

Muhammad Saleem Mazhar *

Naheed S. Goraya *

External Challenges to Pakistan's National Security

Abstract

This article is written in the backdrop of Pakistan's General elections 2018, held on July 25, 2018. As a result of which new government of Pakistan Tehrik-I Insaaf (PTI) has come into power. The new Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi has promised a new Pakistan in his maiden speech by emphasizing the citizen's rights to dignity, need for provision of services/ welfare by state, need for institutional and behavioral change with the supremacy of law. Apparently, Prime Minister's first speech depicts that he is vowed to fulfil his promises which the nation and country faces both internally and externally yet things are different when one has the executive power and run the show. The new government has taken the command of the country at a time when it is amongst challenges and opportunities with regard to the issues of national security, foreign policy, its soaring relations with the US, India and Afghanistan. Nation-building and the state-building have been the enormous challenges to Pakistan right from 1947 which persist even to date. Undoubtedly these relations over the period of time have transformed into different shapes with the regional perspective. The article discusses external challenges of the country vis-a-viz its foreign policy approach that the new government is to face in the days to come. Therefore it remains a million dollar question how new government in Pakistan will be able to fill the gaps of the trust-deficits in neighborhood, particularly with India, Afghanistan and US and this is the main argument of the article. It concludes with a 'way forward approach' that can be adopted for effective long-term national security policy together with national imperative.

Key Words: National Security, Foreign Policy, Cold War, New World Order, Soft Power, Hard Power, 4th Generation Warfare, War against Terrorism, Kashmir Dispute, CPEC, Indo-US Nuclear Deal

Introduction

The concept of security originated from the "Latin word *Se Cura*, *Se* means without and *Cura* means care, i-e; without care or fear" (Sujeet, 2005: 43). Objectively, security is a condition where there is no threat to the national values

* Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, is Dean Faculty of Oriental Learning, University of the Punjab, Lahore & Chairman Department of Persian, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

* Dr. Naheed S. Goraya, is currently Visiting Post-Doc Fellow at V- Dem/ Deptt. of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, Sweden. She works as Assistant Professor at Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS), University of the Punjab, Lahore

of any country and in subjective sense, such a state of affairs when the sense of fear is vanished from the societies. The debate on the conception of security was initiated in 1983 when the Cold War was still going on. Richard Ullman¹ challenged the purely military concept of security by arguing that it misrepresents the veracity by rooting states to focus merely on military threat at the cost of overlooking far more real and serious threats. This ultimately leads to militarization of international relations creating global insecurity (Steve, 1997). Bhaty (1996: 20) states that “each state requires security as a basic pre-requisite, no matter either particular state is weak or powerful. All the great post-war settlements of modern times like Vienna in 1815, Versailles in 1919 and San Francisco in 1945 were derived from the principles of international security. Even though, the economists refer the financial power as a key conduit to attain security. Likewise, they also accentuate the *Soft Power* over *Hard Power* to acquire the national interest. The post-Cold War is portrayed as *New World Order* or *New World Disorder* when the security of smaller states has befallen more challenging than ever before”.

When the “security proposes the safeguard of fundamental national interest, ranging from territorial integrity, foreign policy, economic growth to the maintenance of political, economic and cultural distinctiveness. It gives prospects to the states to opt their allies and rivals freely” (Afzal, 2014). National security challenges are never persistent and are defined by evolving variables. The landscape of security is always more intricate and impulsive together with interconnected set of trials, verbalized by strategic culture of the countries and regions. Therefore, the National Security is, “a physical situation and an opportunity to develop potentials in a designed fashion and the most fruitful manner without resistance” (Couloumbous & Woolfe: 1994).

The world politics and geographical realities have undergone great transformation in the last decade, particularly after 9/11. It indeed introduced “irregularity in the warfare and traditional order of security strategies of nation states, commonly called 4th Generation Warfare². Under the new security challenges, the coercions are universal and the rival has a universal approach (Khan, 2011). The contemporary globe is in face of three major issues vis-a-viz national security and so is Pakistan.

1. **Relocation of Power-** The supremacy from West to East and North to South is raising multi-polarity
2. **Fast-tracked Globalization and Technological Progress-** It has led not only to the integration of people and ideas but has bifurcated people too concurrently

¹ Late Diplomatic historian and foreign policy scholar

² In this form of warfare the enemy (in most of the cases) is undefined and may appear suddenly from anywhere with yet new tactics to harm the nations or group of people.

- 3. Emergence of Violent Non-State Actors-** The use of threat for political benefits and motives (Khokhar, 2015: 35).

Security Paradox

Security studies are the fundamental area in the field of international relations. For decades, security has been defined intently and largely in the context of national security emphasizing on military security only. The 'Realist School of Thought' which considered the state as the most imperative player, prevailed the idea of security. The states strive to capitalize on their power. This power-seeking behavior is embedded in anarchism, i.e., non-existence of global order and apprehension for security and defense of sovereignty. The danger to security emerged principally from other states. This necessitated self-defence and the need to build up military power. Even though, the Realists believe other types of power too (such as capital and geo-political position), however, military power is indispensable for security (Griffiths & Terry, 2002: 289-291).

