

Conflict, Security, and Development

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INTRODUCTION

The three words Conflict, Security and Development are very much inter-linked. Each one of these has a profound effect on the other two. When ever conflicts arise, be they between individuals, social groups or nations there is bound to be lack of security and when peace does not prevail economic development is hampered. If we look at these in the reverse order we find that in areas where economic development has not taken place over a long period of time, people tend to vent their frustration against each other and against those in authority. Consequently there is insecurity, law and order breaks down and conflicts arise.

Those who hold the reigns of government in their hands; those political parties who come to power and the armed forces who come to the aid of the civil administration must realise that prolong use of force by the militants and by the armed forces alike can tear the national fabric as under.

There is a need, therefore, to carry out a serious study of the co-relation between conflicts, security and economic development. This should be done both at the government and academic level. Facts and figures must be assembled; data regarding the loss of lives, destruction of property and infrastructure should be made available. Only then a realistic assessment of the impact insecurity is having on the economic health of the nation can be made. It has to be a holistic approach, including the rising population, illiteracy, unemployment, corruption and a host of other issues, which impact on the security of the state and its economic growth.

While both developing and developed nations are faced with the problem of finding the right mix between national defence and economic development it is the former i.e., the developing nations, which face the difficult choice of where should the priority lie, security or economic development. What is needed, therefore, is a realistic assessment of the various elements of national power, before carving up the cake.

National security has both an external and an internal dimension. Most often, and quite erroneously, developing states pay greater attention to the former and give little attention to the latter until domestic unrest goes out of hand—a situation that we are facing today in Pakistan.

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Aim

The aim of this paper is to analyse the changing nature of the threat currently posed to Pakistan. It looks into the causes of conflicts and it explores how instability and violence in a neighbouring country spills across the international borders. It studies the impact of the War on Terror on Pakistan's security and its economic development. Finally it focuses on what needs to be done to bring about internal harmony and reduce the external threat to Pakistan's integrity so that more resources are made available for improving the economic health of the nation.

Changing Nature of the Threat

During the first fifty years of our independence the threat to our security and territorial integrity came from across our eastern border. Our staff colleges and military formations always depicted a threat from Foxland, code name for India, in their exercises. A two-front threat was never visualised till the strategic environment changed in the region.

Despite unfriendly relations with the rulers of Afghanistan we never needed to position troops in the tribal areas to meet a possible threat from our western neighbour. The Afghan *Jihad* against the Soviets in 1979 saw the arrival of thousands of foreigners, seeking monetary benefit and imbued with ideological fervour against a godless occupier of a Muslim nation. The ISI—supported, US-equipped and Saudi funded *Jihadis* eventually pushed the Soviet troops out of Afghanistan.

However, the civil war that followed the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan impacted on the security of our western frontier. ISI became the king maker in Afghanistan supporting the Taliban against the Northern Alliance. Unknowingly they pushed a segment of Afghan society into the lap of India, which seized an opportunity to enter into Afghanistan with full force. Events that followed 9/11 compelled Pakistan to look westwards as well, to safeguard its security against its enemy in the East.

The second factor, which changed the security landscape in the region was the US invasion of Afghanistan and President Parvez Musharraf's famous U turn. Friends had suddenly become enemies, but not in the eyes of those who still supported the anti-US Taliban in Afghanistan. This pitched the government against a section of its own people.

The nature of threat took on another shape when religious extremism and terrorism slowly began to eat into the body politic in Pakistan. The security agencies had now also to tackle an enemy within.

CAUSES AND NATURE OF CONFLICTS

Religious Extremism

With ninety percent of the citizens of Pakistan being Muslims, a common faith should have bound us together. Unfortunately, today, religion is being used to divide the nation into different sects. Instead of letting a hundred flowers bloom some of our clerics are spreading hatred against those who do not subscribe to their interpretation of Islamic values. The attack on the places of worship of another religious group shows how hatred is being spread in Pakistan against a section of the population, whose beliefs differ from the majority.

