

PAKISTAN'S SECURITY COMPULSIONS: EXTERNAL & INTERNAL DIMENSIONS

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“While history has been unkind with Pakistan, its geography has been its greatest benefit.”
(Stephen P.Cohen)

Abstract

The international security environs are undergoing drastic transformation. The related changes/evolution has diverse implications for countries both in the developed and developing world. In this regard, Pakistan as one of the major stakeholders in the regional security dynamics is impacted in multiple ways; creating opportunities and challenges simultaneously. Emerging Multi-polar world order, ever-increasing globalization with free movement of people, ideas & finances and rise of non-state actors are underlining the need to have an in-depth analysis of strategic national security appraisal for Pakistan. Consequently, this article takes into account perspectives on internal security paradigms; economic, political, governance and internal peace & security, for evolving a collective security perspective. Taking guidance from Quaid-i-Azam's vision of “Peace within and Peace without”, the article propounds proposals for collective national security policy formulation to reap maximum benefits from the increasingly pre-eminent geo-economic developments underway in the region and beyond.

Keywords: Multi-Polar World, National Security Perspectives, Territorial Integrity, Socio-Political Stability, Geo-Economics.

Introduction

The concept of security is challenged, yet essential to emphasize government issues of state security and progress in the present chaotic world.¹ Currently, three main trends are influencing issues identified with Pakistan's security mechanism. Firstly, the re-distribution of power from West to East and North to South is fostering Multi-polar World Order. Secondly, the fast-paced globalization and swift technological developments encouraging free movement of things, funds, individuals and thoughts, uniting and isolating people at the same time. Thirdly, the rise of non-state actors, utilizing weapons of fear and intimidation for political dividends, has been posing national security challenges.² In consolidation, these issues are testing the security of states in different ways. With an enormously central strategic location, Pakistan by virtue of developments along its eastern and western borders, has been impacted by the mutuality of these dynamics. The prognosis for future suggests that maneuverings in Pakistan's neighborhood are likely to intensify to harm its national security and

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development. At the same time, having a history replete with turbulence, wars, calamities, disasters and to top it off dismemberment, defence and security attains higher priority for Pakistan. On the domestic level, impacted by the security conundrums of the region, internal dynamics of security are likely to emerge as a source of key concern. Such dynamics underline the ever – increasing importance of national security policy formulation with the support and consent of all stakeholders which must be rigorously implemented as a national duty.

This work intends to dilate upon Pakistan's security challenges and opportunities while underlining the most important perspectives and recommendations for making internal and external security impregnable. The primary appraisal of security environment portends not only challenges but also opportunities through the prism of history for augmenting long - lasting security. It is argued that there exists a collective resolution infused with positivity for betterment and improvement in the country today. In this milieu, tapping on potentials including Belt and Road's Initiative (BRI) connectivity projects especially China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), present multiple opportunities for improving directional, formational and capability - related dimensions of security for Pakistan. This positive vibe if seized and translated by our leaders, holds the capacity to considerably direct the nation towards a path of prosperity. Nevertheless, the path is beset with difficulties, which merits realization and unwavering commitment by all of us.

Geographical Perspective

Human society is closely knitted to its geography as the history of both is a mirror image of each other. The relationship between characteristics and necessities of the environment of a state has been established since time immemorial³, whereas the geographical location of a country defines its geo-strategic significance. The biggest strength of Pakistan lies in her strategic location, that in seventy years of her history, Pakistan has twice played role of a front line state for the US, and now a third time for China. Hence, geo-strategic location has enormous strategic politico-economic significance.⁴ It is seen as a "Zipper State" for three key regions of Asia i.e. Central Asia, Middle East and South East Asia. In the immediate neighborhood, China, India, Iran and Afghanistan share long land borders with Pakistan with a long coastline of North Arabian Sea. The Middle East and Central Asian states form the extended neighborhood of Pakistan.