Strategic Considerations for Pakistan

Pakistan's geo-strategic location is on one hand beneficial and on the other hand engrossed with grave security challenges. Pakistan's failure, for a surfeit of structural and socio-political reasons, to form, foster and endure effective state institutions has intended that it has remained stalled in internal as well as external security crises (Malik, 2016, February 4).

Akbar (2011) writes that "Pakistan has one of the most complex threat analyses in the world. In the North is China (a rising economic giant); in the East is India (a state with enormously superior industrial assets and a much bigger human base and confrontations with Pakistan over several subjects); in the West lies Iran and Afghanistan (never affable and cause of internal strain and domestic steadiness); to the South located Arabian Sea (a doorway to Central Asian States through Gwadar Port).

Pakistan's foreign relations can be termed as off and on with Afghanistan (Western border), never ending perpetual enmity with India and marriage of convenience and love and hate relationship with United States of America and all-weathered friendship with China. . Though Middle East, Iran and Russia are also very much important (Khattak, 2018). In addition, two of Pakistani provinces with huge population have well-built ethnic and tribal knots across the border in Afghanistan whereas on the Indian Frontier, there is an unsettled dispute over the status of Jammu and Kashmir. Therefore Pakistan's domestic politics remains closely linked to the political relations with Pakistan's neighbors. Any analysis of threats to Pakistan's security should lay emphasis on this overlapping trend between external and internal dilemma". The worldwide security environment specifies major deviations.

It is a harsh fact that Pakistan has been under the challenges of security and economy at the same time. It goes without saying that Pakistan has come across many-sided challenges of complex magnitude which are really hard to settle. In

broad-spectrum, Pakistan has been diluted from within and the challenges are enormous.

Geo-Political Environment

The evolution from uni-polarity to multi-polarity and Pakistan location in the neighborhood of a “global power (China) and evolving regional power (India) is not devoid of challenges and opportunities. The awakening and growing instability in Middle East, rise of Islamic State (ISIS) and intensification in strategic competition astride the Gulf, can indistinguishably pull Pakistan into a conceivable passive strategic competition and conflict” (Khokhar, 2015: 44). Geo-politically Pakistan carries a significant strategic position along with the status of the only nuclear power in the Islamic world. Pakistan’s global obligations to the Coalition Forces in Afghanistan has placed a grievous hollow in the already impoverished economic capital of the country, while since 2002, the United States has propelled over US\$ 10 billion in security-related aid and nearly US\$ 4 billion in financial support. Nevertheless, the internal problems of Pakistan are interconnected with the outside forces. The major fault lines of geo-politics have brought the security issue on the top of country’s agenda and it is amidst the conventional and asymmetric, traditional and non-traditional challenges, hard and soft threats.

Outwardly, Pakistan faces double-edged long-term security challenges with India and Afghanistan. In each case, rather than pursuing peace and cooperation, the states are in constant competition. These South Asian nations and states have become proxies in the hands of world powers. In the contemporary times, the countries of the world underwent major global strategic developments which had direct and indirect repercussions for Pakistan in terms of security;

1. Post-World War order in the Arab world; and situation of Middle East
2. Emergence China and a new wave of rivalry between China and the US has given rise to new *Great Game* on this continent; and
3. An era of new Cold War- new phase of tensions between Russia and West.

American role and policy in countering new regional power of china cannot be overlooked when one talks about the national security challenges to Pakistan. This will however not without grave repercussions, if India is used as a counter-balance to China in South Asian region. In fact, the amalgamation of terrorist and unadventurous challenges has preordained Pakistani forces on two fronts, i-e; to deal with external challenges and internal security. This twofold commitment and deployment is replicated in the progression of the dogma of ‘wide-ranging response’. Its operationalization will, nonetheless, prolong to pretense hard choices and a steady appraisal of policy in response to a shifting threat milieu. Counteracting militancy and brutal fanaticism will remain the country’s superseding security target.

The term national security attained the world attention after Cold War. Apart from depending on hard power means, it involves non-security challenges in order to certify wide-ranging national security. These challenges have not only hampered the economic growth of the country but have also led it towards political instability. Those challenges include environmental degradation, population explosion, water, energy and food scarcity Pakistan's security challenges can be classified in traditional challenges and non-traditional ones. Among the traditional challenges, terrorism persists to be the major and crucial menace to the domestic security of Pakistan. Conversely, transgressions possess a strapping nexus. The drug lobbies and illegal groups have joined hands with terrorists for financial benefits. Terrorism and crime are inter-connected with the enablers and multipliers.

The country's defence is deeply in jeopardy in the modern years as compared to the preceding perils. Earlier the issues like Kashmir dispute and Afghan civil war were measured as peripheral coercion. "Nevertheless the danger at the moment is not only from India however the danger today is an internal menace in addition to ranging from abortive governance, mismanagement of the country's market to the war against terrorism" (Akbar, 2011).

