

An Overview of Domestic Threats / Constraints to Pakistan's Security

Mubeen Adnan*

Abstract

The present discourse on security is predominantly dominant by the issues of identities, democracy and issues related to the social transformation of societies. The issues of security, causing a widening gap between the developed and developing countries. The paper generally focuses on the security related domestic threats and problems confronted by Pakistan. Tracing the domestic dynamics of the threats/constraints confronted, the paper examines the consequential repercussions for the security of Pakistan. An analysis of the major internal threats are important for any proper understanding of the threats confronted. The problem of insecurity for Pakistan is from within, it has to set her own house in order. Interdependence of all multifaceted threats and their over all impact on internal security should be removed. Pakistan needs development in political, social, and economic field.

The nation state of Pakistan is going through convolutions of many constraints. For developing state like Pakistan however, the problem is from within, due to fragmentation along ethnic, religious and linguistic lines. The cohesiveness of these entities is crucial to nation building. An absence of this process on the contrary could threaten the very existence of a state and so is the case with Pakistan. The end of the Second World War introduced strategic sophisticated and deadly weapons system and new aid, defense and security concepts. Security is increasingly being interpreted as "security of people, not just territory, security of the individuals, not arms; security of all people every where, in their homes, on their jobs, in their streets, in their communities and in their environment"¹ Security issues are surrounded by the threat perceptions and different constraints.

Over a half century has been passed since the birth of Pakistan, no development of democracy and institutions have been experienced. Since 1958, again and again military rule has deteriorated the system of this state. Army has penetrated into every system of Pakistan. Democracy did not get its roots and as a result the problems of ethnicity, sectarianism, integration, kalashnikolf and drugs, terrorism, suicide bombing, economic downfall, food shortage and power shortage, etc have been flourished with the passage of time. The threats confronted by the Pakistan democracy and security

* The author is Lecturer at Political Science Department, University of the Punjab, Lahore - Pakistan

undoubtedly are interlinked and good governance is required to remove all the domestic constraints in the way to the security of Pakistan.

Security perceptions of Pakistan are directly linked with the real and perceived threats confronting her from time to time. "Threat is a geopolitical environment condition for which the price and penalty will have to be paid by the target state if it fails to build its own effective warding-of mechanism"²Major threats/constraints to Pakistan are national integration, national development and national security. These three are interrelated with each other. Internal threats to Pakistan come from several sources. Pakistan has to set its own house in order. National security and national integration are intimately interconnected and interdependent.³Pakistan has been subverted from within. Pakistan is an Islamic ideological state and it should safeguard its ideology jealously, for it is the repository of its nationalism, national spirit, interest and power. "Any programme for national integration would pre-suppose a graceful acceptance and realistic recognition of the fact that Pakistan is a multi-cultural/lingual and ethno-national nation-state and society. Pakistan's ethnicity is a positive asset".⁴Cultural co-existence is required for democratic system. Cultural co-existence resulting from cultural confluence and interaction is the answer for Pakistan.⁵ Pakistan has passing through the culture of political intolerance and by passing the true Islamic ideology and as a result, having no national integration in the real sense.

There are some more constraints which come out from the above mentioned constraints have been harassing Pakistan since its birth like Pakhtoonistan, Provincialism, Kashmir, Indo-Pak wars, parity, East Pakistan, Bangladesh, Four Nationalities, Secession, Parochialism, Aggression, Poverty, Terrorism, Talibanization of Society, suicide bombing, corruption etc.

Pakistan is facing multi dimensional threats and problem is far more serious, for our very survival is at stake. Pakistan should plan their remedial measures and Pakistan's national security can be ensured through national integration.⁶ True democracy is the binding force between national security and integration. The gap between the rulers and the ruled continue to be increased.

M.P.Singh and Veena Kukreja in the book *Pakistan Democracy, Development and Security Issues* explain that Pakistan is a nation still in the making. It continues to be domestically unstable and politically weak. Pakistan is facing internal war like situation against the terrorists. Basically nations resort to war when diplomacy fails. A state which is truly democratic can face the challenge to its survival otherwise it will face stresses and strains of insecurity and inability. Rule of law, fundamental rights, a free press and strong opposition is required for the security of Pakistan otherwise it will remain weak and vulnerable at the hands of all domestic problems and constraints. Pakistan has

wanted its state moderate, free, open, peaceful, progressive, Islamic and democratic.