Robert D Kaplan reiterates that geography is an indispensable "backdrop" to the human drama of ideas, will and chance.⁵ The same goes true for Pakistan which suffered immense losses due to its geography besides reaping fruits too. The management of its Eastern wing which was naturally prone to floods and cyclones continued to multiply problems for the newly born state after independence in 1947. After the war of 1965 with India, the country was still reeling out of cascade of shocks when in 1971 the enemy again struck, resulting in dismemberment of Pakistan. The problems did not end here; as playing twice the role of a frontline state for the US has not come without a price in its checkered history. The trial and tribulations which Pakistani state and society have suffered are huge and are one of a kind in the history of

mankind. Apart from this, Pakistan's strategic location continues to bestow upon it a character that provides a link between the Middle East and South Asia. Pakistan has retained this pivotal importance since Cold War till today.⁶ The crucial geo-political position of Pakistan makes it a state which cannot be avoided by global and regional players.

Topography

Pakistan's topography is a momentous blend of landscape diversifying from plains to deserts, forests, hills and plateaus to coastal areas of the Arabian Sea in the South to the towering mountains of Central Asia in the north. Pakistan is home to Himalayas and Karakoram mountain ranges with Karakoram being the most heavily glaciated part of the world outside the Polar Regions. Pakistan is endowed with the densest consolidation of high peaks in the world with five mountains over 8000 meters, including K₂, the second highest on Earth. In the north, there is another great mountain range of Hindu Kush which is 800 km long and stretches between central Afghanistan and northern Pakistan. The highest peak there is Tirich Mir (7708 meters) situated in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province of Pakistan which separates Central Asia from South Asia.

Demography – Past and Present

Pakistan's unique geographical history has given it an immense social and natural diversity. There exist many features, cultures and distinctions peculiar only to Pakistan. Its historical significance is characterized by many celebrated features including the Great Indus Valley Civilization developed with Harappa, Mohenjo Daro and Mehrgarh being the large cities of this civilization.

However, by 1700 BC, this civilization disappeared yet its influence and remains are still found in the subsequent civilizations.⁷ Next thousand years saw the invasions from South West and Central Asia. By 1500 BC, Aryans came to Punjab and settled all over India. Later, Punjab was conquered by Persians during 500 BC who were followed by Alexander the Great. Then, history witnessed establishment of Mauryan Empire that was subsequently conquered by the Greeks who established their capitals in Peshawar and Rawalpindi. A visit through the pages of history suggests that many civilizations including the Indians, the Greeks, the Arab Muslims, and the Turks, followed by the mighty Mughals ruled the present day Pakistan.

This rich civilizational history has great bearing on the culture and sociology of the people of Pakistan who are a fine blend of multi-ethnic and multi-lingual community. Pakistani society and culture comprises numerous ethnic groups ranging from the Punjabis, Kashmiris, Saraikis, Makranis, Baloch, Hazaras, Pashtuns to the Baltis, and Shinkai communities. Pakistan's culture is greatly influenced by neighbouring countries' cultures such as Afghan, Turkish, Iranian and South Asian Indians, Central Asia and Middle East. This diversity of cultural influences finds expression in dress, food, language and religious practices.⁸ However, the truth underlying the demography of a nation is never defined by its boundaries, landscape or

geography but it is the character, steadfastness, unity and perseverance of its men and women that make it stand out tall. This dynamism has found ample expression in Pakistani people who rise from the ashes like a phoenix each time they face calamities and disasters.

Resilience – Enduring Feature

Michael Kugelman of Asia News Network says “Resilience is a trait often used to describe Pakistanis, and rightly so. No matter what is thrown at them Pakistanis persevere”. This is evident from Pakistan’s political history of playing the front line state twice: in the ‘Cold War Era’ and then to win ‘Global War on Terror’ in recent times. This front line status has inflicted huge losses to Pakistan so far. But it is the resilience of Pakistani state and society that keeps it afloat. It is heartening that despite experiencing bouts of violence and instability, of divergence and divisiveness, the country not only has existed but also excelled as a compact and promising state especially with China’s BRI vision elevating its stature further in the emerging multi-polar world.

