

## **External Challenges & Regional Perspective**

**Security Challenges** To properly comprehend the security challenges, it would be appropriate to categorize these challenges into three groups; external, domestic, and those challenges that have linkage with both external as well as internal situation such as terrorism. A further grouping could be traditional and non traditional security threats.

### **External Challenges**

Pakistan has been facing external threats to its independence and territorial integrity right from its birth. Periodic domestic troubles/upheavals along with internal subversion further complicated the situation. Sandwiched between India and Afghanistan, Pakistan's security perceptions have been largely influenced by its state of relationships with India and Afghanistan. More specifically, the single largest source of security challenges has been with India. Today, Pakistan is confronted with a three-threat scenario—the perennial threat from India, Afghanistan, and the threat emanating from a changing domestic situation. Threats from India and Afghanistan make a formidable task for Pakistani security planners. The developments following 9/11 have further complicated the situation. Since partition, India and Pakistan have fought three major wars (1948, 1965, and 1971), witnessed two large border clashes (Rann of Kutch in 1965, and Kargil in 1999) experienced three major crises, and had innumerable exchanges of fire along the LOC within 65 years of independent existence. Indeed it must be an unenviable record for any two neighbors, especially between two developing countries. Deep rooted suspicions, mutual distrust, and antagonism continue to bedevil Indo Pak relations even after the passage of 65 years of neighborhood. Despite the fact that economic and political developments in South Asia have reached a stage where one can begin to contemplate with hope and optimism the prospects of normal neighborly relationships, the conflicting notions of normalcy do not seem to have registered sufficient impact. Undoubtedly, the Kashmir dispute has been and in many ways still continues to be, the main source of continued antagonism between the two countries. Since partition, the state of Kashmir has experienced violence and varied kinds of troubles. In addition, the people of Kashmir have been consistently striving and vociferously raising their voices for independence. The Indian interpretation of the situation in Kashmir is that troubles in Kashmir are primarily caused by Pakistani efforts. It refuses to acknowledge the existence of the Kashmiri people's freedom struggles as an indigenous movement. No movement for freedom can go on for such a long time unless the people involved are deeply committed to its successful conclusion.

More than 100,000 Kashmir people have died along with countless injured and scared Kashmiris. The Indian government has consistently refused to read the writings on the wall, and has opted for a military approach to suppress the movement. In addition, Indian officials have also been asserting that the UN resolution is no longer valid and applicable, as the Kashmiri people have been regularly participating in the local state elections. Apart from the Kashmir dispute, Siachin, Sir Creek, and water related issues are also taking a huge chunk of goodwill. Although the process of Indo-Pak normalization was initiated in 2004, and for four years meetings of various agreed baskets were regularly held, the Mumbai incident abruptly halted the process. The long delays in resuming the useful dialogue adversely impacted the process of desired neighborly normalcy. However, the dialogue has been recently resumed. It is the earnest hope of many South Asians that recently resumed dialogue would maintain a desired level of consistency. The second major source of external threat emanates from the current developments in Afghanistan. The threat from Afghanistan did not acquire alarming proportion until the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. Since then, Pakistan Afghanistan relations have experienced many vicissitudes. Post 9/11 developments further complicated the situation. For most Pakistanis, the experiences of the past have not always been very pleasant, and in case of Afghanistan, many times the unpleasant aspects took the front line. Invariably, something totally different was experienced than what was earnestly expressed by the rulers. There is no doubt that people of both Pakistan and Afghanistan have great regard for each other, but the policies are made by the ruling groups. The powerful elements within the incumbent Karazai cabinet are not just known to be extremely sympathetic to Pakistan's eastern neighbor, but appear to take some kind of pleasure in making Pakistan uncomfortable. It is difficult to prove whether such pursuits are undertaken at the behest of their external patrons, are the product of their own well disguised dislike for Pakistan and Pakistanis, or pushed ahead because of the vested interests. Such elements who appeared to take pride in advancing someone else's agenda need to be controlled and made more nationalistic. It is true in strategic terms that in view of Afghanistan's internal problems (including the ongoing civil war) and the relative military inferiority, it cannot pose a serious threat to Pakistan's security. But the danger of possible fall out from Afghanistan's political instability into the neighboring provinces of Pakistan cannot be overlooked. The provinces of Kyber-Paktoon khawa, FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas), and Baluchistan are extremely prone to such an eventuality, primarily because of the existence of

dissident elements. There exists sufficient evidence to support the contention that these subversive movements were and continue to be actively encouraged and materially supported by outsiders using the land of Afghanistan. During his recent confirmation hearings for Secretary of Defense, Senator Chuck Hagel remarked that India has over the years financed problems for Pakistan from Afghanistan. Pakistan's Afghan dilemma appears to be more complex than it needs to be. Basically, this revolves around the policy pursuits of the incumbent Afghan government. Six issues have been impacting Pakistan-Afghanistan relations rather consistently since the emergence of Pakistan as an independent country, and each of them has taken some toll on the Pak-Afghan reservoir of goodwill. These issues include unbridled rumors regarding the Taliban's linkages with Pakistan and their periodic adventurism, the status of the Durand Line, Indo-Afghan relations, the landlocked nature of Afghanistan, the presence of foreign forces (including American and NATO forces), and the undesired critical speeches of the Afghan leaders unnecessarily vilifying Pakistan. Each of these issues has been periodically making adverse contributions. Soon after the tragic events of 9/11, the Americans invaded Afghanistan and further messed up the already chaotic and complicated situation in Afghanistan. If the Afghan mess is to be sorted out, then both the Afghan and Americans need to do much more than what they have done so far. The Afghans need to check and minimize corruption if they are unable to eliminate it altogether to reduce fairly heavy dependency upon the drug barons, transform its drug based economy, accelerate work on the developmental projects which could improve the job situation, introduce and undertake effective measures in order to improve law and order situation, improve techniques of police training, initiate and embark upon political approaches, expand and accelerate the training program for its army, avoid undiplomatic and irresponsible speeches and statements, and cooperate with Pakistan in order to jointly work towards the attainment of peace and stability in Afghanistan etc. For Pakistan, Afghanistan's peace, stability, and territorial integrity is extremely desirable for a number of reasons. Therefore, Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan will continue to make extra efforts with a view to a stable and peaceful next door neighbor. Not only is Afghanistan a neighbor, but it houses a substantive Pashtun population and has age old trading relations with Pakistan. In addition, the desired gas from Turkmenistan can only be procured once the situation in Afghanistan stabilizes. The turmoil in Afghanistan has not only blocked Pakistan's access to Central Asian States and adversely impacted upon Pakistan's potential as an energy and trade corridor, but has also

seriously effected stability in FATA. Besides, the danger of anticipated instability and the likely outbreak of fighting within Afghanistan in the post NATO/ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) drawdown are continuously on the rise. Indeed, Pakistan cannot afford to see Afghanistan becoming a haven for anti-Pakistan forces. In fact Pakistan also supports long term international assistance to Afghanistan in order to secure a viable economic system.