

National Security (Definition, Aims, Objectives, significance)

Definition: National security or national defense is the security and defense of a nation state, including its citizens, economy, and institutions, which is regarded as a duty of government.

Aim. Create a safe environment where life, property, civil liberties and socioeconomic rights of the citizens are protected and the people of Pakistan are able to live and prosper in harmony, freedom, respect and dignity as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan.

Objectives:-

- a. To establish the writ of the state and protect the people from all internal threats.
- b. To protect the life, property and fundamental rights of the citizens of Pakistan.
- c. To promote pluralism, freedom, democracy and a culture of tolerance.
- d. To prevent, deter and contain threats to internal security in a transparent, accountable and just manner.
- e. To resolve and manage disputes with hostile elements peacefully without compromising the rule of law.

Significance:-

Political Stability, Democracy and Good Governance

Contemporary overview of national politics projects Pakistan as a country transforming into a potentially stable democracy with strengthened democratic and state institutions. A process in which political parties and state institutions are all together planning and conflicting to transform the formal democracy, practiced since beginning, into a more sharing democracy. The ongoing attitudinal and structural transformation, occurring under different pressures at the structural level, aims at transforming the existing two tiered governance into a three tiered system i.e. federal, provincial and local governments to address the imbalance, created by demographic growth. This process, if successfully completed, indicates an opportunity for greater political stability, practice of participatory democracy and provision of greater voice to the people in formulation and execution of measures related to human security. On the other hand, if the

process is arrested or evaded by arranging status quo in transfer of power to grass root level, it will only imperil national security in the long run.

Economic Security

In the context of economic security, Pakistan's economy is 26th largest in purchasing power parity terms and 42nd largest in terms of nominal gross GDP. The GDP per capita at \$3,149 ranks at 140th in the world. However, with population of 187 million, a favourable demographic dividend and huge locational / resource potential, these figures do not reflect true potentials of the country. Inadequate tax policy revenue collection and inability to document sizeable undocumented economy make the country prone to excessive borrowing from external and internal investors. This restricts financial security as well as the delivery capacity of the government. Resultantly, the country is ranked as a lower middle income country with GDP of 232.3 billion. Understandably, due to host of internal and security related issues, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) stood at paltry \$175 million in 2013. It has risen to \$1.6 billion, therefore with investment potential for \$38 billion plus, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and trade with Central Asian states and Iran portend transformative potentials.

Internal Security

Internal security threat from militants, sectarian and pseudo secessionist forces which has devastated the country for more than a decade, is now being dealt with a clear policy of zero tolerance for violence. The first ever National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2013 initially provided policy guidelines but torn between dialogue and military action, resulted into long initial gestation period of inaction. The failure of talks with Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) led to military operations in FATA. The Peshawar Army Public School massacre of children in December 2014 renewed national resolve and resulted into formulation of National Action Plan (NAP). The political government prioritised military effort i.e. operation Zarb e Azb over the civilian action to reform Madaris and to rid the society of extremism.

Civil Military Relations

Management of Civil Military Relations has been a persistent challenge for politics in Pakistan. It seems that a tenacious balance with positive outlook has emerged. After a brief initial period

of misunderstandings, the political and military leaders have been able to develop consensus on combating terrorism, sectarianism and violence in the country on priority and situation is rapidly moving towards greater internal stability. The communication between civil and military leadership is frequent resulting into greater cooperation and focus on result oriented policies. It augers well as the political leadership and media stand firmly behind military in its internal security operations. Delving deeper into identifying the sources of terrorism beyond the common narrative, intelligence organisations have been able to expose the involvement of Pakistan's neighbours in fomenting internal instability in Pakistan, a fact which the Indian leadership in short sighted bravado readily accepted.⁸ The need is now to implement remaining elements of NAP on priority.

National Security Policy Perspective

Pakistan today, stands at cross roads so far national security is concerned. The positive vibe prevailing in the environment despite enormous challenges combined with bipartisan support for pragmatic policies has the potentials for altering the course of the history. Alternately internal divisions, interest based politics and corruption can prevent that from happening. The international security environment indicates significant changes. The transition from unipolarity to multipolarity and Pakistan location in the neighbourhood of a global power (China) and emerging regional power (India) which is inimical to former and is aligned with US and West continues to portend challenges and opportunities. The awakening and growing instability in Middle East, rise of Islamic State and intensification in strategic competition astride the Gulf, can inextricably draw Pakistan into a possible fatalistic strategic competition and conflict.

Quality of Democracy

Foremost for Pakistan's national security is political stability. It is argued by the analysts that developmental approach to politics may win votes and prolong longevity of formal democracy and the political regimes, yet foundations of a sustainable democracy can only be laid by an elite which respects democracy, democratic institutions and exercises political power through them. For making democracy attractive for a common man, existing formal democracy has to rapidly transition towards a more participatory democracy which incorporates the grass root level. The quality of democracy, governance and state institutions have to improve. The policies should aim

at addressing the immediate concerns and problems of the common man. Therefore, political security and long term stability in Pakistan can be accrued through a participatory democracy which delivers results.

Role of Military

The military is currently performing quintessential constitutional task in restoring internal stability. These measures are strengthening GOP and accruing greater political stability. However, in the long run, it is the responsibility of civil government to create and maintain order and normalcy from the outcome through a political action programme. Expectantly, the operations will be completed by end of 2015, thereby creating conditions for political stabilisation in few years. Support to and strengthening of democracy will help fostering long term political stability in the country.