External Challenges & Regional Perspective

Today Pakistan has transformed itself in a potentially stable democratic state where third democratic transition has taken place. The formal democracy has shifted into participatory one. The country is more conscious politically and expect the leaders to deliver for public good. Apart from that, Pakistan lacks the sufficiency of traditional security approach (Syed, 2014: 79). The new government vows to tackle the external challenges in neighborhood. At present, the ultimate apprehension of Pakistan's national life is defense, both internal and external, though Pakistan is in face of wide-ranging challenges to its security which have undeviating connections to the outer coercion. The susceptible security of any state is a syrupy bowl for the main key actors of global politics as well as for regional actors to safeguard their interests. However, the rise of terrorism as a repercussion of American attack on Afghanistan in October 2001 has exacerbated the security condition of the county to an unparalleled degree. Simultaneously, it has transported much foreign influence in the region (particularly in Pakistan) as the country has a unique geo-strategic place in the region.

Though the security situation without doubts have improved in Pakistan since 2014 onwards after the military operations Zarb-e -zab in North Waziristan and Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA) yet the peripheral security has been a prime concern for Pakistan. When one talks about external threats to the national security, one must look into the questions of, 'whether both atomic powers of South Asia will find any solution to their conflicts through dialogue? Will the new government in Pakistan be able to bridge the gaps with US and how far it can remove the trust-deficit?' All these issues depend on the fact how the ministry of Foreign Affairs may present its case effectively before US. While on the other hand, the fact cannot be negated that it is a two-way traffic, and

hence it carries greater significance how American government expresses and communicates its concerns effectively?

Pakistan is in face of internal as well as external threats widely. The first ever National Security Policy (NSP) 2013 originally delivered the policy recommendations however torn between military guidelines and dialogue. It ensued into lengthy initial incubation epoch of delay. The negotiations with Tehrik-e-Taliban (TTP) were failed and it led to the military operations in Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (FATA). Afterwards the APS (Army Public School) incident of December 16, 2014 led to the revitalization of national resolution and ensued in the formulation of National Action Plan (NAP) (Khokhar, 2015: 39). “The country has been the *Front Line Ally* on the *War against Terrorism* and has always tried to become a good friend of USA since independence, however, till date, it has proved an unproductive effort.

The country is under the global watch every day. The country has by no means been so enmeshed in protecting its autonomy and its security than in these intense and harsh times” (Aziz, 2011). Apart from the ground realities, Pakistan and US must have good relations which is an important parameter for the security matters of the South Asian region. Yet, the US thinks that “intricacy of subjects caught up in our relations eradicating the global terrorist networks, defying the growing surge of Islamic radicalism in Pakistan, protecting and defending Pakistan’s nuclear assets, and easing the shift to civilian-led democracy necessitate an alert and unrelenting US consideration and dexterous diplomacy” (Zayane, 2014).

While on the other hand, new tensions in Europe have already formed a nearer liaison between Russia and China. “Moscow is apt to presume an extra unbiased place in South Asia, disengaging the scenarios of partnership with Pakistan on a range of issues with Afghanistan, counter-terrorism besides defence and security.

1. Multi-Dimensional Problem: Global War against Terrorism-US, Afghanistan and Taliban

9/11 turned the equation of internal and external security threat in which Pakistan was given the choice of being with “us or against us”, and hence Pakistan chose itself to be a *Front Line Ally in the Global War against Terrorism* along with other challenges from regional, sub-regional entities and even across regional. Overall, Pakistan remained on the loss as a repercussion of this war and eventually drifted the country towards a security deficit state, losing its 35000 civilians. Now America has so called withdrew its forces from Afghanistan but plans to stay there by 2020. This American presence is inter-related with the steadiness and national security of Pakistan. Pakistan has remained a Front Line Ally in GWOT. Despite this fact, the Western forces has not been satisfied enough with the country’s role and implications even sustain today.

Fundamentally, Pak-US relations had started in some different scenarios, in the middle 80s, they were of diverse nature and afterwards, they did not even remain trans-national. From 1979 till fighting the war against Soviet Union, and then after 9/11 Pakistan became a Non-NATO Ally of the US and then ultimately in 2014, its policy centered to withdraw from Afghanistan, focusing on Obama’s policy

that that the US will keep its highest number of troops along with NATO partners in Afghanistan. But now new Trump administration has come up with a new strategy for South Asia where he vows to send more troops in Afghanistan. It is rather very strange that America along with its hundreds and thousands of troops could not get military victory though had the support of Afghan National Army. In the meantime, the *Global War on Terror* persists to nag the country (Khan, 2011).

On February 8, 2018, while addressing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Deputy Secretary of State John Sullivan **said** that though US recognizes Pakistan's sacrifices in the war against terrorism yet Pakistan has remained unsuccessful in rooting out the sanctuaries of terrorist and for that reason, the country will be held accountable in the days to come (<https://www.rferl.org/a/pakistan-sullivan-militants-no-decisive-steps/29023919.html>). Earlier a new defence policy of action had been devised by the Pentagon that places China and Russia above jihadism as the core threats to America. While studying the reviewed 'Afghan War Policy', it looks that the US has also decided that its decisions in future will be connected to 'interests and conditions' rather than time lines. In this backdrop, Pakistan's new government is in face of new security challenges in the region in the coming days. Whatever policies were adopted in the past, Pakistan will face the same losing position, if not acted wisely this time. . The common interest of fighting against extremism and terrorism, and the geo-economic importance of CPEC are subjects that in future are likely to fetch Pakistan closer to China and Russia than to the US (Ehsan, 2018, February 10).