What are worthy religious leaders do not realise is that religion alone is not strong enough a fabric to withstand the pulls and pressures inherent in a multi ethnic, and multi lingual society. Rigidly held moral beliefs leads to intolerance and eventual conflicts against those who do not subscribe to their values. Where one group begins to believe that the values and lifestyle of the other group is fundamentally evil then clashes are bound to occur.

President Parvez Musharraf, while mentioning US concerns immediately after the attack on the Twin Towers stated that the US administration had convinced itself that religious extremism was a danger to the outside world.¹ Unfortunately it has also become a danger to Pakistan's security.

Ironically those religious parties who today are in the forefront of the movement of the imposition of the *Shariah* are the ones who opposed the very creation of Pakistan. The highly respected and internationally acclaimed scholar of Islam, Abul Ala Maudoodi, whose followers have established a large number of religious seminaries in Pakistan had no love lost for the founder of our country as he was not a practicing Muslim in his eyes.

In the initial years of our independence religion did not play a part in our official life. Nor did the government of the day concentrate on trying to make us better Muslims.

Extremist religious views began to appear in the corridors of power during the eleven years of dictatorial rule of General Zia ul Haq. It is he who introduced a number of changes in the Constitution in order to bring it in line with what he believed to be essential Islamic values. The proliferation of *madrassas* all over the country is due to the patronage they received from the head of the state.

Madrassas

Madrassas are not a new phenomenon. They have been in existence in the subcontinent for centuries. The western world continues to associate *madrassas* in Pakistan with militancy and believes that they breed terrorists. This is not a true reflection of these religious seminaries. The vast majority of them provide free boarding and lodging to hundreds of thousands of children from the poorer sections of our society. They are, therefore, in a way assisting the government in removing illiteracy, which because of lack of resources or incorrect priorities, is unable to fulfill its vision of education for all.

Of late, however, some *madrassas* have begun to spread hatred against those who do not conform to their understanding of Islam many of them have gone to the extent of supporting the use of force to achieve their political ends. Students leaving these *madrassas* go convinced that that their religion requires enforcing others to follow the correct path. It is they who fall a prey to religious extremism. There were 11, 805 *madrassas* in Pakistan in 2004 imparting education to 1, 088,801 students.² The figure has risen to around 20,000 *madrassas* in 2010. According to a very reliable source around 1 percent of the *madrassas* in Pakistan are imparting military training to their students.³

¹President Parvez Musharraf's address to the senior officers at GHQ on 11 November 2001.

²Ministry of Interior, Government of Pakistan, as quoted in *Friday Times*, January 7-13 2004.

³Statement of Brigdier Cheema, former head of the National Security Cell in the Ministry of Interior, Government of Pakistan.

But what is more significant is the fact that these *madrassas* follow a very restricted syllabi, which is confined to religious subjects only. Students passing out of these schools are unable to get jobs in the open market. They are semi-educated and unemployed. Brought up in an atmosphere of intolerance and fed with hatred for the western nations, who have occupied Muslim lands, they become victims of those who want to wage wars, not only against America and Israel but also against their own government, who they believe to be toeing the American line.

Ethnicity

Karachi, the commercial capital of Pakistan, has been ridden with ethnic strife since a long time. Target killings in that city have disrupted the life of its inhabitants. The Hazaras are demonstrating against the name of Kyber Pukhtunkwa, as they have been ignored in deciding a new name for the NWFP. Southern Punjab is clamouring for a new Sareki province. The Balochis, maintain that they are being denied their due share of the natural resources their province possesses.

When ethnic groups in any country begin to demand their rights and become violent in their protests. Conflicts between the government and the protestors occur. In South Asia intra-state conflicts have been raging since independence. They have now assumed dangerous proportions. India is faced with secessionist movements in North East India.

Sri Lankan Tamils had been struggling for an independent state in the north east corner of the island.

Territorial Dispute

India and Pakistan have fought three wars and a number of low intensity conflicts over the disputed territory of Kashmir, since they gained their independence. Because of the lingering territorial dispute over Kashmir India and Pakistan are forced to maintain large armed forces. The rising defence expenditure in both countries is keeping millions of people in both countries below the poverty line.

