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‘NDU Journal’ is an annual publication of National Defence University, the premier institution of security and strategic studies. The journal is a unique publication of the country which primarily deals with the national security issues of Pakistan. The journal has its own standing among the students, researchers, experts, policy makers and intelligentsia. It has been enlisted by International Political Science Abstracts, USA, Bibliography of Asian Studies USA and Ulrichs Periodicals Directory. Keeping the flag high, all the articles appearing in the journal are selected after a rigorous scrutiny and blind peer review at home and abroad. It is the testimony of quality of contents of the journal that **Higher Education Commission of Pakistan** has upgraded the journal to ‘Y’ category.

ROLE OF PEACE JOURNALISM IN INDO-PAK RELATIONS: A CASE STUDY OF “AMAN KI ASHA”

Ms. Hafsa Khalid

Abstract

South-Asian region remains the focus of global community since India-Pakistan, the two nuclear antagonists, subsist in an atmosphere that is prone to recurring crisis and critical circumstances thus, leading to intractable conflicts. Keeping into account the failure of the two governments to construct peace within the region, peace journalism seems to be one of the remedies that can guarantee peaceful future. The article explores the prospects and promising outcomes that the peace-oriented news media can bring within the premises of the subcontinent. The phenomenon of peace journalism has deeply been investigated in the article where “Aman ki Asha” has been taken as a case study of peace media fostering positivity and brotherhood.

Introduction

Ever since, life has come into existence on this planet earth, war and peace have remained important aspects in determining the very destiny of human kind. With every conflict, there is a solution; with every war, there comes peace. The bonding between war and peace is like the association of day and night; no matter what comes first. The realization of peace-building efforts in any conflict-ridden society leads to the conclusion that the construction and maintenance of peace and harmony has always been the core hub of every society, thereby, leaving behind no reason to refute its importance as a significant prerequisite of human existence.

Media, of any society, is the most influential tool of winning hearts and minds of the targeted public. It is equally true in the context of Pakistan and India where people put a lot of confidence in whatever is portrayed through their respective media. Media has been acknowledged as the most

significant instrument for communication at a larger level. It is the fourth influential institution of the state besides Executive, Legislation and Judiciary and therefore, is very significant in shaping the opinion of the public and their attitudes¹. The term media is a vast phenomenon including those paradigms or ways through which a large number of people could be communicated in a structured pattern thereby incorporating electronic, print and online media. The current study, however, focuses on the news media which encloses the journalistic features aimed to inform and educate a larger public.

Due to marvellous influential characteristics, media can do wonders through cultivating the content in the mindset of the public, thereby shifting their beliefs and behaviours. The credit goes to media that the term 'peace journalism' has been coined. The debate on peace journalism through media has attracted many scholars, peace advocates, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) owners and workers, journalists and other governmental organizations all-over the globe. Fortunately, people of India and Pakistan have started realizing that peace journalism can prove itself a significant and worth considering bridging aspect through which the ever continuing hostile relations of both the nations can be normalized². The reason lies in the fact that media, especially the news media, regulate a watchdog function and maintain an eye on the other sectors of the society, making them answerable to the public³.

Unfortunately, news media^{oo} particularly television, news channels and newspapers, have been used as an instrument for negative propaganda by the governments on both sides of the border. Despite their contribution in promoting peace by making the public well-informed, they have become a tool of promoting violence and conflict both within Pakistan and India and beyond⁴. Therefore, effectual steps towards confidence and trust building need to be embraced in-order to lessen suspicion and revulsion between India and Pakistan and guarantee such environment which proves helpful for collaboration and brotherhood⁵. Consequently, promoting

peace through journalistic media of both the countries has gained the status of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and has attracted many national and international players. India and Pakistan have always been engaged in arms-race but the outcome of such actions has been appalling for the either country. Hence, endorsing peace and cooperation has become extremely important for the stability of the region.

The key objectives of the study are to; identify the significance of peace and serenity in South-Asia particularly in the context of India-Pakistan; explore the importance of peace journalism in the contemporary relationship of Pakistan and India; offer recommendations pertaining to the endorsement of media peace-building initiatives that the journalists might find helpful in furthering the phenomenon of peace journalism in the subcontinent.