When Pak-US relations are debated, there are two perceptions generally conceived and it plays a far stronger role than the ground realities itself. One perception exists in Washington DC which largely depends upon those lobbies which work as anti-Pakistan forces. The perceptions developed by them are not always genuine and at times, they are fictional too. Pakistan is considered to be linked with radicalization and Taliban. However if seen through the prism of reality, this perception is widely negated in the recent general election's result show that among 342 seats, only 11 had been won by MMA (Muthidda Majlis e Amal). It is indeed negation of that perception. The areas of FATA, NWFP and Gilgit-Baltistan adjacent to Afghanistan which consist of 3% of population and Indian influence does exist there too. So the rest of 97% population cannot be associated with radicalization factor in any case. This is the reason that from the last few years, a new perception has been developed about Punjabi Taliban in South Punjab but the reality was not so. No doubt America has very strong misunderstandings that has naturally damaged Pakistan a lot.

No doubt that India and Pakistan are rivals since independence. Still the global shifts have made the Western border a looming peril too. The murky relations with Afghanistan have shaken the security of the country. Pakistan foreign policy revolves around such an approach that incorporates the country's diplomatic and security efforts towards Afghanistan which may emphasize to develop better relations between both neighbors. The strategic insight between both countries can be extended through economic incorporation, political settlement, and reverence for territorial boundaries. Even to date both countries follow the blame games whenever any terrorist activity take palace on any side of the border. However it is

a good gesture that from last four months both Afghanistan and Pakistan have initiated dialogues. The strategic partnership in recent times accomplished between Afghanistan and the US and Afghanistan and India divulges their plan of supremacy over the South Asian region. Consequently, peace and solidity in Afghanistan may possibly remain a secluded nightmare that, sequentially, might subvert the region (particularly Pakistan).

Now this consensus is commonly found in US and Afghanistan as well that there is no military solution to this war. The only way out lies in negotiations. It is anticipated that in near future, Pakistan is not going to fight any war with Afghan Taliban for the cause of American interests. If the new government vows not to fight for America that means it has open and wide options and the country will not indulge into the enmities within its borders and in Afghanistan for America's sake. It is really unfortunate that after passing 17 years, the issue of Taliban is not resolved. Strategically and operationally, it looks unrealistic that Pakistan has such an effective influence while US along with its NATO allies and large number of military troops has no say in Afghanistan. Whenever Pakistan has tried to provide facilitation for Taliban talks, (for instance Murree Talks), that was sabotaged systematically.

If America wants to kill Taliban or put them into defeat, then it may do single handedly. But if it wants Pakistan's support for engaging Taliban, then the best solution is that it should not pressurize Pakistan to that extent. One cannot negate the fact that the US has no comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan even to date. It is rather a pick and drop system. Either it keeps pressurizing Pakistan for "Do More", but this strategy will never work unless the US focuses on one point of just negotiation. If both countries start thinking on positive note and adopt the policy of move forward then the countries have more options to develop relations on the basis of equality. If America has issues with bad Taliban, Pakistan also faces the same. It is the call of the hour that both countries abandon their good and bad Taliban. Pakistan must consider that the war on terror is not its own war and it is the right time to disengage itself properly from the whole situation

2. Issues at Eastern Border

Pre-partition politics and the consequential strategic rivalries have accentuated the reciprocated enmity between India and Pakistan. Apart from that, Indian Afghan policy and Chinese factor has gained momentum too. India with the help of US has key role in Afghanistan whereas contradicting it to Pakistan predominantly to restrain China. Kashmir is considered to be Pakistan's jugular vein; more so, as India is making efforts to twirl it into an arid region by pilfering and blocking its share of the waters (Ikramullah, 2012). Pakistan's nuclear weapons is another disturbing question for the world powers. Another apprehension on the part of the world powers is about the nuclear assets of Pakistan which they think that will go in the hands of militants which to a real sense, is an excuse to capture or neutralize them. Today the country faces threat from US and India as well. These are hard times for Pakistan. The whole world shows concerns about Pakistan's nuclear programme. These concerns have augmented after the Swat operation. Nevertheless Pakistan has strong grasp and power after the 2010 Nuclear Security

Summit in Washington (12-13 April), even global communities have acknowledged this truth.

Khan (2011) writes that “nuclear arsenals are the decisive weapons preordained for national security”. Brown and Winderman (1994) in their book ‘*Critical Mass*’ have stated that “because of the Kashmir Issue, South Asia is the most dangerous place on earth”. It is very significant to know that Kashmir dispute has not been an easy thing to be solved in the presence of other issues with India like Siachen, Sir Creek and support of terrorism. Pakistani military has presented the evidences of Indian involvement in Baloch insurgency in Pakistan (Kalboshen Yadev) and the support of Baluchistan Liberation Army (BLA) to fight in neighboring Afghanistan. India accuses while India blames Pakistan in the incidents like Mumbai Attacks and for its support to Lashkar-I- Taiba. Therefore, the relations between both Pakistan and India have been in murky waters throughout the history. Nonetheless, in the areas of trade and business, both countries have some relations atleast if not that good. “Despite this fact, no breach in relations is in the offing, the nature of continuing rivalry with India had made Pakistan very cautious about its national security and safety of the motherland” (Akbar, 2011).

