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**RE-DEFINING SOUTH ASIAN SECURITY
PAKISTAN'S CHALLENGES IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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An examination of the Security imperatives that Pakistan will face in a post Kashmir resolved regional scenario. With the Pakistan-India subcontinent becoming a nuclear zone there is a degree of increased military stability, enforced through an understanding of the fatal consequences of a nuclear exchange. This enhances the likelihood of a resolution on Kashmir. There is a need to understand the changes that this will bring about in a society that has held the conflict over Kashmir as the catalyst to its Security Policy for the last half century. Given the peculiar regional situation that Pakistan will find itself in the future there is a need to develop an outline of its threats and consequent national security policies. Faced with many internal threats, Pakistan's Security Forces must look to a new definition of aims. Re-structuring and training for demanding national development related tasks and new threats would be a challenge. Associated with this are the myriad changes that Pakistan's social and political structures face in the future as well.

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RE-DEFINING SOUTH ASIAN SECURITY PAKISTAN'S CHALLENGES IN THE NEW MILLENIUM

General

Since Pakistan's creation Kashmir has been the center piece of its National Interests and security policy. Some would argue that the obsession with Kashmir has been a dead weight that has been responsible for the Pakistan's retarded development. To so categorize it would be an exaggeration, though.

Kashmir has been an important factor in determining the security policy. Financially, the conflict over Kashmir has given the armed forces an overwhelming portion of the national funds. However, the issue must be seen within the overall dissatisfaction that resulted from the boundaries established by Partition in 1947 and the peculiar relationship with India.¹ Kashmir has also been a catalyst that most political movements have used as an election tool. As a result political success is often seen as synonymous with a favorable solution in Kashmir. This has given the issue a greater significance than other national interests.

Pakistan was to be formed out of the Muslim contiguous areas of British India, as it did in most cases, with the exception of Kashmir. The Princely ruler, in violation of the understanding that all rulers would accede to the majority of the populace in their states, decided to declare accession to India. A tribal war resulted in a significant portion of the state being declared AZAD or 'free'. Subsequent to the 1948 Indo-Pak war a UN resolution was passed whereby the people of Kashmir would decide through a plebiscite which of the two countries they wished to join. This resolution, still pending in its execution, is the basis for the Kashmir Movement and the strained relations between Pakistan and India. India views the Kashmir issue as an internal problem while for Pakistan it is a vitally important unfinished part of the Partition and creation of Pakistan.

The rise of rightist political elements in both Pakistan and India, the deep commitment to Kashmir by some of the groups involved in the Afghan Jihad which draw their followers from the Pakistani youth and the militarisation of the situation by India have further exacerbated tensions between the two countries. Pakistani policies have been derived from this environment for so long that there is little in the way of a post Kashmir scenario and what shape national policy will take then. It is likely that there will be a substantial change in the way that bilateral relations with India are viewed and its consequent impact on security policy will change the allocation of priorities of the national strategy and so on. This paper will seek to address this scenario so as to bring to the fore policy imperatives for such an eventuality, in particular the impact on internal, foreign and defense issues in the future.

A Historical Perspective to Pakistan-India Relations

Age old communal hatred erupted into violence that increased with the onset of Partition in 1947 and the subsequent killing of nearly five hundred thousand people. It has been accurately stated that both countries were born at war.² An early war in Kashmir in 1948, followed by two more Pakistan-India wars in 1965 and 1971 have shaped the attitudes of both countries towards each other. The struggle in Kashmir has come to symbolise the validation of the two nation theory on one side and secularism on the other and has driven both countries to aggressive hostility and mistrust. The impact of increased defense spending has been more apparent on Pakistan's economy where it makes for a large 4% of the GDP.³ The 1998 Pakistani Nuclear Weapon testing may be a precursor of worse things to come to many, but could in fact bring stability to the region and reduce the need for conventional forces in Pakistan to a considerable degree, provided the Kashmir issue was resolved to a point where deployed forces could be withdrawn.