Burden of History with Difficult Neighborhood

At the time of creation, Pakistan was akin to a hapless newborn. Inequitable distribution of resources at the time of partition, with managing two wings East & West Pakistan, 1000 miles apart with an utterly hostile enemy in between was preordained. Losing her founding father in the second year of her life and fighting a war against arch rival India set the stage for tumultuous times lying ahead for the newly born state. Since independence, Pakistan has been facing socio-economic challenges due to inequitable distribution of assets at the time of partition and political instability throughout. Threats emanating from its eastern neighbor India predominantly because of the unfinished agenda of subcontinent’s division in the form of Jammu & Kashmir have also cost it heavily, denying it socio-economic development by diverting its resources for strengthening security. On Kashmir issue dispute continuously knocking at the door of United Nations and international community as the single biggest example of forsaking the right of self-determination. So far, the resolve of Kashmiris stays immovable and they won't rest till they get independence. This reality is obvious to the Indian policy makers, yet the subversive actions denying Kashmiris their innate right are underway jeopardizing peace in South Asia particularly creating security worries for Pakistan.

Recognizing the changes underway in global and regional geo-political and geo-economic environment, foreign policy of Pakistan is somewhat balanced. However, it needs to focus on the future of Pakistan-India relations which have to be based on respect and peaceful co-existence. There is a need that both nations must try to shed burden of history by resolving long standing disputes especially Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution. To that end, Pakistan by following Quaid-i-Azam’s directive of ‘Peace Within and Peace Without’ may gain maximum benefits from the emerging geo-economic developments underway via China’s BRI vision of connectivity and economic well-being for the people of this region and beyond.

Assailability: Potentials and Pitfalls

The new regional alignments are orienting Pakistan towards diversifying her security, strategic and geopolitical priorities and strategies to address internal and external challenges to safeguard its national interests. These developments also compelled the political and security leadership to apprise its National Security Policy (NSP) and National Internal Security Policy (NISP) to deter internal and external threats. First and foremost prerequisite for Pakistan's security is to secure its borders and territorial integrity at the same time undertaking threat analysis emanating from its immediate neighborhood in the east, west and south. Given China's BRI Vision and specifically CPEC in Pakistan, there emerges a new phenomenon of 'Regional Security'. Furthermore, there is realization in Pakistani security calculus that ensuring connectivity and strong economy are cardinal parts of national security as Pakistan's bright future hinges on this economic corridor.

Analyzing and assessing Pakistani borders' vulnerability to attacks predominantly from eastern, western and southern borders is discussed here. For that purpose, assailability factor needs to be examined at length. Assailability is based on geography and kind of borders/neighborhood a country has. A circle is most suited for defence as all points on the perimeter are equidistant from the centre. A force in the middle can react to a threat emerging at any point on the perimeter.

The shape of a country can be compared to the circle to assess the state of assailability. Pakistan being an elongated country has a hostile neighbor on the East and an unfriendly country to the West. Pakistan's total land borders are 6774 km; India 2240 km, Afghanistan 2430 km, Iran and China 909 km and 595 km respectively. Based on nature of relationship, border with China is the only land border where assailability may be measured as zero. Keeping in view nature of relationship with neighbours and emerging developments following factors will define degree of assailability:

- Prevalence of disputes.
- Degree of animosity/ hostility.
- Propensity to resort to application of military instrument.
- Nature of military potential available.
- Geography of borders.

Thus, borders with the rest of the three countries have a degree of assailability, worst being with India where assailability can be quantified at 7 or 8 on scale of 10. In case of Afghanistan, this figure is 5 and for Iran it is 2, as shown in figure.

Disputes in Neighborhood

Since independence, Pakistan has always faced territorial claims by Afghanistan and lingering issue of Jammu and Kashmir with India.⁹ Keeping assailability factor in mind, Pakistan has been facing continuous threats from these two countries situated on western and eastern borders respectively.