The Indian Army and security experts, since the Mumbai terrorist attacks in November 2008, have been presenting the idea of retaliatory military action against with a concept of Limited War (Surgical Strikes) which may not turn into a major war. Another idea was propounded which was called “Cold Start Strategy” which necessitated to generate an enthralling shared ground and other services action to incarcerate partial Pakistani territory. Nevertheless, this was not the case with earlier Indian government under Manmohan Singh (2004-14) because it had the certain idea that Pakistan would retort. India’s army and its national security establishment are trying to follow a new strategy to deal with Pakistan. On the other hand, India supports anti-state elements in Pakistan. These groups get funding from India and other actors in order to aggravate Pakistan’s problems (<http://tacstrat.com/content/index.php/2014/10/21/security-challenges-for-pakistan/>).

Unless Pakistan and India improve their relation, peace in the region will be a far cry. “The growing Indian role in Afghanistan is another threat for Pakistan’s security that must be curtailed. India backed the Afghan Northern Alliance (with the help of Iran and Afghanistan) against the Taliban in the late 1990s and almost certainly keeps liaison to Northern Alliance elements now in the Afghan government. Pakistan also faces perils about Indian consulates in the border cities of Jalalabad and Kandahar are involved in fomenting insurgency in its Balochistan province and in Swat Operation” (Bibi, 2014). The Indo-US Civil Nuclear deal is another matter of grave concern for Pakistan because the region will get involved into an unending arms race. India has been declared as de-facto nuclear weapon state by giving a special status in the NPT. India’s bid for permanent seat in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is also supported by the US and all the major powers of today. It will definitely imbalance the South Asian region. Though US is a superpower and Pakistan takes it very much into its consideration

yet the role US wants to give to India in Afghanistan, that is against the national security interest of the US

3. Security of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

Since 1962, Pakistan and China does not have any single friction in their military and foreign relations. It is one of the best relationship between both countries. China Pakistan Economic Corridor is multi-billion lead project of “One Belt One Road (OBOR)³ Initiative” which has been anticipated to give Pakistan and economic boom resulting in political stability at the end of the day. The CPEC has raised Pakistan’s global profile. From “the world’s most dangerous country” (Blair, 2007) in 2007, it was perceived to be the next economic success story in 2015 (Runde, 2015). Though it is an economic initiative yet it will have geo-political implications for the region too.

CPEC is imperative for the approach of security through progress in the context of China and it is often called as corridor of peace. China contemplates that “improvements in security and economics are correlated and progress in one can supplement the other. A rising country requires peaceful neighbors and the CPEC can be a harbinger of peace and richness to the backyard of China in the regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan. China trusts that the economic investment would fetch internal stability to Pakistan” (Sai fur Rahman & Shurong, 2017). CPEC which is being considered as “game changer and lifeline” for Pakistan, its security of the corridor is critically significant for both Pakistan and China so as to further support trade and development related ties. The security threats to this project are of course terrorism, the separatist movements of Baluchistan, however the militancy is the biggest threat to this project. Another threat is Indian involvement and apprehensions regarding CPEC.

A number of countries think that CPEC has a strategic intimidation to their military and economic interests and piercing influence on the state. India sadistically affluences to CPEC, specified the atmosphere of a forceful geo-strategic struggle it place into the hands of Pakistan a valuably promising position along the Arabian Sea. Besides, reliable evidence subsists that reveal RAW runs a special cell system to harm CPEC in Pakistan. “The construction of Chabahar Port by India with the help of Iran and Afghanistan can be well understood in this regard. Chinese design in the Indian Ocean is nonetheless another obstacle in India-China geo-politics. Instability in politics and troubled security state of Pakistan may transmit repercussions in the expansion of CPEC infrastructure near the Afghan border. The major test is prevailing proxy war with neighbor India and its strong influence in Afghanistan at the same time recently developing unreceptive relations with its west” (Ibrar, et.al; 2016). The struggle for power influence in Afghanistan by different regional actors in the wake of US withdrawal has a grave threat on the sustainability of proposed CPEC.

³ The grand strategy of China to connect Eurasia, South East Asia, South Asia and Africa through roads, railway lines, maritime routes and energy infrastructure. The region covered by this initiative comprises nearly 70 percent of World’s Energy Reserves and all the Muslim Countries.

“Most overlooked aspect is the price of production. Hefty demand from industrial bunches for raw materials carries price hike and hurts the major motive of CPEC economic prosperity. At the same time result in resource depletion, environmental pollution and changing climatic patterns” (Richardson, 1972: 883-896).