Given this, there is potential for diplomatic resolution to the conflict. Geography dictates that a nuclear conflict could be devastating to both aggressor and attacked, which in turn could escalate the tone of any future conflict to a point where it becomes total. The costs of nuclear war are so high that both countries will be driven to recognise the issue diplomatically and come to a lasting solution. This paper will seek to speculate on what the regional scenario would look like in a post Kashmir resolved sub-continent.

THE CHANGED SCENARIO

A post-Kashmir regional atmosphere would be characterized by a reduced levels of animosity and power brokering. There would be a reduced threat for Pakistan and therefore less need for large conventional forces, freeing resources for use in development. Additionally there would probably be less interference in internal affairs from outside and the foreign policy focus could shift from coalition building and threat response to promoting regional harmony and trade. Pakistan's regional relationships have changed significantly since the end of the COLD WAR from being a front line state battling the communist threat, to one of relative obscurity where instability and poor governance have run hand in hand to further deter external inputs and interest. This is likely to change again where Pakistan will now be able to divert attention to conflict resolution in Afghanistan and promote regional rather than individual interests in the

CIS. Neighbors and other regional countries now forced to choose sides in their relationships with both Pakistan and India will be able to establish mutually beneficial relations with both, promoting trade across land by road and rail.

Nevertheless there will be areas of concern where important national interests will have to be safeguarded. Friction amongst neighbors is constant, however the resolution of one acrimonious issue will hopefully pave the way for a political and diplomatic process based on tolerance and bilateral respect for the process of peace rather than one of war. Some of the regional issues to be kept in mind are:

- Contentious issues with India such as the distribution and control of water in the Jhelum River, demarcation of a mutually agreeable border in the far south in the region of Sir Creek and the establishment of secure deterrence, are likely to fester. The promotion of a regional economy and the instability caused to that by these issues is likely to assist in conflict resolution. Enhancement in trade and exports is likely to benefit foreign relations in general but especially so with the CIS, Iran and Afghanistan in the context of oil export from the Caspian Basin. Pakistan's southern shores are ideal terminal locations for secure oil export, bypassing the Arabian Gulf and the insecurity of the Straits of Hormuz.
- Kashmir has been the focus for so many for so long in Pakistan that there would be an obvious loss to some, with the resolution of the conflict. These interest groups that have derived legitimacy from their struggle are likely to foment internal disturbance and try to garner external support. Inter province differences over resources and water distribution issues, are ideally exploitable. Some radical religious groups will find it difficult to agree to any resolution to the issue and will either seek to export radical militant movements or will then focus on sectarian differences with a view to establishing a 'Taliban' style of movement in the country. Unless the Kashmir problem is resolved to the complete satisfaction of Pakistan there is likely to be social dissatisfaction. There might even be unrest if the latter condition was met, as for some the cause has become more important than the issue. Political backlash is likely to focus on the dilution of the 'two nation theory' that any but the perfect solution of Kashmir is likely to cause, thereby engendering secessionist tendencies in parts of Pakistan that are unhappy with its 'punjabisation'.⁴ Like Kashmir, the two nation theory has been the subject of many political agendas and it has come to mean different things to different people depending on which side of the political arena it is viewed from. For some it means that Pakistan is not just a homeland for muslims to practise their religion and culture, but should be an Islamic State on the lines of the Taliban government in Afghanistan. There is also a tendency to regard all dissent from federating units as law and

order rather than political issues, and political dissent as traitorous.⁵ These are matters of concern for any administration involved with the resolution of Kashmir and need to be understood as part of a larger social problem created by a lack of education and high unemployment.