Mass Media Theory of Agenda-Setting

The roots of agenda-setting can be found in early 1960's in the findings of Benard Cohen where he concluded that "the press is significantly more than a purveyor of information and opinion. It may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling readers what to think about"⁶. Since then, it has been considered as one of the most noteworthy theories discussing the powerful clutch of mass media on its captivated audiences.

The idea of agenda-setting is that media is the instigators of the narratives since majority of the people do not witness such events on their own⁷. Therefore, the views and attitudes of the public rely mainly upon how the events are propagated through the media. Being media as the influential projectors of the issues, the viewers tend to believe in the reality portrayed via media⁸.

In the Indo-Pak context, agenda-setting via media seems to be in accordance with the political agenda of both the states. Therefore, this theory is highly relevant in the subcontinent where the war-oriented agenda setting is

amongst the core reasons behind the ever strained India-Pakistan ties. Hence if the Indo-Pak media authorities are sensitized regarding the negativities furthered by the war-oriented agenda setting, it is only then that the peace narrative could materialize in the two societies.

Mass Media Theory of Cultivation

Cultivation theory is largely focused on the implications and effects particularly of the television exposure on the audiences. The theory is based on assumption that more the individuals are exposed to television content, the more they are liable to form opinion that are similar to television's media reality⁹. On one hand, television is the major source of information for many people, on the other, its continuous exposure can result into an enormous amount of behavioural and attitudinal changes.

The practicalities of cultivation theory can also be verified within the contemporary Indo-Pak ties. Since the media of both the countries have played a major role in cultivating negativities and hatred amongst the people of both nations, the peace journalists must consider this approach while figuring out the genesis of the ever strained India-Pakistan relationship.

Intensification of Indo-Pak Rivalry

History of the strained relations between Pakistan and India can be traced back to 1947 when these two nations were declared as independent sovereign states. Ever since, the rivalry has continued and become stronger, intense and yet more enduring as the time went by. Both India and Pakistan face the dilemma of weak political system that is unable to construct policies which are apt to develop reconciliation and more likely to settle the enduring concerns and problems that have captivated both the societies, since partition. The leaders of both the nations, however, have been engaged in the exchange of some constructive declaratory statements but the effects of such proclamations are very limited.

The unresolved issue of Kashmir has hampered efforts to improve relations between the two states. Despite all three wars being fought on this very cause, Kashmir still remains an unfinished agenda between Pakistan and India¹⁰. In the years following the partition, Pakistan has always voiced for solution of Kashmir problem as the main issue, while India has always asserted that the problem is a non issue for the world¹¹. since then, Pakistan's foreign policy has often revolved around this matter and has demanded the solution of the entire Kashmir episode. Non resolution will render the peace initiatives within the nuclear neighbours as worthless.

Another factor that has escalated suspicion and a risk of miscalculation within the entire region, is the nuclearization of the two highly antagonistic yet strategic giants of South Asia. It must be noted that both the nuclear and conventional wars are directly proportional to each other as the threat of one leads to the likelihood of the other¹². Pakistan's open nuclear strategy declares that if it feels threatened by India then Pakistan would not hesitate even to use nuclear technology while India, on the other hand, has declared that if Pakistan engages nuclear weapons in the first place then India would be the second to use them¹³. Along with that, Siachen Glacier is also a source of conflict between India and Pakistan. The issue, of course, is a part of the legacy of partition coupled with the incompatibility of the political wisdom of both the governments¹⁴. Moreover, the iceberg is less an area of strategic importance than it is an emblem of ego, national pride and a sense of belongingness for the people of both the countries¹⁵. The Indo-Pak forces are not only consuming their precious resources over a needless war but also damaging the natural environment and ecosystem of that area¹⁶.

The highly unexpected Kargil conflict in 1999 left behind strains that might take several years or even decades to get washed out from the minds of both the nations. The Kargil incident provides a clear understanding of the Indian and Pakistani elitist's desires under the canopy of "national interests"¹⁷. Moreover, the Kargil conflict had made the foreign powers suspicious of Pakistan's capability of becoming

a reliable and responsible nuclear state while India successfully placed its demands before U.S. and came-out as a sound and trustworthy nuclear ally of the world's super power.