Lack of Trust

There is a lack of trust between the two rival nations in the subcontinent. Each of them believes that its enemy will use the military instrument to achieve its political objectives. The acquisition of state-of-the-art weapons to brow beat the adversary are all manifestations of lack of trust and a perceived threat to each others sovereignty and independence. It results in a set back to their economic development.

Corruption

Corruption is another cause of conflicts. It has increased manifold in Pakistan.⁴ From the lowly policeman to the grade 22 bureaucrat, corruption seems to be seeped into their blood. Cronyism and favouritism is of common occurrence in this land of the pure.

Politicians have taken huge amount of loans and have defaulted without any of them being punished. Fake degrees have surfaced. Those involved in this corrupt practice have got out of it lightly. Illegal wealth is stacked away in foreign banks.

⁴Transparency International report in 2010.

Even aid received from donors is not spared. Reportedly the contractors, siphon off most of the aid received from the aid giving agencies. When the needy do not get any benefit from the aid they turn towards militancy. It might be of some consolation to know that Pakistan is not the only country, which is blamed for corrupt practices. According to a security analyst “World’s biggest threat is corruption, not nuclear weapons.”⁵

Injustice

People get frustrated and angry when they are denied justice. The *thana* culture prevails. Complainants find it difficult to register their complaints at police stations. Those responsible for the protection of others use brutal methods to obtain false evidence. The high and mighty feudal landlords can get away even when they commit serious crimes against their tenants. Telephone calls from those holding important positions in the government compel the police to leave the criminal.

Speedy and cheap justice is denied to people. Cases drag on for years. The worst sufferers are the poor who cannot afford to pay the lawyers nor can they offer monetary benefits to those who administer justice. Injustice leads to anger and resentment against the established authority.

When Survival is at Stake. People take to violence when they are pushed to the wall and their very survival is at stake. They are prepared to kill and get killed in the hope that their enemy would not be able to bear the cost of continuing the conflict and will give them their due right. Fear and hatred becomes so ingrained that opposing groups cannot imagine living in peace with each other.

IMPACT OF THE WAR ON TERROR

Pakistan was in the eye of the storm immediately after 9/11. President Parvez Musharraf was facing the most difficult situation in the two years of his rule. He was aware that the United States would attack Afghanistan and seek Pakistan’s support. He also was informed that India was prepared to offer its bases and logistic support to the United States in this hour of need. Yes or No was the question rattling in his mind. There was no half way.

Two days after the fateful day of September 11, US Secretary of State, Richard Armitage placed before Pakistan’s Director General of the Inter Services Intelligence Directorate, Lt. Gen. Mahmood Ahmed, who was in Washington at that time. The paper contained the points, which Washington expected Pakistan to provide to the United States in its war against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

The important point mentioned was Pakistan will assist USA in ways to destroy Osama Bin Laden and his al Qaeda network. Pakistan was required to give blanket over flight and landing rights to USAF planes.

On the same day at 11.30 pm Pakistani time US Secretary of State Colin Powell, rang up President Musharraf and conveyed the same demands. Musharraf responded by saying “Pakistan would support the United States in each of the seven actions.”⁶

⁵ *Washington Post*, 26 May 2010.

⁶ Woodward, Bob, *Bush at War*. Simon and Shuster, London, 2004, p.59.

Musharraf also acceded to provide logistic support to the United States in its war against Afghanistan.

Some segments of the society in particular the religiously-oriented political parties did not agree with Musharraf's U turn. Foreign Minister Mehmud Ali Kasuri said in a TV interview that a debate had already started over continuing the support to the Taliban regime or not because of their extremist views of Mullah Omar and the Afghan religious *shoora*. What ever be the reason for accepting the demands of the United States a major shift in Pakistan's foreign and domestic policy was taking place. The decision of President Musharraf to join the US War on Terror was going to have far reaching implications for the security of the country.

He should have been aware that forsaking the Taliban would be strongly criticised by the religious right. The possibility of they using violent tactics to put pressure on the government should also have been take into account.