National Interests

- Inviolate Geographical and Ideological Borders. The security and defence of Pakistan is its utmost concern. Within the interpretation of the 'two nation theory' as espoused by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Founding Father, Pakistan seeks to pursue a way of life of its own. There is little change in this most vital of interests.
- Stable Region. Again, this is vital to Pakistan if it is to develop into a regional economic player. To ensure accessibility to markets both within and outside the immediate country it is essential that the region not be disturbed and the 'electronic herd' be kept interested in maintaining investments.⁶
- Access to Water. An issue of vital concern to Pakistan is the access to water as agreed to in the Indus Basin Water Treaty. There is concern over India's tapping into the waters of the Jhelum River and reducing availability of water to the realigned Pakistan irrigation system. Agriculture, the mainstay of the economy accounts for about one quarter of the GDP and is the largest employer sector in the economy.⁷
- Economic Prosperity. Increasingly, natural resources are being out stripped by what is one of the fastest growing populations in the world. Population control and the need for prosperity through industrialisation and commerce are essential to achieve social stability with an equitable distribution of wealth.
- The Kashmir issue is in the author's opinion not a vital interest as continuing lack of resolution has not proven to threaten the integrity of Pakistan. Up to now none of the so called 'secessionist' movements, in Balochistan, North West Frontier Province(NWFP) or more recently in Sind and the Seraiki belt has drawn strength from the failure of the struggle in Kashmir as a motivation. That this might change for political reasons is likely, though not a natural consequence of the struggle coming to a conclusion.

Important Interests

- Resolution of Kashmir and other conflicts.
- Establishment of representative democratic institutions.
- Universal Literacy.
- Population Control.

- Environmental Security.

Most of the above interests are internally focused and deal with issues that are important to the stability and well being of the Pakistani society. The above interests tend to result out of a lack of good governance by a series of leaders in the recent decade and an attitude of indifference to the fallout of modern developing societies.

Threats To National Stability

In Pakistan there has been a useful tool for external focus in the form of the Indian threat which has to a large degree managed to divert attention from internal social and political problems. In the future there is likely to be a greater likelihood of instability when that is no longer able to hold the attention of the people. Pressing issues related to over population, provision of basic civic amenities and education are only the more visible issues likely to come to the fore. The struggle between the militant religious political elements and the moderates is probably going to be more damaging to society and is likely to have under tones of a 'have' versus 'have not' class animosity. Inter provincial grievances could easily identify with this, and given the distinct ethnic identity of each, could be potentially seriously damaging to the federation.

External Threats

Despite a reduction in tension, India would remain Pakistan's primary threat given its large conventional force and its heavy armour capabilities. The large tank fleet leaning westerly will continue to threaten Pakistan unless significant reductions are made. Given that there would no longer be a need to police the Kashmir border with such a heavy concentration of troops and a mechanism of nuclear deterrence would be in place, the overall environment should be less hostile than earlier. However the responsibility for peace in the region will largely lie with the largest country in it, as all of India's neighbour's with the exception of China possibly feel threatened by it. As one strategist notes.

South Asia has a glorious future, one that assures peace, stability and prosperity for all seven of its members. It is perfectly reasonable to imagine a state of affairs as follows, say in the late eighties:

- (a) India and Pakistan are at peace- a real, durable peace between two good, friendly neighbours.
- (b) The armed forces of the two states have been much reduced in size and face outward. They are no longer needed against each other.

- (c) India and Pakistan, the two major powers of South Asia, backed by the remaining five nations, stand together, and the world knows that when it touches one it touches the other.
- (d) There is complete nuclear co-operation between India and Pakistan, with nuclear scientists of the two countries working together as partners in a joint venture.
- (e) As a result of the reduction in defence expenditure and the channelling of savings into development, there is a notable improvement in the standard of living and the quality of life in South Asia.