Similarly, India and Pakistan have also been engaged in vicious competition of arms race long before the acquisition of nuclear technology thereby creating a security dilemma for the entire region. It is perhaps not the nuclear weapons but the escalation of arms and missile technology also that places the security of South Asia at a high risk¹⁸. Moreover, in the third world countries like Pakistan and India where, there is a food deficiency along with worst health conditions, the considerable amount of the budget is allocated for the arms trade.

Considering the above mentioned reasons, one can reach the conclusion that it is perhaps the national pride that has forced the Indian and Pakistani news media to endorse war propagandistic designs that has jeopardized the peace of entire region. It is time for the people of both the countries to realize that "friends can be chosen but neighbours cannot". Therefore, peace journalism seems to be one of the remedies that can overcome the above mentioned hurdles in bringing peace between India and Pakistan.

Conceiving Peace

Before proceeding to peace journalism, one must have an understanding of what the term "peace" means. Peace is a varied phenomenon and its definition depends on how the individuals perceive the very notion. Johan Galtung, originator of the discipline of peace-research, divided peace into two different categories i.e. "negative-peace" and "positive-peace"¹⁹. By "negative – peace", he meant nonexistence of brutality, war and other such demonstrations of direct-violence while the attainment of such a scenario is not all the times possible through non-violent means²⁰. The international organizations like UN carry the authority to set-up "negative-peace" where-ever required either through utilizing its authority of militia or coercion²¹. By "positive-

peace”, he meant the nonexistence of all sorts of misunderstandings, lack of all categories of violence either structural or cultural and the attainment of peaceful scenario is always through non-violent means²². Peace journalism, disarmament, conflict transformation; all exemplify the struggle towards “positive-peace”.

Peace Journalism: A Tool of Confidence-Building

The notion of peace journalism, as suggested by the term itself, relates to the process through which tension and communication gaps could be alleviated and a message of peace could be promoted via journalism amongst the adversaries. As the field of journalism depends entirely on media therefore peace-building through the use of media can be entitled as peace journalism.

Peace journalism illustrates and reorganizes the main responsibilities and core functions of the reporters who bear the burden of covering disputes and conflicts²³. It is a common belief that humans are meant to interact with each other as they cannot isolate themselves from the environment of other fellow beings, due to their dependability on one another. The irony is that the humans cannot exist without their fellow beings and at the same time, they cannot stand one another. The incompatible goals of individuals as a consequence of these interactions lead to tension and conflicts putting way to anxiety and destructiveness. Being communication as an essential constituent of human existence, the idea of peace journalism possesses the ability to foster positive and rather productive interaction amongst people. Structuring peace as the major aim of this phenomenon, it depolarizes, deflates and de-escalates anxieties or conflicts, thus motivating the journalists to report the differences and disputes in such a manner that encourages communication in order to have a better understanding amongst the adversaries²⁴.

A peace journalist attempts to balance the perceived power of the antagonists, coordinates the dialogue process and

facilitates openness and mutual understanding²⁵. Furthermore, the importance of visual images in the projection of peace journalism has also been considered. The human brain is most likely to bear the visual images more than the written texts for considerably longer period²⁶. This is more evident in the war situations where the dramatic heart-touching images immediately penetrate into our personalities than the written or verbal news content.

Therefore, television and newspaper images are the most powerful and influential medium of all media institutions as individuals tend to relate the images, they see, to their view of world reality. However, the press images, because of their single freeze-frame ability, are likely to affect more than television content or films²⁷. Moreover, cartoons, pictures and other such visual representations do bear a tendency of propagating war journalism by generating "enemy images" and in the same manner these visuals also have the potential to mobilize the efforts towards constructing peace amongst the adversaries²⁸.

Peace journalism seems to be the antidote that perhaps could cure the stressed relations between Pakistan and India. Both nations being intensely affected by such a pricey historic enmity, desperately need their journalists and media to proceed professionally and ethically as they mostly cover stories regarding conflicts and tension related to these two nuclear neighbours.

Applying Peace Journalism in War-Like Situation

Media, in any conflictual or peaceful situation, is a powerful weapon used by the authorities in order to influence public's support. Without media, disseminating a particular message to a larger audience is rather impossible. Therefore, one can say that media is the most powerful tool, that can be used for promotion of peaceful milieu.