Refugee Influx. The immediate impact of the carpet bombings of Afghan population centres by USAF was the mass movement of Afghan refugees into Pakistan. This added a further economic burden of looking after the already existing 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

Tribal Areas become a Safe Haven for the Afghan Taliban. The additional refugee problem could have been absorbed but what affected Pakistan's security was the arrival of Anti US Afghan Taliban who vowed to push the Americans out of their country and began to use the tribal areas as a safe have from where they could mount attacks against the US and NATO forces in their country.

This resulted in drone attacks by the United States, which not only violated Pakistan's sovereignty but also resulted in a lot of co-lateral damage and turned those affected directly and indirectly against the government.

FORMATION OF THE TEHRIK-TALIBAN— PAKISTAN (TPP) IN PAKISTAN

The continued American bombings against a Muslim neighbour and the perceived pro-American policies of the government helped in the establishment of the Tehrik-Taliban-Pakistan (TPP) with the added demand of the imposition of Shariah in the country.

Army's Involvement in the Tribal Areas

The Army moved into the Tribal areas on the directive of the civilian government. It has deployed a substantial force, for the first time, in that lawless region of Pakistan. Its objective is to root out the militants, who have been carrying out attacks all over Pakistan.

Rise in Militancy. There has been a steady rise in militancy over the years. There were 16 suicide cases in 2006; it rose to 56 in 2007 and 72 in 2008. The figure of militancy went up to 130 in 2009.⁷ Most of the attacks were against security personnel since Pakistan joined the War on Terror. GHQ, the most guarded military establishment, has come under attack. Military convoys in the tribal areas have been ambushed. NATO

⁷The News 18 March, 2010.

supply vehicles bound for Kabul have been destroyed. Not all militancy was the result of the War on Terror. Sectarianism; ethnic killings; kidnappings for ransome; paid mercenaries and outside involvement have complicated the picture.

US Concerns of Pakistan's Nuclear Assets Falling into the Hands of Terrorists

The US *mantra* of 'do more' has two objectives, First to prevent the anti-US militants in the tribal areas from providing safe haven to the Afghan Taliban opposed to the presence of US troops in Afghanistan and second to ensure that Pakistan's nuclear assets do not fall into the hands of terrorists.

Economic Costs of Conflicts

The Soviet Union collapsed because it could not support conflicts beyond its borders. The emphasis on security by expanding its spheres of influence beyond its borders led to its disintegration. Moscovites had to stand in line for hours to buy a essential commodities as they were in short supplies. The Soviet citizens were gradually become frustrated and angry at being denied the fruits of their labour as resources were being diverted towards military build up and supporting client states. Heightened security had made life of the common citizen even government officials very hard indeed.

I recall my visit to Moscow in 1987. Although, I was invited by the Soviet academia they could not find a place to entertain me in a restaurant because permission had to be taken from the Soviet Secret Service to enter into an ordinary public eating place. I witnessed the long lines of men and women in front of shops in Moscow who had come to buy a pair of shoes, which had just arrived in the shop window. I saw the shop assistant on some days standing behind empty counters. My Soviet conducting officer could not get married because he had not yet been allotted a two room apartment, which could take another year or so.

The misadventure into Afghanistan was one of the factors for the disintegration of the Soviet Union but more than that was the frustration of being denied the fruits of one's labour that brought about the downfall of communism in the Soviet Union.

Afghanistan and our tribal areas reflect most vividly the connection between conflict, security and development. This unfortunate country along with the adjacent tribal areas of Pakistan have witnessed turmoil, lack of security, death and destruction and virtually and absence of economic development since three decades.

The inability of the US forces to suppress the Taliban in Afghanistan prevents them from carrying out economic development or nation building in that country even if they sincerely believe in doing so. Terrorist attacks on NGOs working in Afghanistan hamper their efforts towards economic recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation in Afghanistan.

The same can be said of the tribal areas, where conflicts between the militants and security forces continue. Where the US drones seek out targets and destroy them irrespective of the collateral damage being caused. There are areas still in the tribal belt where the writ of the government does not prevail. It is no wonder, therefore, for the much trumpeted ROZs to remain in limbo. Even if the US Congress finally gets its act together and releases the funds required for the establishment of these reconstruction

opportunity zones in the tribal areas, till such time the local people and the foreigners feel safe working in the tribal areas, not much can be expected in the way of development in that region.