4. Proxy War & Sectarian Divergence

The proxy war in the name of religion between two major sects of Islam has harmed Pakistan to a greater extent which has led to a sectarian violence in the country playing havoc with the peaceful internal environment of Pakistan. Since beginning, the country has been facing sectarian hostility despite the fact that the conditions worsened in 1985. Pakistan also endures from the threat of sectarian segregation. The politically goaded religious leaders continue to exploit the masses (*South Asia: Confronting...2005*: 221). The Sunni-Shia issue is oppressed by unfavorable forces to generate a distressing law and order situation in the country. The differences between dogmas and practices has aggravated by suicide attacks on shrines and mosques. Religious fervor, sectarian and ethnic splits and provincialism is making the situation worse. Consequently, the national integration of Pakistan has become pathetic.

In addition to the local anti-state elements, outside actors have played their parts towards backing sectarianism in Pakistan sporadically (directly and otherwise). There are ample prospects of outlying involvement in sectarian episodes in Pakistan. Practically, all sectarian groups, operating in Pakistan, get monetary support from one or another foreign state and those states hold up such organizations for their own vested interests. These facts advocate that sectarianism is conceived by domestic and peripheral players which draw on the indoctrinated adolescence in order to promote their own benefits (*The State of...2005*). The sectarian violence has gravely distressed the religious, political, economic, social, and diplomatic businesses of Pakistan. The nastiest hit area is religion where broad range bigotry has cleaned out the social order in the country. The discrimination and fanaticism whether religious or political, customarily pass on within it the germs of social divergence.

Regional Perspective & Way Forward

The million dollar question is whether the political leadership plans to repeat the same old game of power politics or it will learn something from past mistakes? The geographical demarcations of Pakistan may well be used for the positive outcomes being at the juncture of South Asia, Central Asia and Middle East. The sectarian violence, militancy and terrorism can be evaded only if domestic security is dealt properly. Its foreign relations can be improved with the neighboring relations through trades which will bring about more and more collaboration and in edifying self-belief and in resolving other conflictual issues among the regional players (Afzal, 2014).

The realism in political, strategic and economic matters partly makes the security intangible and contradictory. The entire globe is a component of multi-options and none of the country is indispensable for other. Every country has more than one options for safeguarding its interest. However it is Pakistan which has to rethink as

it is drifting towards isolation and regional disengagement. The security environment of South Asian region is under rapid transformation and the challenges to the state of Pakistan are two-fold:

a. The Pak-US relations may not strategically drift in any case to a point of no return. . The relations must be going on with the US and simultaneously, Pakistan needs to have eyes on the ‘bridge back’ and taking decisive actions against any and all ‘security threats’ that the world considers harbor within its borders.

b. The country should avoid any soaring conflict with its neighbors and save itself from any situation backed by US and Israel.

Few things remain very basic when it comes to the new government about its neighborhood policies.

In the regional perspective, Pakistan’s relations with India and Pakistan are very much important. America has abandoned the financial institutions not to give any loan to Pakistan with the plea that Pakistan might not use this money to return its loan to China. But if really the diaspora’s role is important and American pressure also remains persistent, things will never work positively. The initiation of dialogue with India is much vital. The new government in Pakistan needs to prioritize and India must also know that it is the beginning of very good opportunity to bring forward those issues where there had been suspension. Both Pakistan and India may start with “Pre-Dialogue Framework of Discussion” rather than the obsolete CBMs and both government may reassure each other that if any incident takes place across the borders, they should avoid blaming each other’s without solid proofs.

Therefore in the present circumstances, the only important question is to start the dialogue though it is not seen as progressing before Indian Elections, which are to be held in March 2019. It does not seem that it suits Modi government’s interest that it shows any soft corner for Pakistan. It may not compromise its position for the initiation of peace talks. Therefore, Indian reciprocation is much important. As far as US is concerned, Pakistan cannot forsake its interest for American stake. It has been conveyed to the US from last two years that it cannot fight anymore. But what can be done is to resolve the bad air that had been created from past many years. Unless both parties do not try to cultivate positivity into their respective quarters, whether it is military, foreign affairs or the combinations of Prime Minister Secretariats, the bad air needs to be cleared. Vajpayee, the late Indian Prime Minister (1998-2004) had taken positive steps to initiate good relations between both countries.

While new Indian government under Modi is rather aggressive as far as its relations with Pakistan are concerned. This government (the hardliners among BJP) are much prone towards building military pressure on Pakistan. The violence on LoC and on the Working Boundary is a day-to-day example. The idea behind this pressure could be because of Pakistan’s army involvement in North Waziristan Operation, and the Operation Zarb-e-Azb, and therefore, Pakistan would not rise the skirmishes on the LoC or the Working Boundary.

One point is very important here that no doubt private media cannot be controlled fully. Yet it should be the code of ethics that none of the defence analyst may go for negative rhetoric. In order to nullify this rhetoric, a realistic framework may be formulated because in both countries, there are many people who live below the poverty line, water issues, and economic crisis. South Asia is a pivot in the global set up. India is big country with strong economy and military power. But at the same time Pakistan is also a military power so it would be great opportunity for both countries to start a new beginning.

