UNDERSTANDING NATIONAL SECURITY:
A PAKISTANI PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

National Security essentially remains a Western-centric and Western-dominated concept. Not much work has been done in the context of South Asia, which hinders meaningful scholarly advancement in the discipline. In Third World countries national security is misinterpreted as regime security. The era in which Pakistan gained independence was the time of power politics and theory of realism was reigning over international intellectual landscape, however in the meantime United Nations Organization (UNO) was being formed. Formation of UNO reflected emergence of counter thought of realism and termed as liberalism. However Pakistan opted to follow the doctrine of realism. Presumably the existential issues forced the infant state to align herself with the world power centers of the time, i.e. either the United States or the Russia. Pakistani leadership made a convenient choice, and joined the United States. An appropriate decision keeping in mind the international environment, however subsequently country's leadership failed to incorporate changing international political and security trends in state policies. The paper outlines the post war and prevailing international trends in the national security and describes environments wherein country failed to incorporate these intellectual findings in state policies.

Keywords: National Security, Strategic Culture, Comprehensive Security.

Introduction

The word security is taken from the Roman language. The term *secures,* where *se*, means without and *cura* donates worry, care, concern or anxiety.[1] There are two principal avenues to interpret the term, initially it implies the state of being secure or free from hazards. While in the other, It means without unease or without cares or worries. In the context of developing countries, there is no clear concept of security. The concept of disorder is an antonym for security. Indeed many leaders and politicians in the third world countries have been concerned with the issues of stability and unity. Many statesmen have legitimized their actions with the prevention of disorder.

Security is the branch of knowledge which draws its roots from the discipline of International Relation (IR).[2] However it has a partial overlap with the discipline of Strategic Studies (SS) and Peace Studies. It is believed that security should be the singular term focusing on both the strategic and peace research.[3] Security Studies in its current form gained prominence after WWII or to be more precise what today is

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considered Security Studies was developed since mid-1940s. The golden period of security studies is counted from 1955-65.[4] During this era Security Studies coined theories and developed methodologies that were integrated into the broader field of IR. This period of golden age was followed by a period of stagnation due to reduction in multidisciplinary studies in Strategic Studies (SS), an increase in empirical and technically oriented studies, and the challenge of peace research. This period of stagnation lasted till 1980. However the critical studies of the security became an expanding field since 1980s.[5] The decade of 1990s saw an increase in the discussion on new security, with the broadening of research agenda beyond the military realm that has been the focus of Strategic Studies for some time. The end of cold war gave a great deal of acceptability to the concept of International security Studies concepts. Peace Research was not only acceptable but also implemented in the developed countries.

Civil wars, ethnic conflicts, terrorism, international crime, and in the context of third world countries issue like health ,education, population, energy, water scarcity and even environment become part of the comprehensive definition of security. The Frankfurt School of Critical Theory emphasizes that the military and state centric, zero sum understanding of security should be replaced by a concept of security that centers on communities and individual emancipation generally termed as comprehensive security. In the developing world the concept of state security is favored by totalitarian regime. In many respects state security is a less ambiguous term than the national security.

The third world countries generally termed as weak states by the western standards have serious concerns about domestic threats to their own authority. Small groups of elite, ruling the country like private entrepreneur treated their citizens like paid servants and own private losses and vulnerabilities are termed as threat to National Security. Although a western concept; however about 90% of domestic conflicts, regional crises and overall international violence that has taken place in the world since World War II is concentrated in the third world. More strikingly, "of the 120 wars recorded since 1945, 119 have taken place in the developing countries".[6.] The term had been evolving itself over the years. Theories of realism have governed the concept of national security during 19th & 20th centuries.

How Security is perceived in Pakistan?

Pakistan is a multiethnic and heterogeneous society struggling to develop into a modern, progressive and tolerant homogeneous nation state. The country inherited a fear to its existence since it was born in 1947. The threat to Pakistan's borders emanated from West and the East; especially situation in the East kept the country overly engaged in physically guarding her borders. Disputes over the distribution of military hardware, left the newly formed Army in disparaging state. Kashmir war of 1948 left no ambiguity about what lay ahead between the neighbors. On the Western front, Afghanistan despite being a Muslim country and having long ethnic and commercial ties was the only country to oppose Pakistan's membership in the United Nations. The country had to decide about the best way to guard its territorial sovereignty. The shortest way to rebuild the military was to align itself with one of the power block existing in the world

at the time. Pakistan became part of unholy alliances like Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). It was done for the purpose of improving the Army despite knowing that country would earn the ire of opposing block and presumably the leadership knew, these pacts bind the participants only against the spread of communism and most likely the alliance would not come to the rescue when chips would be down against India. The desire to build the military is highlighted in the budgets of early years.