We are far from that paradise, but progress can be made in that direction starting with the removal of tensions within the region. It is noteworthy that of the seven sisters of South Asia, the smaller six have no problem amongst themselves, but each has problems with India-problems, disputes, misunderstandings, disagreements, call them what you will. (Even tiny Maldives clashed with India in 1982 over the island of Minicoy.) All the problems and tensions felt by the six are related to India which, at least for the moment, stands as an obstacle to better intraregional relations. As the largest (and most problem causing) state of South Asia, India must take the initiative to ease tension in the region, to reassure its smaller neighbours, and to move with them towards that paradise. With India lies the key.⁸

Afghanistan with its radical militant government intent on supporting the export of terrorism and drugs will probably increase as a threat to regional stability. The porous nature of the border as defined by the Durand Line and the homogeneity of Pushtun culture on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border makes it very difficult to separate the two countries from influencing each other. An unstable Afghanistan is likely to be more of an internal threat to Pakistan than an external one, but possibly more damaging. The recent religious movements in the Northwest tribal areas are probably linked to a growing 'Taliban' influence in the Pushtun areas.

Given Iran's border with Pakistan in the far Southwest is very isolated from the heartland of the Iran and is of little interest other than whatever natural resources lie waiting to be discovered, there is little threat to Pakistan. A small Shia population in an overwhelmingly Sunni society is not likely to encourage radical elements in Iran to push towards establishing a change of religious leanings in Pakistan. The existence of the present group of Shia militant groups is more as a retaliation to Sunni ones than they are as instruments of a larger Shia domination policy in the region.

Internal Threats

Inter-provincial differences are likely to revolve about the ethnic pulls of different provinces and the radical militant religious groups wanting to establish an orthodox Muslim state. Pakistan faces a number of social problems, exacerbated by political neglect which take on ethnic and religious hues. Unemployment in the erstwhile industrialised area of Karachi and the rural versus urban competition for limited jobs has become a struggle between the 'Muhajir Qaumi

Movement'(MQM) and its sub groups, and the 'Jeay Sind Movement'. With its roots in the quota system imposed for the limited number of government jobs, whereby rural Sindhis were allocated a certain number of vacancies while educated urban Mohajirs had to be satisfied with less representation, the struggle has gone on to gather a momentum of its own. It is now characterised by 'bhatta' collection(Protection money), drug related mafia style operations and violence of the worst kind, in the name of equal rights.

The situation has been worsened by factions with divergent interests growing out of the main organisations, pursuing individual agendas often at variance with one another. Till a while ago the environment was limited to Sind, where most of the urban areas had large MQM representation and the rural were held to ransom by 'dacoits' of rural Sindhi ethnic background, almost always with considerable political clout through connections with local chiefs and large landholders. However the trend has shifted to the Punjab as well, where unemployment and a corrupt governing system, particularly in the police department, has encouraged and at times abetted such crime. The result of which is a growing cynicism and dissatisfaction with authority among the common people of Pakistan.

One solution for a disoriented and dejected large youth population is to look towards the order and discipline of the militant religious groups, for hope and a restoration of some respect for authority. With vast funds and a clear recognition of hard work and merit, these organisations are performing the function that the national education system should have been doing. For the vast majority of young people, the order and discipline that is infused through these organisations gives their lives focus. For now that focus is on the struggle in Kashmir and the freedom of the area that is believed should have been part of Pakistan. It will be mandatory to establish a functional system of government where the energies of the young can be productively focused, as the alternate is an internal struggle for power between the government and the political parties generally and specifically with the militant elements of some of the more right leaning ones, which could escalate into a societal struggle between the moderates and the far right.

To further complicate matters, the internal ethnic struggle within the provinces which could flare into violent opposition, fanned by the fire of the fight between the radical right and the moderates. In Punjab, this is characterised by the recent development of strong ethnic bonding; where 'Arain', 'Jat' and 'Rajput' to name a few have become strong political forces. Formerly only loosely recognised castes or tribes, used to differentiate large family groups, these have now emerged as political blocs.

