

Internal Security Challenges

The third major source of concern revolves around domestic challenges. Internal security occupies a pivotal position in any country's national security policy. Not only is Pakistan confronted with many internal threats and challenges to its physical security, but also to its citizens. Among the domestic sources of concerns that had almost continuously impacted Pakistani society, there are issues relating to governance, political instability, sluggish economy, energy and water crises, ethnicity, extremism, and terrorism etc. Generally, Pakistan has experienced a severe economic downturn, though in the past couple of years it has begun to improve. Not only does economic security imply a desired level of capability to build a strong economy, but it also entails the "resilience to withstand the impact of financial shocks, and ability to cope and adopt to the dynamic forces of globalization in the international context, and finally it is the ability to translate the achievements in social welfare in the domestic context." Not only did growth rate stagnate and inflation continue to stay in double digits during last few years, but also not much industrial investment was witnessed, and unemployment continued to grow. Gas and electricity shortages further complicated the situation. In spite of having huge-hydro-power potential and proven coal deposits, Pakistan has been facing and continues to experience energy shortages. However, one should stress that the government is trying hard to increase power generations. In order to meet both the industrial as well as public demands for power and gas, efforts are directed to intensify exploration within the country, as well as to secure gas from external sources. According to the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2011-12, the current GDP growth rate is 3.7%, inflation 10.8%, unemployment 6% and population growth rate is 2.0%.⁵ Not only has tax collection registered increases, but both the public and external debt have also increased.⁶ Pakistan has installed capacity of 20,000MW, but has been unable to exploit the full potential of the existing capacity. While energy supplies have registered marginal increase, the future prospects seem bright with the accelerated work on 969 Neelum-Jhelum, 1410 MW Tarbela 4 extension, 7100 MW Bunji, 430 MW Dasu, 740 MW Munda Dam, and 4500 MW Diamer Dam.⁷ In addition, the Iran-Pakistan pipeline has been officially inaugurated, which is likely to improve the situation once the pipeline is completed and the gas begins to come to Pakistan.

Weak governance along with a complex law and order situation not only deters investors (both local and foreigners), but it continues to pose a major challenge in terms of a desired pace of economic development. The extremist groups tend to thrive upon a situation where the state is unable to meet the aspirations of the people. The situation in Karachi, parts of Baluchistan, and FATA is still far from a satisfactory level. While the Karachi situation is indeed the product of multiple factors including ethnic and sectarian violence, terrorists' infiltration, and the resurgence of gang warfare along with target killings, the Baluchistan situation is also the result of many factors such as grievances over economic exploitation, underdevelopment, perceived unfair use of provincial resources, the quest for political power, and covert external intervention. Estranged local groups are exploited by the foreign players. In FATA, unnecessarily delayed socio-economic development coupled with state's inability to pursue gradual integration of the area provided opportunities to interested outsiders to exploit the situation.