Defence Expenditure[7]

Year (April to March)	Expenditure (Millions or Rupees)	Percentage or Total Government Expenditure
1947-8	236.0	65.16 (Aug-Mar)
1948-9	461.5	71.32
1949-50	625.4	73.06
1950-51	649.9	51.33
1951-2	792.4	54.96
1952-3	725.7	56.68
1953-4	633.2	58.70
1954-5	640.5	57.50
1955-6	917.5	64.00
1956-7	800.9	60.10
1957-8	854.2	56.10

This was the formatting of the environment prevailing at the time. Despite the fact that political situation was highly unstable due to demise of Governor General Mr Jinnah, assassination of Prime Minister Mr Liaquat Ali Khan and subsequent political upheavals, that prevented any meaningful development in the country, yet the performance on account of developing the Armed Forces was commendable. This was only possible due to outright support of United States. Although in the long run Pakistan could not achieve self-reliance to maintain the modernization standards acquired through the foreign aid. However theoretically the approach adopted by the country of aligning herself with one of the power block was correct and as per the ground realities. It also coincided with the prevailing international trends. Why Pakistan did not join the opposite block i.e. Russia is a subject of separate debate.

The result of political instability was the military take overs of General Ayub and General Yahya. Military contends that it was dragged into the foray by the political leadership of the country. The space was provided by the polity, which failed to develop themselves into an institution capable of handling the issues of state policies. Ayub khan in his biography states that he was asked by Governor General Ghulam Mohammad to produce a constitution in three months".[8]

Identification of Pakistan's National Security Culture

Ironically the most stable period of country's history happens to be during the Martial Law regime of President Ayub Khan. This was the time when the world was at

the peak of cold war, however concurrently security studies have also gained popularity among the developed countries. "The national security culture internationally was defined according to four criteria: the world view of the external environment; national identity; instrumental preferences; and interaction preferences".[9] In Pakistan Generals were ruling at that time, their approach to national security depended on their military experiences on the Bureaucratic Model of decision making rather than being institutional, incorporating all the stake holders. Excerpt from President's book Friends Not Masters throw some light on his ideas about the four elements of security culture.

"Nobody gives you freedom you have to fight for it. Nobody fights for you; you have to fight for yourself. About identity his views were; Pakistan must develop/ establish a distinct national identity of its own in moral, social, intellectual, and political terms. Internally, the major problem for us has been to establish political institutions and stable instrument of government. The main cause of our major problem is India's inability to reconcile her to our existence as a sovereign, independent state. From the beginning, India was determined to make things difficult for us. Pakistan's location of being wedged between three mighty neighbours is a weakness; however it can be converted into a source of strength if we could establish normal and mutually acceptable relations with the countries hemming us in."

There was nothing wrong with these ideas; these were based upon realist paradigm which advocated the might is right phenomena in vogue at that time. However being dictator he lacked legitimacy and the policies basing on ideas could not be followed through after his regime ended. During the regime of Mr Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto who succeeded Martial Law after the conduct of National Election 1970, security culture underwent paradigm shift. There were two reasons; Separation of East Pakistan and nuclear explosion by the India. Higher Defence Organization was created by establishing Headquarters of Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. It remained a halfhearted attempt.

In response to Indian Nuclear explosion Prime Minister Bhutto made his famous public statement "If India builds the bomb, we (Pakistan) will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry, but we will get one (atom Bomb) of our own. We have no alternative...atom bomb for atom bomb".[10] The result of this policy was denial of development funds to public sector. During this era also our focus as per the international environments matched with the ground realities. However its manifestation was not as per the international trend which prescribed that development of nuclear arsenal should reduce the size and expenditures on conventional forces. Our security culture again experienced changes when in 1979 Russians invaded Afghanistan and Pakistan under General Mohammed Zia UlHaq became the front line state against the threat of Soviet expansion. We did receive some short term gains but in ultimate analysis we suffered a great deal. Refugees, drugs, guns and religious zealots are the gifts of that era. Internationally, Pakistan was instrumental in the breakup of USSR, hence culminating the cold war era in favor of west, however could not cash on the victory. The general died in the air crash and country suffered on account of inconsistent policies.

After the breakup of USSR the concept of security experienced a paradigm physical change advocated by the intellectuals and academics. The contours of new concept resembled that of welfare state and termed as comprehensive security. West or developed countries implemented it earnestly by reducing expenditures on the defence. Pakistan had a major share in bringing about these benefits to the west by playing a decisive role in termination of cold war, however was unable to reap the fruits of its efforts. The whole saga unfortunately turned out to be opposite. Regional environment went bad to worst. Afghanistan was left to the mercy of war lords who played in the hands of international agencies. The spill over came to Pakistan. The unresolved Afghanistan also became sanctuary of international terrorist groups. After 9/11 the international environment drastically changed and Pakistan again had to become an instrument in score settling game of world powers.

Analytical Debate

Since independence the country was faced with serious problems like unjust and partial boundary award, non-implementation of assets distribution, enormous flux of refugees, their rehabilitation and Kashmir dispute. The statements of congress leaders forced Pakistan to deduce that India will be an erstwhile enemy in times to come. These problems coupled with   political instability made the country difficult to govern. The regional environment forced Pakistan to make protection of its territorial integrity the priority one. It warranted maintenance of strong Armed Force. The only way to achieve this objective was to align herself with either of the power block to get assistance for modernizing its forces. The alignment was as per the ground realities; however the country started living beyond her means. Basing on the borrowed capability the country instead of resolving its differences with the neighboring countries got involved in the arms race. Pakistan neither had the industrial muscle nor did it try to develop one. It almost acted like a rentier state.