The journalists perfectly know how influential media can be, especially in war-like circumstances. Media can best be

used as a catalyst for peace and can bring reforms and revolutions around the world. Two different approaches on reporting conflicts have been identified. The first approach propagated by Martin Bell, an experienced British Broadcasting Company (BBC) war journalist, denies objectivity to have any role in conflict reporting as, according to him, objectivity has never alleviated the agony of the victims²⁹. Such journalism has been named as humanitarian journalism. However, the second approach sees objectivity as the basic element defining journalism³⁰.

Whatever the approach might be, one thing is quite clear that journalists are socially and ethically bound to protect the public interests³¹. In areas of intense conflict, peace journalism does not require the journalists to show only the good side of the picture but it emphasizes on impartiality and in-depth research of available facts. Every conflicting party has its own story and it is a democratic right of every individual to be heard before being analyzed or criticized. Therefore, peace journalists seek good reporting because it is often through such reporting that the problem automatically is reduced or resolved³².

In fact, peace journalism is all about building bridges by facilitating dialogue process in war-like situations. A peace journalist should know the scope of an issue, background, major causes behind the escalation of conflict, impact and repercussions of the entire conflict³³. Similarly, peace journalist should be fully equipped with skills in peace-building, and conflict analysis and transformation of the issue.

It has also been suggested that instead of only covering sudden erupted conflicts, the journalists should keep on alarming the people before any such event could occur³⁴. This would not only help in de-escalation of tension but would also make the adversaries understand underlying factors that worsen relationship between the parties at conflict.

Indispensable Components of Peace Journalism

Three major components of peace-journalism approach are; representing the other side; alternative media reporting; and creative peace coverage³⁵.

Representing the Other Side

Representing the other's point of view through journalistic media can do wonders by clarifying each party's position through projecting the in-depth storylines of the conflict which otherwise are ignored by the people. This very component underlies the hypothesis that, as the media cover the other's point of view, the public becomes more informed regarding peace opportunities³⁶. However, the other party's contextual information can help in better decision making and understanding one another. Moreover, if media could provide even half-image of the actual reality (from other's view point), it becomes more simple to humanize the "perceived other".

In fact, a peace journalist is bound to provide diversified information independent of the officially provided stories, otherwise, lack of ample information can even lead to misunderstandings, ambiguities and more intractability in the stances.

Alternative Media Reporting

Unfortunately, there are times when the peace processes assume back seat due to certain reasons in the context of India-Pakistan. In such circumstances, peace journalists require reporting on alternative stories that could promote and strengthen the peace processes. The alternatives to brutality can be provided through revealing the stories pertaining to human-rights violation. Such an attempt would not only provide some exciting rather human-interest stories but would also help in making the victims voice their sufferings. In times of less enthusiasm towards any peace initiative, alternative reporting can help peace process in the very sight of public. Besides human-rights violation,

interviewing the politicians or the prominent opinion makers of the “other side” can ensure more in-depth understanding of their viewpoints³⁷. Hence, in this way the public of one side could develop firsthand knowhow regarding other’s perception of the conflict.

A journalist may follow two steps while covering any peace process. First, the backchannel negotiations should be reported in order to build public trust and secondly, the obstacles likely to distort the peace environment should be revealed and discussed honestly in the news stories³⁸.

Creative Reporting

The last important component is reporting peace stories creatively. It is a common perception and a big obstacle in peace journalism that peace stories are often unexciting and boring. Since the audience is more interested in exhilarating stories, therefore, peace journalists need to go out of the box in order to attract the public. For this purpose, the journalists require creative reporting that could motivate and inspire the individuals both emotionally and socially.

Creative reporting could include the stories of cooperation that involve the grass-roots of both rival parties. In this way the media practitioners would not only empower their public with various viewpoints but also create opportunities for the audiences to develop a balanced rather more accurate judgment about the issue.

Peace Journalism in Indo-Pak Scenario

In countries like Pakistan and India, there are times when the formal level (official) dealings often fall short of alleviating mistrust and suspicion amongst the people of both the nations. The recurring crisis, impolite political stances, arms-race, internal problems, lack of concern; all combine to give a horrific picture of the future of South-Asia. In such circumstances, Track-III (citizen-diplomacy) remains the sole prospect that could bring both societies closer to pressurize

their representatives to reassess what has gone wrong during all these years.