India

In one way or the other, Lord George Nathaniel Curzon influences Indian strategy circles that looked at the world from an indistinguishable geographical point of view as Indian elites do today. Curzon's India comprised of the lands of present day Pakistan, Bangladesh and Burma. This India, in Curzon's view, required shadow zones of impact, particularly in the Iranian Plateau, the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, and in South East Asia as far as to the Gulf of Siam (Gulf of Thailand).¹⁰ It is intriguing how India is stressing on same shadow zones of impact in the region.

This Indian mindset is manifested in the decades old dispute of Jammu & Kashmir. Ever since Pakistan's independence, the issue of Kashmir has been at the base of Indo-Pak rivalries.¹¹ The issues of Siachin, Sir Creek and water keep on impacting Indo-Pak relations besides their conflicts gaining a nuclear dimension too. It is because of these cardinal issues that there is greater concentration of forces and security mechanisms on Pakistan's eastern borders to counter any adventure by India. Furthermore, recent Indian Cold Start and Doval Doctrines are completely Pakistan-centric, presupposing that India can cross the international border, temporarily hold Pakistani territory and launch punitive multi-dimensional strategic and economic targets without triggering a general conflict. Also, repeated violations of the Line of Control renders this border dangerous, perpetuating, threat from India. To tackle these threats, Pakistan has developed a range of nuclear weapons that will present a theoretically insurmountable barrier to any Indian design seeking military aggression against Pakistan, also putting in place requisite border security mechanisms to ensure its territorial integrity.

Afghanistan

The bi-lateral relations of Pakistan and Afghanistan have mostly been unfriendly since 1947. The hostility has developed into complexity due to regional disputes to repeated allegations of cross-border terrorism in the Post – 9/11 scenario. Afghanistan's peaceful future depends on a promising regional cooperative milieu, with Pakistan as an important stakeholder. On the other hand, a shaky Afghanistan destabilizes Pakistan, complicating its capacity to restore her security and economy by suppressing internal militancy. However, Pakistan's geostrategic outlook, military operations like Al-Mizan and Zarb-e-Azb and limitations of its counter terrorism policies due to difficult, shared and mountainous border with Afghanistan have not so far brought any resolute changes for lasting peace in Afghanistan. Afghanistan shares religious, cultural and traditional values, and is dependent on Pakistan for transit and bilateral trade. Nonetheless, the absence of radical change in Pakistan's strategic outlook and behavior towards militant groups caused resentment in Afghanistan, India and United States. The presence of NATO forces in Afghanistan along more than 2000 kilometers of porous border pose serious concerns for Pakistan's security. The Durand Line remains a thorny issue between the two countries whereas India's machinations to create instability inside Pakistan continue through its consulates situated in Afghanistan close to Pakistani border.¹²

Recently, emergence of Daesh on Afghanistan's side of the western border is a great concern for Pakistan. The group has resources, manpower and safe havens in the foothills of the White Mountain (Speen Ghar) on the other side of the Durand Line, where it has virtually established its writ. In this respect, blaming each other's government will not solve the problem as the threat is transnational and could only be addressed through collective response mechanisms. Bajaur and Mohmand agencies' border areas, being high-threat zones, need to have regular surveillance.¹³ Fencing the border is another hard step taken in national interest. Furthermore, proper border management needs seriousness and commitment from both Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, the Afghan Unity Government is influenced by the US and India which do not want stability in Afghanistan so as to keep Pakistan unstable for their vested interests.

Iran

Another porous border of Pakistan is in the southwest with Iran running over almost 900 Kilometers. This border is infested with drug trafficking, illegal border crossings, terror attacks, human trafficking and unlawful transportation into both Iran and Pakistan. Iranian authorities have built a fence to prevent illegal trespassing and trade. This has caused friction between the two countries. The Balochs also claim that the wall was built against the will of the Balochi people who populate both sides of the border. These border tensions between them are creating security implications at the junction.