Conflicts also occurred in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa between the security forces Maulvi Fazullah who had assumed complete control of Swat. He was enforcing his interpretation of Islamic tenets by force. Music and CD shops were closed, men were compelled to sport beards; barbers lost their jobs, girls were prevented from going to school. Their schools were destroyed. Public building including rest house were burnt down. His FM radio broadcast hatred against the government daily.

When Civil and para-military forces failed to ensure the writ of the government in Swat the army was called in aid of civil power. A military operation became necessary. This resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians to safer places.

The cost of the war on Terror increased manifold. Looking after the internally displaced persons cost a lot of money. Rebuilding and reconstruction of the damaged property and infrastructure drained away precious resources.

Security related pressures on the economy compelled India's Prime Minister, Man Mohan Singh to say that peace with its neighbours was essential for India to achieve its economic potential. Even the United States believes that if tension prevails between India and Pakistan it will not be able to redirect its soldiers and military resources to fighting the Taliban. Washington's self-imposed conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and its paranoia about home land security against perceived attacks by al Qaeda and the Taliban continue to cost the US tax payer billions of dollars a day.

Although the cost of both the conflicts are still bearable because of the strong US economy but even the mightiest country in the world is now beginning to feel the impact of supporting lingering conflicts in far off lands and within its own country. Its economy is being adversely affected. The American dream is likely to be shattered due to the expanding military expenditure to deal with conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Former Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz was not wrong when he stated "economic interests build people together and that cooperation and development are a tool to promote peace goodwill and fellowship". Economic interests play a critical role in building and cementing relations between people. It expands the size of the cake, which allows each group to get a larger share. Building peace through economic development should be the goal of every government. Pakistan today is facing an economic crunch making it difficult for it to take care of its own security need. The millions of people who live below the poverty line are liable to join the other disgruntled lot and take up arms against the state.

The hotel industry is also suffering because foreigners have been advised to keep their visits to Pakistan to the minimum. The occupation of hotels is down to 40 percent. Their earnings have been reduced. On the other hand the costs have gone up as more security guards have been employed because of the security threat. Extra walls have been constructed; splinter proof cylinders have been emplaced, Concertina wire has been added. Sniffer dogs have been bought. All this has added to the cost of running the hotels due to the rise in militancy.

The Prime Minister disclosed recently that Pakistan has suffered 30,000 casualties and US \$50 billion worth of losses in property and infrastructure. Washington has

provided Coalition Support funds and other financial assistance but the amount promised does not compensate for the loss of lives, the damage to the infrastructure and the wear and tear of the military hardware. The continuing use of force by the security forces also has its negative impact on the civil military relations because of the co-lateral damage that is bound to occur. All of this hurts the economic development of the country as well.

India too is increasing its defence expenditure due to insecurity within its country. After the Mumbai attack by some militants India has stepped up its homeland security. India will invest US \$12.3 billion into the private sector industry by 2016; Air port security has projected over US \$43.2 billion. Home land security has allotted 100 million for city security. Chindambaram, India's Home Minister, says the budget for security has increased by 35 percent to over 29.52 billion by 2009-2010.

Every thing must be done to avoid violence. Conflict could be the result of internal differences or waged from outside sources to achieve their own objectives, driven by geo-politics. When aid does not filter down local truces do not work; peace accords do not last. Ethnic language regional conflicts enhances differences between rich and poor; between rural and urban and between provinces. This hampers economic development.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Madrassas

Our intelligence agencies must identify those *madrassas*, which are spreading hatred against others and motivating young minds to kill the 'kafirs' to earn a place in heaven.

These should not only be banned but action should be taken against those who run such religious places of learning.

All *madrassas* should be encouraged to broaden their syllabi to include subjects, which would give the students an opportunity to get jobs and become useful citizens of the state. Some half-hearted attempts have been made by previous governments in this regard.

What is needed is to seriously take up this matter and ensure that the mind set of the students is changed. They should be allowed to come out of the cuckold in which they are trapped.