Media, in both the states, enjoy a highly honoured and credible position amongst the people. Indians and Pakistanis tend to structure their perceptions in accordance with the light of news media. The recent boost of journalistic media in Pakistan, after the concluding episode of 2009 Chief Justice's restoration, has proved media's efficacy in portraying and resolving social issues. The same is applicable to the Indian society where the major economic, social or political information is extracted from the media sources.

Since media, over the previous six decades, have intensely fuelled the Indo-Pak conflict and these issues have been inculcated in the minds of the public so deeply that escaping this media war has become almost impossible. Such a trend has always come in the way of peaceful and secure South Asia. Thanks to citizen diplomacy, due to which the observers on each side saw a positive change in the official stances of Indian and Pakistani governments. The era of 1990s is characterized with various Track-III initiatives where different groups of the society made a positive move towards confidence building and the official efforts took a different, rather much concerned course³⁹. It is because of peace-oriented journalistic media that people on the two sides, now, are much aware of the significance of peace and evils of war between India-Pakistan. Credit goes to media's reporting that the Indian and Pakistani representatives now meet each other by having their public backing and media support.

The recent argument of the citizen peace-communities in Pakistan and India has burdened both governments with heavy responsibility of continuing the ongoing confidence-building efforts sincerely and devotedly⁴⁰. Here, the input of journalists and other media practitioners is worth-mentioning. The current attitude of media industry has contributed in across-the-board public awareness regarding how much crucial peace is for nuclear-armed South-Asia. Peace journalism in South Asia gained popularity in 1990s but

due to the frequent leg-pulling being exercised on part of both governments, it could not receive much public heed⁴¹. Today, the things are quite different; people are much aware, civil society is much mobilized and media is fairly independent and privatized. Therefore, current environment seems to be more suitable for attaining the maximum benefits of peace journalism between India-Pakistan.

News Media as Instrument of Peace-Journalism and Conflict De-Intensification

Media, predominantly news-media, serve twofold tasks; either they can be viciously dreadful by cultivating facets of fanaticism or they can be awe-inspiringly human-oriented through disseminating authentic information by regarding human-rights⁴². The pervasive conviction in war reporting leaves war outcome to the incumbent governments while peace-oriented war reporting grants journalists the power to take the resultant outcome in their hands by affecting the public positively and much fruitfully⁴³.

Peace-oriented news-media not only strengthens democracy but also guarantees individuals' sovereignty and people's right of having access to plausible information within their immediate environment⁴⁴. Constructive news media of any society enables the citizens to form their opinion impartially on contemporary problems, whether political or social, and help the individuals in making conversant decisions on societal issues that directly affect them. They monitor, evaluate and critically analyze those who possess significant ranks thereby empowering citizens to keep an eye on their government representatives⁴⁵.

Furthermore, peace-values, being cultivated through peace-oriented media, reproduce such a society that ensures tranquil minds and healthy living of the public⁴⁶. Such media grants voice to the unheard, valour to the suppressed, power to the weak, remedy to the victimized and an opportunity to the citizenry to take fate of the state in their own hands. In the underdeveloped states of South-Asia (especially Pakistan and

neighbouring India), peace-oriented journalism remains the only option.

'Aman Ki Asha': Compensating Bitterness and Exemplifying Peace Journalism

Perhaps one of the most lasting and celebrated peace journalistic endeavours between India and Pakistan is the one that came after 2008 hostile media's treatment of Mumbai incident. The project, accredited as "*Aman ki Asha*", demonstrates the worth of media in mediation, conflict-transformation and bilateral discourse⁴⁷. Started in January 2010, Pakistani "*Jang Group*" and Indian "*Times of India*" teamed up to compensate media's track-record of acrimony and surliness against each-other. The initiative's title combines Urdu (*Aman* denoting peace) and Hindi (*Asha* denoting hope) terms to articulate harmony and understanding between India-Pakistan to illustrate the dying desire of both the nations to acquire peace.