Over the years, the Pak-Iran relationship has been characterized as cold due to Pakistan's closeness with Saudi Arabia, which has close relationship with the US has further increased the crevices in Pak-Iran relations. Iran views the Islamic Military Alliance (IMA) as a coalition of Sunni Muslim countries against Shia Iran and its other allies in the Middle East. Against this backdrop, Iran's relations with Pakistan have deteriorated while Pakistan's former Chief of Army Staff, General Raheel Shareef has been appointed as Commander-in-Chief of Islamic Military Alliance. Similarly, Pakistan views Indian involvement in Chabahar as threat to its security since India declares her ambitions of isolating Pakistan regionally and internationally. Addressing these issues, calls for elimination of cross border movements in the region promising significant financial incentive, physical links through Iran - Pakistan gas pipeline and instituting effective mechanism of Border Management Commission between Pakistan and Iran. Alongside, propagating Chabahar and Gwadar as compatriots instead of pitching both ports as rivals for ensuring enduring relations between the two neighbours.

China

In its northeast, Pakistan shares border with China which is connected through Karakorum Highway that passes through the Gilgit-Baltistan province. Recently, China has initiated BRI in order to connect with Eurasia, Central Asia, Middle East and Africa through a network of land and sea routes. Under China's BRI vision, Pakistan provides pivotal position through 'Gwadar Port' along with both land and sea routes running through its territory, considered to be of immense importance for China's rise as an economic world power.

North Arabian Sea

Pakistan has a coastline of 960 kms along the Indian Ocean. The maintenance of shipping lanes into the main ports of Karachi and Bin Qasim is vital to Pakistan's economy. Pakistan has significant location in North Arabian Sea in particular and in Indian Ocean in general which could control the world trade by playing effective role in the region.¹⁴

Keeping in view external threats to Pakistan, the foremost is Indian hegemony which is multiplying its influence through close cooperation with the US and other western allies. Threats emanating from Arabian Sea can be divided into war and peace time periods; war time potential threats entail joint Indian Naval, Air and land Forces' strikes. There also exists a probability of attack by Extra Regional Forces predominantly by the US Navy and Air force in tacit understanding with India, in case Pakistan is required to be subdued. Whereas peace time activities detrimental to security include terrorism related acts, piracy, human trafficking and narcotics, clandestine and subversive activities including mining, drone or rocket and suicidal attacks by anti-state actors. Nevertheless, Pakistan's Armed Forces through their modest but intelligent and technologically advanced inventory are fully capable to defend against any aggression on any of its borders by any country. Now, the discussion focuses on critical challenges to internal security of Pakistan.

Economic Security

Any democratic country aspires to have in place sustainable governance with positive economic indicators, good health and education infrastructure, satisfactory internal security guaranteeing all citizens' social security while providing them equal opportunities to progress and prosper. Pakistan despite being a democratic state has been faced with challenges like poor governance, political instability, fragile law and order, lack of social justice, rising national debt and to top it off an internal security threatened by extremism and militancy.

Further, corruption is common and goes unabated. Pakistan is positioned 127th out of 177 on Corruption Index and divide between rich and poor as per GINI Index remains at 29.3%. There is least will and commitment on the part of government towards expediting the tax reforms process and documenting the undocumented economy. It is worrisome to note that Pakistanis feel more confident in investing abroad as compared to the investments in their own country and for that reason there is continuous flight of capital from Pakistan.¹⁵ The current account deficit has shot up by 43% to US \$ 15.96 billion in the first eleven months of the fiscal year 2017-2018 which is 5.5% of the GDP. This deficit stands very close to the full year's estimate of US \$ 16 billion, and is expected to reach around US \$ 17.5 billion by end of June 2018. Analysts say that high import bill and foreign repayments have weakened the external sector's position.¹⁶ Heavy borrowing has piled up to a US \$ 75.7 billion external debt, which is not sustainable for long term growth. Foreign exchange reserves have fallen and the descending slide continues.

The circular debt which is reported at Rs.507 billion on 31 May, 2018 has increased by Rs.40 billion to Rs. 547 billion by June, 2018. At the same time, consistent decline in investment rates and savings have put the policy makers in a tight spot. In April 2018, Pakistan's GDP was projected at 5.28%, highest in 10 years. However, with the swearing in of the new government faced with huge economic challenges including alarmingly high debt re-payment, growing trade deficit, swelling circular debt and plummeting Pakistani currency, the target seems unlikely to be achieved.

