.

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Threats from extremist groups has remained a challenge for Pakistan for a very long time. Internal security threats from sectarian and pseudo secessionist forces have created destruction in the country. Since the US invasion in Afghanistan this challenge and threat has risen in magnitude. Sectarian violence is also a serious threat to Pakistan's national security. In the recent years Pakistan has been facing sharp sectarian violence. Sectarian violence in Pakistan mainly manifests as tit for tat target killing of rival sects. No doubt sectarian violence is the most dangerous threat to

Pakistan's national security after terrorism.

In the implementation of the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2013 to curb violence, actions were taken against all such elements which were posing a threat to Pakistan's national security. This policy was later renewed after Peshawar Army Public School Massacre in December 2014. The National Action Plan (NAP) was then formulated by the Pakistani Government in 2015 to crackdown terrorism and to supplement the ongoing anti-terrorist offensive in North-Western Pakistan. The Government prioritized military efforts like operation "Zarb e Azab" and "Radd ul fasaad" to erase extremism from the society. Successful military operations in FATA, Balochistan and Karachi are displaying positive changes by sabotaging terrorist attacks in Pakistan. This internal peace and harmony will, in time, provide necessary conditions for the revival of Pakistan's economy.

In 2019, Pakistan finds itself facing a dire macroeconomic crisis. It is spending more on imports than it receives on exports, with its current account deficit having risen from \$2.7

billion in 2015 to \$18.2 billion in 2018. Despite the massive depreciation in the rupee, Pakistani exports value have remained almost the same. Meanwhile, the government's external debt has also increased from \$64.1 billion in June 2018 to \$65.8 billion in January 2019. The inflation rate is now touching 9.4 percent. To make a significant impact on the current account deficit, Pakistan needs to ensure an investment-friendly environment that attracts more foreign direct investment (FDI), instead of relying so heavily on foreign aid.

Pakistan also needs to focus on building its domestic industry to expand its export portfolio and enhance its competitiveness in the international market. It did recently receive \$2 billion from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) through the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), which provides concessionary development loans. In February, Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammad bin Salman signed seven Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Pakistan, pledging up to \$21 billion worth of investment over the next six years. China invested \$66 billion in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which was announced as the flagship project for the

BRI. CPEC comprises four key components, including energy development (\$34 billion), infrastructure development (\$11 billion), the Gwadar port and the opening of 10 special economic zones. Faced with a two-front threat on its borders, Pakistan believed that it had found an opportunity to not only enhance her economic prospects but to redress her security concerns. The FDI in form of CPEC will move Pakistan into positive growth and stability. Pakistan is a connecting country, with the improvements in communication infrastructure and CPEC, more potential for increase in trade with Iran and Central Asian states seems an inevitable possibility.

Pakistan needs to focus on these dimensions of contemporary security challenges. The previous year's Indian policy to isolate Pakistan has failed miserably. The new aligns and regional cooperation platforms emerging in the South Asian region and the world are not against it, nor in favour of Pakistan. The attitude and approach of the political leadership of Pakistan and their ability to administer effective good governance could prove to be a game changer as far as regional security is concerned.