The project incorporates various initiatives ventured via both entertainment and news-media that are intended to strengthen the ties between India and Pakistan and to mobilize mass support to attain peace objectives⁴⁸. In partnership with the dynamic civil-society of both states, "*Aman ki Asha*" seeks to expose the public aspirations for witnessing a serene and secure region that lacks animosity and abhorrence against any nation. It has ushered the two historic opponents into such a context that guarantees mutual discourse, buoyancy, reciprocated respect, trust and has compelled both the governments to adopt fresh innovations to tackle their ever-continuing animosity. It attempts to offer productive outlook, broad in mindedness, acceptance, generosity and above all, it seeks to soften the deadlock that stands responsible for limiting the thinking ability of Indian and Pakistani politicians. Furthermore, it has insisted upon the journalists to search for shared values in lieu of divulging disparities and has brought the two societies closer enough to endorse the culture conducive of practicality and optimism.

A recent survey executed by *Daily Jang* has revealed that roughly 65% of Indian and Pakistani populace is very much mindful of this peace-journalistic endeavour and hence cherishes the initiative for its uniqueness, charisma and vigour⁴⁹. Fortunately, it has touched nearly every issue that has anything to do with both the countries; whether it is trade, business, culture, language, education, visa policy, health issues, politics, cricket diplomacy, lifestyle, music, drama, movies or tough concerns like Siachen, war prisoners, Kashmir or water issue. Under the canopy of “*milnay do*” (let citizens convene), it has incorporated and fostered civil-society endeavours by drawing near to the grass-roots of India and Pakistan and has been lucky enough to win their trust and minds⁵⁰. “*Aman ki Asha*” has granted a phenomenal breakthrough since partition particularly by involving the consent of Indian and Pakistani governments and citizenry. The most celebrated programs liked by the public under the said initiative are “Surk Shetra”, “Chotay Ustad”, “Foodistan”, “Pakistan-India Takra” and frequent current affair shows being hosted by anchors of both the media.

Drama, music and film icons have enthusiastically supported the initiative by appealing the public to disregard what has happened before and anticipate better rather more productive future. It has altered the most dominant yet most unfriendly Indian and Pakistani mindset through portraying their common roots, culture, food and language. Being an extension of Track-III diplomacy, it has fostered the worth of democracy which is ultimately the only way out for both the societies. Following the media’s treatment of dreadful Mumbai episode and media’s aggressive track-record, the initiative hunts for denuclearization by halting the arms-race, deforms the “otherization” by valuing human-rights, alters the pessimistic mindset by illustrating commonness, cracks the deadlock by engaging the masses and strives to heal the miseries of the individuals.

The initiative has been regarded as the most sincere and solemn strive undertaken by both the states towards cultivating peace and synchronization⁵¹. Its practicality has

made the most contradictory issues to be conversed on a single platform and the resultant views to be projected on both Indian and Pakistani media without bias or stereotyping. Being supported by a win-win stratagem, it ponders on mutual gains, bilateral compatibility, confiscating misconceptions, cultivating acceptance and positively modifying mindsets. It has accomplished what the other millionaire public-relation industries or NGOs have so far been unsuccessful to achieve. In India, Pak-phobia or Pak-threat has seen a considerable decline from 75% to 42% while in Pakistan the similar trend has reduced from 54% to 29% which confirms that this peace-journalistic endeavour has fruitfully come much nearer to what it was destined to accomplish⁵².

Similar to other India-Pakistan peace initiatives, "*Aman ki Asha*" has also drawn condemnation and suspicion from Indian and Pakistani cynics. In Pakistan, few politicians, thinkers and media practitioners have deemed this step as merely an unnecessary idea intended to waste audience's valuable time and weakening of Pakistan's political posture over Kashmir⁵³. While, Indian cynics' obsession over Pakistani backed extremism has grown thorns in the way of project's success as they observe the very initiative as being business-oriented, impractical and divisive⁵⁴. However, the peace drive is in its babyhood and calls for uphill struggle to reach maturity but it is the primary step that, if allowed to prevail longer, might dismantle India-Pakistan historical antagonism and prove itself to be the torchbearer of new rather much peaceful beginning⁵⁵.