How the country will avoid default like situation when it has to pay US \$ 45 billion of debt by December 2018 as well as to make interest payments, in addition to depleting foreign currency reserves.¹⁷ The economy has shown signs of development when it registered a potential growth from 5.1% in 2015 to 5.85% for the FY 2017-18. There is room for a boost in the economic momentum by instituting strict measures such as austerity drive, broadening tax base, limiting tax evasion and privatizing loss-making public service enterprises in order to put fast-depleting precious resources on halt. It is mandatory to ensure provision of uninterrupted power supply to domestic and commercial consumers to increase industrial output and restore the trust of private sector which is presently suffering hard due to power outages and shortages. CPEC related projects when combined with growth- centered policies have the potential to take growth rate to encouraging numbers in short to medium term.

Pakistan being the zipper state, with developments in energy, communication and road infrastructure under CPEC, promises great prospects for increase in bilateral trade with Iran and Central Asian states. Hence, Pakistan- Iran gas pipeline and CASA 1000 should help in bridging the gap in energy shortfall. A timely culmination of these projects is critical to a stable economic security. For reinvigorating Pakistan's sick economy, there exists an immediate need to overhaul our economic policy through a consensus of all stakeholders, committed to stand for economic stability and get rid of IMF bailout packages in favor of homegrown, self-reliant, austere and resilient economic remedies. If nuclear weapons' acquisition in 1980s ensured Pakistan's security against existential threat, the future security of the country lies in economic security. This purpose can best be served by timely implementation of CPEC development plan provided its potential is optimally exploited and ensuring it doesn't become a debt trap.

Political Instability and Disarray

If we analyze the success stories of Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, China and India, political stability, good governance and continuity of policies emerge as pre-requisite for economic development. The smooth political progression of 2013 from one political government to the next has fairly fortified the political and democratic set-up in Pakistan. In this milieu, political parties and state organs are collaborating and conflicting simultaneously, as democracy is evolving into a more participatory form of government. It is contended that politics centered around development projects only may win votes and prolong the life span of political regimes. However foundations of a result-oriented political disposition can only be laid by those leaders who not only respect democratic institutions but also derive strength from them as well as exercise their instrumental power through them.

The existing political framework needs to experience progress towards a deepened participatory democratic system to include grass root levels so as to make democracy appealing and to deliver results to the common man. Making strides in the quality of democratic governance, administrative and institutional reforms are imperative also for political stability. All arrangements and measures are, therefore, needed to be pooled in to address the issues of a common man. Along these lines, Pakistan can experience political security and long-term stability ensured by a more participatory democratic system delivering dividends. The national consensus on national security, established through the National Action Plan (NAP), will ensure prolonged periods of political and economic stability. For internal stability, the government with consensus of all the political parties should fortify the democratic system, while integrating democratic institutions and upholding rule of law. The consideration of a three-tiered arrangements of administration; district, provincial and national, provides essential forums for resolution of disputes and result-oriented governance. In federalism, the part of interprovincial coordination is of vast importance. Thus, Interprovincial Coordination Ministry (ICM) ought to be enabled to assume accountability. Recurrent meetings of Council of Common Interest (CCI) can empower dispute resolution mechanism and should be facilitated for encouraging a thriving society in a politically stable country.

Governance Woes

Social equity and economic growth are essential for supplementing each other to build-up a good and just society. Development prompts social fairness; the disadvantaged are helped, their essential needs are met, and access to monetary benefits are improved. Pakistan has been in the eye of the storm because of terrorism, violent extremism and acute intolerance, a ticking demographic bomb and the immense youth bulge of 64% which remains untapped thereby impacting the socio-economic development of the country.