Identity is one of the major constraints towards the security of Pakistan, even after the secession of East Pakistan in 1971 was severe, Ayub Khan and Yahya Khan faced the rebellious politics of Bengalis, Baloch nationalistic assertions in 1970's were seen and Bhutto used force in order to put down Baloch tribesman, Sindhi nationalism in the 1980's and Muhajir Qomi movements have been gathering strength since 1990's.⁷ Zia Ul-Haq sent the army to suppress rural Sindh and Musharaf used army against Balochies and tribal areas. The all have developed separatist tendencies.

Today's wounded Pakistan is facing democratic turmoil; all the ethnic groups are feeling alienated by the Punjabi elite and Blouch, Pashtoon and Sindi nationalists are against the hegemony of Punjab. Ethnic unrest is another kind, the domination of Punjabis in all aspects of life is resented by smaller ethnic groups .In early 1990's the civil unrest is seen in Sindh. Smaller provinces have been demanding provincial autonomy. Baloch nationalists groups have their grievances and this threat should be treated as early as possible. Sectarian conflicts between Sunnis and Shias have been intensified the domestic constraints to the security of Pakistan.

A path chartered by the military regime of Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan then of Zia-Ul Haq was altered by yet an other military regime that of Musharaf. All these military regimes produced political instability, poor governance, institutional paralysis, by passing the rule of law, socio-economic down fall and so on. No civil government has been able to establish and maintain its legitimacy for more than brief periods. Democracy was very weak and democratic institutions could not be strengthened by military rule. Military rule in Pakistan by paralyzing the democratic institutions is one kind of threat to Pakistan.

Pakistan is passing through the `most difficult period of its existence and facing domestic threats and constraints to its security. Insecurity is increasing; people do not feel secure in the streets or in their homes. There is erosion in the legitimacy of the state when political institutions are unable to provide security to its citizens who may no longer perceive the central governments as the manager of conflicts. In such circumstances, groups perceiving deprivation tend to resort to violent solutions to their grievances. A diffusion of small arms and light weapons can promote the process of state breakdown due to violent internal strife. The Pakistani paradigm fits with this scenario.

Economic instability is a fundamental variable of internal security threats to Pakistan. The absence of genuine socio-economic development has provided ethno-sectarian elements and regional forces grounds to exploit and weaken Pakistan internally. Economic security we mean whether a country can pursue,

without being threatened from the outside, independent economic and foreign policies or not. Per capita income and gross national product are required for security. Self sufficiency is also required. Pakistan being the developing state is clearly at a disadvantage and its security will be threatened. All Pakistani governments have failed to attain socio- economic equality.⁸ Low level of investment and social services are seen. Pakistan under heavy debt and rely on foreign aid for financing the investment. Security and peace are the two important prerequisites for the stability of economic and political systems of the state. Corruption and poor governance have had a threat to Pakistan. No proper economic planning except late 1950's and 1960's has been seen there and since 1990 it is facing the worst economic crises. The British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said that Pakistan faced more threats from internal terrorism, as it is facing various lingual, ethnic and sectarian problems. Suicide bombing is increasing due to serious short comings in internal security measures and in law enforcement, failure to fully stop financing of terrorism , only banned selective terrorist organizations, half hearted efforts for education, anti American sentiments, militants suicidal attacks, economic weaknesses etc. War on Taliban and Al-Qaida created tussle within Pakistan and the religious fundamentalist groups have reacted in a hostile manner. Suicide bombers as resentment against government operations in lal masjid, wana, swat and waziristan has been increased. Most of the bombings in Pakistan have targeted security forces and civilians. At present any move to dismantle the terrorists is facing resistance. These are worst ever security threats for the citizens of Pakistan and these threats have heightened anxiety for the people of Pakistan day by day. These threats undermine the writ and credibility of the state as well as the security of life and property of the citizens. Pakistani educational institutions have been closed for some days because of fears about militant attacks after suicide bombing at the International Islamic University.