Unfortunately these are more divisive than cohesive and are the product of irresponsible political behaviour and the inability of any previous leadership to create a stronger sense of national identity. In Balochistan, the Pushtuns and the Baloch tribes are completely distinct from each other, with different languages and tribal customs. Within the Baloch group of tribes the Baloch and Brahui languages are another division. These languages are again dissimilar and the tribes' way of life is characterised by the highlands and lowlands that they live in. It is a struggle for power between the chiefs of the Pushtun, Baloch and Brahui tribes that could be explosive, given that most of the tribes have spill over in Afghanistan and Iran with strong ties to the Taliban in the former (with Kandahar only eighty miles away) and the radical Irani elements in the latter. Though the Baloch have little connection with the struggle in Kashmir, the Pushtun do, through some of the 'Madrasas', that are common to the Taliban and the Kashmiri freedom fighters, but given an unstable situation in the rest of Pakistan Balochistan is likely to feel the second order effects sharply. In the NWFP, the recent upsurge in demand for 'Sharia' governance in the Malakand area is an indication of the strong Taliban influence. As the base from which the Afghan War was fought Peshawar, the largest city in the province, is home to many of the Madrasas that educated the Taliban who are of the same ethnic tribes as most of the NWFP. Compounded by a Federally Administered Tribal Area where tribal law is respected and the writ of the government is not recognised and weapons manufacturing and selling are age old businesses, the situation is at the best of times tenuous.

Suffice to say that though the challenges faced by a post Kashmir resolved Pakistan are no less difficult than today, the means to tackle them in terms of government resources and focus will certainly be more. Lack of will of governments in the past to face up to politically touchy issues has compounded the situation where poverty, poor education, ethnic rivalries, religious fanaticism, drug related and common crime and provincial differences have all become knots of an ever tightening noose.

National Security Policy

As a derivative of the changed national security strategy it will be imperative for the government to re-evaluate the security policy in the light of changed circumstances. Though it is hoped that will involve a significant reduction in the size of the armed forces and the expenditure thereof, that might well be wishful thinking. Certainly the present outlay of nearly four percent of GDP going to defence it seems very large. However the figures speak of only three billion dollars, though not insignificant yet less than nearly what all countries in the western world spend. The comparison is fair though the percentage of the GDP for a poor country is not. The

focus however needs to be on the resources freed from security and diverted to national development. This would encompass tangible and intangibles such as government administrative resources, manpower, infrastructure and national will.

The security forces are going to be faced by a myriad of new challenges, with the luxury of not having to commit major forces to deployments on the eastern border. There is therefore a need to re-structure to meet these new demands. This would be a major change in a system where the armed forces have only re-organised to increase in size over the last three decades. The concept of the new security policy must revolve around some of the following salients:-

- Strategic nuclear deterrence in reference to India should form the bedrock of the security policy. A credible, second strike capability must be maintained for Pakistan to be able to feel comfortable with a reduced conventional force. The accompanying early warning, intelligence and command and control systems must be able to support this capability.
- The ability to respond to conventional threats and defend the territory of the country must be maintained. Conventional standing forces could be substantially reduced but the capability to respond within a given time frame will demand the establishment and maintenance of an efficient and functional mobilisation system. National service obligations would have to form part of the law and be implemented. This obligation should form the prerequisite for representation and voting and even jobs.
- The armed forces would have to increasingly assist in national development as they do presently. A disciplined and unpoliticised institution which has the confidence of the people can make great contributions in many areas. Similar roles have been played by many armies world wide. The involvement of the armed forces would of course progressively decline with the strengthening of relevant institutions and the process would eventually be required to taper off.
- Security forces need to be trained and equipped to deal with asymmetric threats country wide. Bombings and other violent acts of terrorism seem to have become the norm rather than the exception and the failure of government to deal with the issue highlights the need for specialised training. This would form one of the core capabilities in the future of the Armed Forces.
- With the above in mind it is obvious that major changes would need to be made to an existing structure that deals with most of the tasks discussed, as secondary to the main one of defending the country from external aggression of a conventional nature. The shape that would take seems to be a smaller, leaner force with increased intelligence gathering and strategic deterrence capabilities. This would involve a greater emphasis on mechanisation

and jointness, and capitalising on technology to provide the required combat power. This might in the long run involve a greater outlay of money per annum than now, but the overall change of focus should kick start the economy to make the amount a smaller percentage of the GDP. The exact assessment of draw downs would be beyond the purview of this paper, but in the light of the discussed capabilities it would be fairly accurate to think of a figure of about three heavy, five mechanised and two mountain divisions with some additional brigades.