As far as Pakistan's question of India-centric policy is concerned, it could be relevant when one analyses the past scenario. But if the foreign policy of Pakistan is seen in the last decade, it dawns that the new threats have emanated on Pakistani borders, like Afghanistan situation, relations with Iran and CPEC Project. Therefore in the current scenario, to ensure the security of CPEC is even more vital than focusing India. The only thing that should be kept in minds that both countries should not enter in any confrontational mode. It is evident from last decade that in Pakistan's electoral policy, India had never been an electoral issue. If a country is important for the other, then at least it should be evident in its electoral and domestic politics too. The domestic politics of any country is its internal issue. And they need to handle it themselves.

Now India has become a non-issue in Pakistani politics and it has never been exploited to have an impact on the vote bank. The reality is that that today Pakistan faces more important challenges than India and to handle US is also a great challenge. So in the current scenario, it can be anticipated that that keeping in view the interest of the country, the new Pakistani government will devise a framework with its relations to India and that will have very positive impact. The efforts for reviving peace should be continued and it is advantageous for both countries. No matter if Congress is ruling or BJP, when the rulers and governments believes in the creation of political will, they certainly achieve those objectives. the best examples in this regard are Simla Agreement (1972), Lahore Declaration (1999), and also during Musharraf's era Pak-India agreements were made as a result of Track-II and both sides agreed on non-traditional solutions .

In international politics, only reality and logic is prioritized. However Pakistan needs such a strong team in foreign office which may communicate with the comparative team at the other end. More think tanks may be established because at multi-levels, think tanks are required to be addressed. Pakistan is geographically and strategically very important country. What needs to be done is to have 3 deputy foreign ministers which may be divided in their duties to deal with different regions. The politicians neither have that vision and convincing power nor do they carry the understanding of How to combine perceptions and realities in order to bring out a good result. . If the communication level is developed with the US, because in Congress also there are people which if debated logically across the table can be convinced. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan are very challenging for the big powers. However, these powers always pursue different tactic for different parts of the world. As far as the countries like Pakistan and Afghanistan are concerned, the strategies like allies, power pressure, threatening and carrot and stick policy have been opted during different phases of history.

Though Pakistan has been blamed for US failures in Afghanistan, yet it has not been a prey to America in case of China and Iran. In this backdrop, the Western powers decided either to change the strategy or use more power. But the situation of Pakistan is entirely different from Afghanistan. It is a nuclear state with a very strong army as an institution. But on the other hand, the state itself is weak with a strong society. The big powers are exploiting this situation through shia-sunni divide, provincialism and deepening the gulf between civil-military relations.

Apart from that the country is engrossed with linguistic, religious, sectarian and inter-racial differences society Pakistan’s prime challenge lies inside, overcoming militancy and radicalism, stimulating the economy, resolving the energy crisis, educating its children and creating jobs to soak up the youth bulge in our population to forestall an intimidating demographic catastrophe. The repercussions of all these troubles for national security are obvious and can be overlooked only at great risk.

Pakistan policy makers needs to cope with diverse preferences so as to uphold its relationship with the Coalition Forces and simultaneously, deal with the concerns of citizens who witness Pakistan being a pawn in what a former American National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, called as “The Grand Chessboard”.

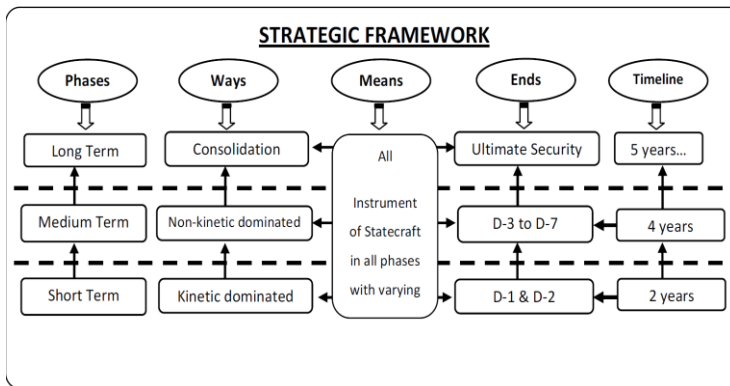


Fig.3. Source: <http://www.san-pips.com/download.php?f=75.pdf>

The soft image of the country must be advocated and represented through the concerned ministries. This rethinking is indispensable in the defying the negative allegations of peripheral pressure, so as to eliminate the opinion that Pakistan is compliant to Washington’s dictates. In the present times, it is very much pertinent for Pakistan to “expand its geopolitical alternatives as its strategic partners (predominantly China) and potential partners (mainly Russia). Old and new internal and regional security challenges have constrained Pakistan to re-evaluate its security, strategic and geopolitical primacies” (Rana, 2018).

Pakistan’s response will also have to engage an increased strength of police and intelligence power and executing a well-honed coin strategy integrating both kinetic and non-kinetic proportions. The political, fiscal and social mechanisms of the counter-militancy approach and rational counter-narratives needs to be

articulated to match changes in the environment. This evidently necessitates a whole-of-government approach (Lodhi, 2014). Last but not least, in any security policy, the ultimate rights must not be conceded; the effective execution of the rule of law and productive actions to halt the exploitation of authority needs to be safeguarded. This could help remove the tag of 'security state' from Pakistan (Rana, 2018).