After the cold war, global environment transformed dramatically and Pakistan should have realized that its geo strategic location should be used for economic gains rather than being used as proxy. Unfortunately the opportunity to stand on its own feet was lost in the wake of Global War on Terror (GWOT). The country again willfully assumed the role of rentier state and relied heavily on foreign aid rather developing the industrial infrastructure. Due to intermittent Martial Law regimes and autocratic civilian governments, the reign of power remained with a small elite feudal group. Since it was a very small circle of powerful kitchen cabinet hence the decision making had always been beneficial to an exclusive group of few in the government. These decisions were termed as state centric as masses were not benefitted

Contemporary Debate on the Concept of National Security

National security more often referred to as the process of integration of foreign and defense policy and national intelligence. It is generally applicable to the developed countries. Most of the third world countries have become insecure due to chronic problems of poor governance like extreme poverty, crime, pollution, famine and expanding population. "The social and economic vulnerabilities are directly related to

national security throughout the Third World, and in most cases much more directly related to the national security than in the developed countries. The threat lies in the heart of the understanding and implementation of the concept of security".[11]

Lately the concept of Human rights modified the concept and it took the shape of comprehensive national security. The problem is commonly understood in terms of the physical protection of the state from the external threats. "External aggressions involving war and border conflicts, espionage, sabotage, subversion, and other threats operationalized by actual or potential adversaries are the immediate concerns of national security".[12] Treating national security as military and political matters reflect the realist interpretation of international relations where anarchy is pervasive and each state looks for its own interests. "An exclusive military strategic approach to the study of national security is not only myopic but also misleading".[13] It would suffice to say here that our political leadership could not adapt to the changing concepts of national security due to host of reasons and remained glued to the military aspect of the term

Comprehensive Security

The latest scholarly trend in the concept of national security is termed as comprehensive security. It is based on the premise that people should have the right to lead their lives as per their desire without any inhibition. In short if people are happy the security is good and people do not get happy only by territorial protection. Bary Buzan states the concept as under.

"In this view, the military sector is about relationship of forceful coercion; the political sector is about relationship of authority, governing status and recognition; the economic sector is about relationship of trade, production and finance the social sector is about relationship of collective identity; and environmental sector is about relationship between human activity and the planetary biosphere".[14]

Third world countries who had been victim of foreign occupation, the theory of colonization fits appropriately. For such countries security is measured by the ability to protect state sovereignty, to preserve territorial integrity, and to maintain autonomy. This demands accumulation of adequate force, which could deter attack by the hostile state. In this back drop military as an institution becomes the ultimate criterion by which overall levels of power potential and national security capability are measured or judged. Construction of a modern military establishment is not an easy task, nor an inexpensive one. In the absence of indigenous capability i-e natural resources, industrial development and infrastructure, the country looks for treaties and alliances. "The dependency of developing countries on foreign support for managing their military threats, and requirement of external aid for their economic survival carries with it strings".[15] They are therefore especially susceptible to heavy pressures to compromise on their national sovereignty in order to maintain that support.

"The minimization of external constraints on policy and behavior is at the heart of national security".[16] Third world countries usually rely on acquisition of arms through external resources or try to develop their own capability, which they do at the cost of

their social sector development. The countries usually fail on both accounts. The foreign acquisitions, as per Ross, erode the national security rather than enhancing it by limiting policy and behavioral autonomy. On the other hand developing country would never succeed in acquiring arms market which would contribute in the economic development. This way the military in the third world becomes a burden on the economy of the country. There is another concept known as state security favored by the totalitarian regimes. "State security puts more emphasis on the state as a centralized governing organization, and less on the individuals and social groups existing in the state".[17]

Consequences of Weak National security Culture (Emerging Threats)

Few of the emerging threats or consequences of weak strategic culture are mentioned below:

- Breakdown of Social Contract between the state and the people
- Unhappiness of People
- Elitism (Self Interests of few).
- Ideological Inhibitors (Identity i-e Religion, Ethnicity and   Braderi Issues)
- Geostrategic Compulsions
- Mis-Governance (Corruption, Incompetence)

Conclusion

The paper has made an endeavor to provide an overview of the evolution and development of the concept of national security through the prism of academic view point and the ground realities. Irrespective of the regime debate one thing has been established that our national security policy did not afford our people opportunity to live happily since independence, hence there is requirement to take a fresh look at it. It would be unwise to get into the blame game. The international environment prevailing at the time of independence and existential issues faced by the country forced us to associate ourselves with either of the power block. The problem lies in state's understanding of changing international environment and its transition accordingly. The onus to devise a policy rests not only with the state institutions, the politicians but also to the academia, which should be able to come up with the ideas to be implemented by the state.

NOTES

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