Jihadi Out Fits

It appears that the *Jihadi* out fits, who allegedly carry out suicide attacks in the country, are both an asset and a liability. A few of these non-state actors are presumably keeping the pot boiling in Indian Held Kashmir. But they are also against the presence of US forces in Afghanistan and hence turn their guns against the government, which they believe is acting on the directive of the United States. How to run with the hare and hunt with the hound is a problem which needs careful handling.

Corruption

According to some reports we are the most corrupt country in the world. Corruption cannot be totally ruled out. It exists in all countries, but steps should be taken to reduce the amount of corruption in the country. It has to start from the very top. It is

only when people have honest and selfless leadership that those below them will not fall to the temptation of accumulating ill-gotten wealth.

Remove Sense of Alienation

The blowing up of electric pylons and gas pipelines or target killings against individuals are all because of a sense of alienation and deprivation felt by some groups. This is particularly serious in Balochistan, which has been neglected for far too long despite the fact that Balochistan provides the rest of the country with natural gas and some minerals.

The Balochis rightfully demand that they too should benefit from their own resources.

The steps agreed upon and announced by the government for the economic development of Balochistan should be seriously implemented.

Good Governance

The regime in power must ensure good governance, which includes administrative ability; rooting out corruption; building and maintaining stable institutions; ensuring the sanctity of the constitution; avoiding clashes between the four pillars of the state and justice for all; the organs of the state remaining within their constitutional role, establishing stable institutions and avoidance of one-man rule and most importantly providing justice to all.

Increase Rate of Literacy

Education alone, however, is not the answer. Education, which will give jobs, which will enhance the country's economy is what is needed. That would reduce the widening gap between the rich and the poor somewhat.

Reduce Economic Disparities

Economic disparities lead to conflicts. Equal distribution of resources is not practical but the un-equalities in resource distribution should be analysed and sincere efforts must be made to keep this to the minimum within the constraints of economic development of far-flung areas.

Diplomatic Skill

Diplomatic efforts must continue to be made in order to reduce the external threat both from across our eastern and western borders. Needless to say this should not be at the cost of ensuring that our vital national interests are not jeopardised. A great deal of resources could then be made available for the economic development of the socio-economic development to ensure.

Security

All countries of the world, big or small, developed or under developed, give the highest priority to its integrity and national independence. But the responsibility to

provide security to the state does not lie only on the armed forces. Military strength alone cannot guarantee security. Internal harmony; economic strength; support of the people and a friendly neighbourhood are some of the other factors, which help in maintaining security at home.

CONCLUSION

Political analysts are not wrong when they opine that there is no scientific formula for resolving conflicts. Each country has to find solutions keeping in mind its own peculiar internal and external environment.

When stronger nations begin to dictate policies to a government, which is receiving financial assistance from them, the people turn against their rulers. Foreign aid then becomes counter-productive.

It is also true that we are living in a global village. There is no such thing as absolute sovereignty. Developing countries in particular, have to accede to conditions placed by financial institutions and donor countries. The only way to get out of the trap of obtaining loans and grants to oil the governmental machinery is to become as much self sufficient as possible. For this to happen internal security, absence of conflicts and working towards achieving friendly borders is necessary.

The economic well-being of the citizen of Pakistan should remain the prime concern of every government. Unfortunately self interest has been placed before national goals. One must admit that with the best of intentions and even if the nation is blessed with good leaders there are many difficulties which come in the way of economic progress in Pakistan.

The economic health of the nation depends indeed on a host of factors including good governance, sound fiscal policies, high savings rate, and a judicious use of external financial assistance however, economic development will be severely hampered unless we can achieve internal harmony and work towards a peaceful neighbourhood.

Domestic disorder poses a more serious threat to the integrity of the state. Political confrontation has created a measure of uncertainty in the country. Prolong social injustices have resulted in frustration amongst the people. Disparity in the economic development has led to some disgruntled elements talking about separation

Religious extremism and intolerance has resulted in conflicts and in the use of violence to settle differences.

To put back our house in order the three issues of conflicts, security and economic development must be tackled together.