As far as American concerns are concerned regarding Pakistan's tilt and normalization efforts towards Russia, the American antagonism does not make any sense. Developing relations with Russia does not mean that Pakistan will have bad relations with the US, though the relations with Russia had been in deep waters with context to Cold War but now it is over and so is Afghan war. Therefore it is the need of the hour Pakistan may normalize its relations with Russia which is emerging as a great global power under great global powers. For Pakistan, it is not a zero-sum game. Pakistan wants good relations the US and China and Russia and Afghanistan and Iran as well.

There is ray of hope for establishing good neighborhood but the mechanism of implementation is much important. In the given circumstances, it can be hoped that Pakistan will not go against its interest and to a practical sense, it seems that Pakistan's partnership with the US over GWOT has come to an end and it does not exist anymore. Hibatullah Akhundzada presented a statement on the very next day of Pakistani Prime Minister's speech where he showed consent to have direct talks with the US. Earlier these talks were held in Doha in July 2018 and henceforth, it seems a good beginning..

International politics is a bilateral issue and it cannot work unilaterally. Therefore, it is anticipated that the onus of responsibility remains largely on Trump government how the US administration creates situation and working relationship for its counterparts in Pakistan. The visit of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in September 2018 in Pakistan is of vital importance for the region and Pak-US relations. The fact cannot be brushed aside that Pompeo's visit will be without "Wish List" too. One must understand in the government machinery that either there are international financial issues or international diplomatic matters, Pakistan's interest cannot be sacrificed over the interest of the other nations. Therefore it is to keep in the mind that America has never given ears to the internal problems of Pakistan. So, it should be clear to the US now that Pakistan will not fight America's or its allies' war anymore. Either the US may fight alone or if it wants reconciliation then it needs to engage Pakistan comprehensively. Where there are so called Taliban, its solution can be found through one point agenda but with sincerity. Still if the US thinks that Pakistan is in search of new allies in the region and whether it will be detrimental or fruitful for American policies or not?

America demands from Pakistan to distinguish bad and good Taliban and curbing extremism, militancy and religious intolerance from society. Though it is very appreciating yet the decisions should be made mutually and not be one-sided. Now the important question is how American government will address Pakistan's interest while keeping in view its status of strategic alliance. Therefore America

must keep in mind that if peace is to be ensured in Afghanistan, it requires Pakistan’s support. The Pak-US relations should not revolve around the security and strategic matters only rather they should be financial also. Since the liaison is security centered, there is an ebb and flow in relations but it is not something out of control. During last government, Pakistan did not have even a foreign minister, so the relations could not progress in any case.

Knowing the continuing fluctuations in global and regional political environment, Pakistan’s foreign policy will be more balanced. There has been substantial decrease in anti-Americanism in Pakistan and the two states are will be building up new relations , keeping in view the each other’s interests. Though, America carries more responsibility to maintain balance and stability in South Asian region.

There are new alliance in the region with the emergence of CPEC and new trends in Pakistan-Russian relations. Likewise the US has its Israel-centric policy in Middle East, if it develops India-centric policy in Afghanistan, no doubt it will be a great success of Indian diplomacy. But on the other hand it is a strong element for Pakistan and it needs to avoid the situation that “there is no way” yet on the other hand, it is much unfortunate that so far Pakistan’s foreign office lack the capacity to challenge this perception. The other perception is on Pakistan’s behalf that the US has always exploited the country at the time of its needs and once its target is achieved, it goes back. It goes without saying that each country has its own interest but at the same time it is very important how one convinces the other.

It is imperative how Pakistan perceives the surfacing of pre-emptive use of force in Pakistan’s case? Whether the attack will be approaching from Eastern front or the Western front? And above that, how Pakistan copes with the fault lines, i-e; Shia-Sunni hitch, narratives based on ethnic lines, financial split and lastly to guarantee writ of the state (Rethinking National Security...2013).



Fig.2. Source: <http://www.san-pips.com/download.php?f=75.pdf>

Pakistan should also assume efficient actions to reinforce security measures on the Pak-Afghan border. This should be done at any cost, no matter if Afghanistan endorses this act or not. The borders should be controlled through electronic and human resources so that the illegal movement across the border could be stopped.

The only “way forward is the best approach of communication channels. Pakistan is ready to open these channels with the US, India and Afghanistan. Pakistan is

ready to listen the concerns of the US but it is essential that the US may reciprocate. It is really pathetic that after passing 17 years, the issue of Taliban is not resolved. Strategically and operationally, it looks unrealistic that Pakistan has such an effective influence while US along with its NATO allies and large number of military troops has a say in Afghanistan. Whenever Pakistan has tried to provide facilitation for Taliban talks, (for instance Murree Talks), that was sabotaged systematically. If America wants to kill Taliban or put them into defeat, then it may do single handedly. But if it wants Pakistan's support for engaging Taliban, then the best solution is that it should not bet Pakistan to that extent. One cannot negate the fact that the US has no comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan even to date. It is rather a pick and drop system. Either it keeps pressurizing Pakistan for "Do More", but this strategy will never work unless the US focuses on one point of just negotiation. It would be rather more wise because Pakistan's say is not that big it is however being expected greater than what it can really do.

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