Roots of "*Aman ki Asha*"

The proposal of "*Aman ki Asha*" did not arrive suddenly from nowhere but possesses a history too. One might draw back the very initiative with the inception of SAFMA (South-Asian Free Media Association) that came along in 2000⁵⁶. *The News* in alliance with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) pioneered the plan of an energetic and liberated media that would be well-versed in endorsing long-lasting peace initiatives⁵⁷. The objectives were comparable to

those of “*Aman ki Asha*” with an intention to exercise media for their mediation, watch-dog and conflict-resolution functions, thereby contributing in alleviating misconceptions, exposing truth, facilitating discourse or communication and discouraging negative stereotypes in South-Asia.

SAFMA, still in the scene, has focused on media’s liberty, unblocked surge of information, conflict-transformation, regional collaboration, trust-building and a struggle towards obtaining peace both within and beyond the region. It has embraced those who reckoned the worth of discourse and who believed in the diplomatic resolution of divergence and, hence, has penetrated its voice into the doors of parliament and policy institutions. It has struggled for peace-building via media, journalists’ liberation and citizen’s right of accessing truth. Similar to “*Aman ki Asha*”, several seminars and dialogues have been arranged by SAFMA with an intention to construct a conflict-free environment. Furthermore, it has assisted Indian and Pakistani journalists to collaborate with one-other to alter their prejudiced mindsets and to undermine stereotypes regarding each side through utilizing media.

Again in 2001, Agra summit, to some extent, brought back the ideals of peace journalism when in the presence of approximately 500 media-teams General Musharraf, the then Pakistani President, and Vajpayee, the then Indian Prime-Minister, met to converse bilateral issues. The event turned into a “media-summit” where a sea of journalists flew from Pakistan to its neighbouring India⁵⁸. Though the conference did not prove fruitful but it had projected the peoples’ longing for witnessing a brotherly atmosphere between India-Pakistan. The event, however, fell victim to sensationalism but the expectations and mood of the spectators were very optimistic and an opportunity was seen for alleviating tensions and misconceptions through utilizing the influence of media⁵⁹.

The above stated events have pioneered the foundations of “*Aman ki Asha*” and have demonstrated how Pakistani and

Indian media can prove to be useful to reduce bilateral tension and misunderstandings.

"Aman ki Asha": Psychological and Societal Ramifications on Public

As peace is beneficial for both states therefore, "*Aman ki Asha*" is likely to have the following ramifications on Indian and Pakistani public; healthy social living of people; chance to settle Kashmir-dispute; strengthening of Indian/Pakistani news and entertainment industry; creation of cultural and psychological benevolence amongst Indian and Pakistani citizens; financial boost through economic interdependence. Across-the-board tourism; diminution of trans-border extremism, smuggling and crimes; bilateral job opportunities. improvement in labour, education, infrastructure, political system, economy, culture, lifestyle, clothing etc; bilateral renewal of cricket, political, military and trade relations; decline in India-Pakistan risk of nuclear-war; considerable lessening of Indo-phobic or Pak-phobic trend; diversion of arms expenses to developmental and health projects; and finally, an opportunity for South Asia to succeed.

Recommendations for Peace Journalism in India-Pakistan

Peace journalists cannot operate alone; they need their fellow members to join them, government's endorsement and public appreciation. In Indo-Pak framework, the journalists require security and freedom to proceed in the best interests of the public. They need space to function, resources to preserve quality, capital to discard yellow journalism, security to certify objectivity and above all, respect for human-being and a public's messenger holding the duty to disseminate valid information. Unfortunately, the region of South-Asia has been viewed as the most dangerous place for conducting journalism.

First, the Indo-Pak journalists and other media practitioners must clarify whether they desire peace between

India and Pakistan or not. If yes, then they ought to endorse the following recommendations in their working media environments since these are not merely suggestions but a way of conducting ethical journalism in Indo-Pak hostile context. The following recommendations are offered from the personal opinion and experience of the participants selected for the survey of current study.