The religious extremism and sectarian militancy got closely identified with proliferation of seminaries across Pakistan is noteworthy. The talibanization of Pakistani society has been an issue of concern in many quarters in the country. An increasing number of sectarian killings were a pointer to this phenomenon. Madrasas are not only responsible for breeding grounds of terrorism but other factors are also responsible. For Pakistan's national security the 11 years of war in Afghanistan was the most dangerous time period. Pakistan supported the freedom struggle in Afghanistan which lead the kalashankof, smuggling, refugee problem and drug culture in Pakistan. According to UN data in Pakistan in 2009 there are about 2.5 million Afghans who are scattered around Pakistan .They are about 1.7 million registered Afghans with 45 percent residing in refugee villages and the rest scattered in whole of the Pakistan .When USSR moved out of Afghanistan, Pakistan was out of the nut cracker like situation , America dumped Pakistan . Expanding terrorism and suicide attacks have raised concerns regarding the safety and security of nuclear arsenals. U.S media is writing stories about the threats to Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

Pakistan was pushed into judicial crisis on March 9th 2007 by suspending Chief Justice of Supreme Court. It has been widely held as a dramatic move to constrain the judicial activism. Lawyers movement as well as the electronic media played a vital role for launching voices against the dismissal of chief justice of Supreme Court. Threats and attacks against journalists were common and many journalists and lawyers were killed during this movement. Media remained under government pressure through laws and threats. Media houses were attacked, raided by police and security agencies and freedom of press came under attack as a result of two ordinances. Anti media laws and closure of channels were imposed. Civil society and politicians also joined hands with this movement and after the long march in 2009, the Chief Justice of Pakistan was restored on 16th march of this year and Pakistan came out from this constraint within a time span of two years.

Another alarming threat is food security, due to lack of proper planning. It is the need of the time to take some bold steps to ensure food security. Firstly the wheat shortage and now sugar crises have traumatized the people.

Election results of 18th February 2008 have rejected the status quo. Last government failed to live up to the expectations of the people. A new government has come to power in March 2008. However, this government did not make any fundamental change of policy towards domestic issues which are threatening Pakistan's security except the Swat operation and now in Waziristan military operation of army. No proper planning is seeing regarding the management of food and electricity shortage.

Territory of Pakistan is home to a complex nexus of ethno- linguistic and religious groups. This range of actors combined with underdevelopment has created tensions in Pakistan that threaten to undermine the territorial unity of the country. Domestic stability involves a wide range of factors including human security, economics, politics, regional stability, environment, education, and religion. Interdependence of all these multifaceted threats and their overall impact on internal security should be removed. Pakistan needs development in political, social, and economic field. In political field the real constraint is the lack of political framework in which all the ethnic groups are ignored. The distribution of power must be equal for all the provinces and people's participation is required in all issues and must be acknowledged by the government. In economic field Pakistan needs structural changes. Economic motivations are required. Among them social development by introducing fresh incentives for the improvement of the standard of people is also required on early basis. The role of military in politics must be eliminated. Ethno-Sectarian threats should be countered. Enforcement of rule of law should be there. Law enforcement agencies should be equipped with new technologies, techniques, training and equipments for stopping terrorist activities in country. Pakistan

should develop think tanks which will predict and stop the future threats to security. There is going to be no quick end to the domestic security threats/constraints faced by Pakistan. Long term policy is required. Pakistan needs a strong democratic government with a clear vision and clearly announced policies for the state.

End Notes

¹ Mahbub-ul-Haq, *Human Development in South Asia*, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1997, p.94

² Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, "Pakistan's Security Predicament" in *Security for Weak Nations*, Farooq Hasnat and Anton Pelinka, ed., Lahore, Izhar Sons, 1987, p.135

³ Ikram Azam, *Pakistan's Security and National Integration*, Rawalpindi, London Book Co, 1974, p.23.

⁴ Akram Azam, *Pakistan and the Asian Collective Security System*, Rawalpindi, Matboat-e-Hurmat, 1983, p.70

⁵ Dr. M.S Baqai, *Social Order in Pakistani Society*, Islamabad ,National Book Foundation, 1975, p.33

⁶ Ikram Azam, op.cit., p.3

⁷ Iftikhar H. Malik, *State and Civil Society in Pakistan: Politics of Authority, Ideology and Ethnicity*, New York, St. Martin Press, 1997, p.44

⁸ M.P. Singh and Veena kukreja, ed. , *Pakistan Democracy, Development and Security Issues*, New Delhi, Paramount Publishing Enterprise, 2005, p 22