The ground reality on socio-economic front is grim; 22.6 million Pakistani boys and girls are out of school, 43% of government run schools lack basic infrastructure and meager spending of hardly 3% of GDP on education has resulted in a literacy rate of 55% after 70 years of independence. As per estimates, there are 145,797 doctors, 10,693 dentists and 55,165 nurses, who are registered to take care of a population of over 200 million. The population growth has been looming large over Pakistan for decades and no government has given serious thought to this problem. Resultantly, today Pakistan is the fifth most populous nation only behind India, China, USA and Indonesia.¹⁸ Hence, good governance upholding the principle of minimum government control, practicing the policies of privatization, shedding bureaucratic weight and becoming cost-effective could address governance woes. Good governance, improved internal security conditions via speedy and effective social justice and service delivery to masses, could let the government focus on national security through the prism of socio-economic development. In this context, systematic de-politicization and sustainable reforms agenda on the principle of "Either Reform or Perish"¹⁹ be applied to the bureaucracy,

judiciary & police, infrastructure & industrial development institutions and education & health sectors on priority basis.

In the spirit of reform, a national commission may be constituted with the mandate of suggesting reforms to government. Its mandate should be to make governance cost – effective, savvy, reviewing institutional performance, setting objectives, deciding indicators, as well as schedule assessment evaluation and intermittent review.

Internal Security Challenges

Internal peace and harmony is another prerequisite for branding Pakistan as a safe country enjoying respect in the comity of nations. Pakistan has been victim of terrorism and foreign – funded militancy which has adversely affected country's society and economy for decades. In the Global War on Terror (GWOT), Pakistan has suffered 70,000 casualties and US \$ 123 billion.²⁰ The terrorist outfits like Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militant organizations have not only targeted political leadership but also the religious minorities, members of rival groups and other ethnic groups as well. The terrorists' attacks took a heavy toll on Pakistan's economy, as foreign investment dried up, businesses moved abroad, human capital emigrated, and the cost of doing business in Pakistan has increased overall.

Though the country has recently completed ten years of rule by political governments yet still political indecisiveness, leadership deficit and poor governance undermine its ability to execute and monitor internal security policy. The strategy of 'Peace Within' can be accomplished by following the goal of 'zero tolerance to any form of violence'. This approach encompasses short and long term measures – the short term includes launching operations like Operation Radd-ul-Fasad for expelling criminal elements from urban communities, and in the long run, police and judicial system should be strengthened in order to have them performed their responsibilities proactively through swift reforms and capacity building.

Addressing security threats from militants and sectarian outfits is deemed vital. In this connection, the first National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2013 initially provided policy guidelines which are later included in the National Action Plan (NAP) as well. Taking lead from this, FATA reforms have successfully seen its merger with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) which would help the region bringing it at par with the rest of the country. Madrasah reforms are also deemed vital to not add to radicalism and extremism rather progress towards becoming harbingers of peace in society.

In this vein, the National Internal Security Policy 2018-2023 takes forward internal security paradigms by not only dealing with measures to curb extremism in society but also taking into account emergence of Daesh in Afghanistan by restraining its influence from spreading in Pakistan. This policy underlines measures to solidify internal security through administrative, ideational and socio-economic measures as security and economy go hand in hand. National Security Management System (NSMS) has also been incorporated in the political system which is ensuring civil-military

consensus on matters of national security and foreign policy. It would, likewise, address problems that emerge from intermittent change of power between civilian and military governments which also hindered a joint approach on issues of national security.

Conclusion

Pakistan's innate strength, its resilient society and effervescent populace are struggling and surviving through the tests of time. The country is cognizant of the contemporary internal and external security challenges, evolving its policies and institutional capabilities to cope with the changing geopolitical environment of the world. At the same time, opportunities offered through vibrancy of geo-economics of the region in the form of CPEC further enhances Pakistan's economic and connectivity vivacity in the emerging multi-polar world. On the external security front, Pakistan's defence is impregnable by means of readiness of its armed forces. However, internal security is directly proportional to the quality of democracy, positive socio-economic indicators and a selfless leadership. In conclusion, democratic continuity, socio-economic security, and a visionary political leadership with its ability to manage good governance will be the game changer.

NOTES

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