- The Airforce must maintain the capability to provide strategic delivery of weapons including nuclear ones and also be able to support land operations. The Navy must be able to ensure the safety and security of the sea lines of communication to ports, enable continued access to oil from the Gulf and at the same time, provide platforms for strategic delivery of weapons of deterrence. Regional commands would have to continue to function till confidence in peace with India is established and reliable and accurate intelligence gathering capability established. Re-structuring would have to correspond to the availability of jobs in the civil market and also to the rate at which national service obligations can be made functional. It would be imprudent to downsize at a rate that did not correspond to growth and thus deactivate a lethally trained force that could fall prey to destabilising organisations for lack of job opportunities. At a later stage, a joint defence agreement to combat common threats could also be worked on to address problems posed by terrorism, drugs and natural disasters. However, bilaterally the key to success is going to be efficient and accurate early warning and intelligence gathering and mutual sincerity. A future scenario should look into the establishment of a regional defence arrangement where India has responsibility for the east and Pakistan for the west, within the overall environment of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC).⁹

Regional Co-operation

The establishment of a regional security arrangement whereby India and Pakistan share joint responsibilities for the security of the region would become a distinct possibility given the solution of Kashmir. This would involve the negotiation of a series of agreements, limiting Forces in a spirit of trust and détente under the umbrella of nuclear deterrence.¹⁰ The precursor to a security agreement should be a trade and commerce arrangement whereby the two countries benefit from each other. Regional groupings tend to provide opportunities and offer new forms of integration that are unlikely to emerge from single country efforts.¹¹ Pakistan with

its labour, textile, raw agricultural products, power and processed foods, and India with its array of IT and heavy industry could mutually benefit by trade. The large volume of illegal trade at present through smuggling, 'khepias' misusing the personal baggage schemes, and circular trade through the Middle East is evidence of the viability of the scheme.¹²

Pakistan could work at improving its industrial base by filling in niche markets in the engineering industry and thereby achieve the economies of scale that make the expansion of the industry worthwhile.¹³ This could be undertaken best under the aegis of the SAARC which could with both India and Pakistan as willing and co-operative partners develop into a meaningful trade agreement in South Asia. India would need to make concessions on its control on imports of consumer goods and Pakistan would need to extend most favoured nation status to India.

It is hoped that with the new situation Pakistan would benefit not only from increased internal efforts but expatriate confidence would be re-established. Well to do Pakistanis working abroad would appreciate the climate of investment and help by large scale direct investments. This would assist in the need for Pakistan to increase exports and commit to a free trade economy.

A further development could be the integration of the ECO and SAARC through the land trade route available through Pakistan to India and the other SAARC countries. A free trade environment from the CIS to Sri Lanka would enable the region to wield considerable economic power in Asia.

Conclusion

The realisation of a solution to Kashmir is the key. Whether the Pakistan and India are prepared to pay the political price will determine the outcome. The dilution of a secular concept for one and possibly the reality of having to live with an independent Kashmir for the other are in the view of some, unattainable compromises. Does it then benefit both to continue to live with the issue as it is? Logically the answer would be in favour of status quo, but history has shown how, difficult it is to isolate a festering issue. The internal ramifications of a continuing struggle for Kashmir are for both countries not favourable. A detonation is likely in either instance. The treatment of a political problem as a military operation has resulted in far too much bloodshed to be easily forgotten and has become a rallying point for world wide Jihad seekers. The options for Pakistan therefore are limited to what it can internally sustain in terms of social and political pressure from the religious political parties. India needs to address the issue from a realistic political stand point where it draws strength from its diverse and secular political culture. The two countries need to emphasise their cultural and historical affinities to bring out a new security

atmosphere in which each draws strength from the other and military means are one of many tools to exercise national security. The status of Kashmir might then be determined, in a way that is beneficial to the security of the region.

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