- The professional media-practitioners in India-Pakistan must be segregated from the non-professionals.
- The Indian and Pakistani journalists must be equipped with required training, professional education, financial and logistic resources. Various training camps must be established all over the subcontinent to strengthen the journalists' capability towards peace-building⁶⁰.
- Young journalists must be promoted and encouraged in both states' news-media industries since they are more energetic, possess fresh ideas, more logical and much creative than the older journalists⁶¹.
- The media peace initiatives like "*Aman ki Asha*" must persist as it is due to such endeavours that Indo-phobic or Pak-phobic mindsets could be altered. Such initiatives must be made globalized by engaging all stakeholders and all media industries. Human minds tend to have short-term memory, therefore, such peace endeavours should emerge on a regular basis⁶². Furthermore, Indo-Pak peace journalists must have to go out of box, something apart from cricket diplomacy or few mutual entertainment or news programmes. Perhaps the element of creativity is more significant and obligatory especially in the context of India-Pakistan historic enmity.

Conclusion

The article has focused on the evolution and progression of peace journalism as an autonomous theme of peace-research. The entire literature has presented the only conclusion, that in a tense political relationship between the governments of

Pakistan and India; only objective, unbiased and rather peaceful media can help revive the forgotten history of Hindu-Muslim unity, fill the political and communication gaps, allow free-movement of people on both sides and could alleviate suspicion and miscommunications between the two nations. The South Asian journalists and media authorities should accept peace journalism as the only remedy of resolving historic issues as such conflicts have contributed in portraying the region as highly volatile, dangerous and insecure.

Notes

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MARITIME POWER AND STRATEGY

Dr. Azhar Ahmad

Abstract

Maritime power includes all relevant aspects of national power both; civil and military. National maritime capabilities and potential are seen in comprehensive terms as including ports & harbours, merchant marine & maritime industry, fishing and oceanographic fleets, ocean economic resources, maritime outlook and tradition, and other aspects of national power related to sea. Whereas, maritime strategy takes care of the development and management of the elements of maritime power. Access to sea provides political, economic and military advantages to the littoral states and raises their stature in the comity of nations. However, in order to take advantage of the bounties of the seas, a nation has to evolve a comprehensive maritime strategy to be able to exploit and protect all the elements of maritime power.

Introduction

“It is He who has subjected the sea unto you, that ye may eat flesh thereof that is fresh and tender, and extract there-from ornaments to wear, and thou seest the ships therein that plough the waves that ye may seek to enrich yourself of the bounty of Allah and that ye may be grateful¹.”

More than two-thirds of the earth's surface is covered with water. All major oceans of the world are practically connected to form one whole. These oceans provide man with a seamless medium to traverse the entire length and breadth of this globe. Although human beings naturally live on land, their sustenance is crucially linked and dependent on these waters. All oceans, seas and inland waterways are a huge reservoir of food and an endless resource of organic and non-organic materials. The two most traditional usages of the seas include

the use of these waters as a source of food (fishing) and as a medium of transportation. Even today, seafoods comprise major portion of the overall human food consumption and the trend is increasing with the improvement in technology and better access to fishing techniques. Similarly, sea transport remains the most convenient and the cheapest mode of transport the world over. It is, therefore, no surprise that the humans prefer to live close to the waters and today 80% of the world's population lives on or near the coasts and 90% of the entire world's commerce is routed through the seas². Moreover, the seas contain tremendous amount of resources, so important for sustenance and development of human society which include oil and gas, important minerals, food and energy. It is also the single most influential element that affects and regulates our climate and environment. Thus, the seas have a profound influence on our economic, social, cultural and military lives.

The objective of this paper is to critically analyse the importance of various elements of maritime power and their effective employment to achieve progress and prosperity for a country. The paper highlights the significance of the oceans in different aspects of human activity before clarifying the concepts of maritime power and strategy. It also explains how maritime strategy helps harness the benefits of various elements of maritime power.

Significance of the Seas

There have been few others like Mahan, who have tried to draw the attention of their peers to the importance of oceans in their lives. One of them was the architect of modern Soviet Navy, Admiral Gorshkov, who writes³:

“Our seas, oceans and inland waterways are of huge importance in terms of resources, the environment and conservation, trade and industry, marine sciences and leisure activity.”

The seas have been used, since time immemorial, primarily as an important resource of food, mainly fish, and as an economical and indestructible path for transportation of goods and people. However, advancements in technology promise a much wider access to the depths and widths of the seas. The increasing knowledge about the variety of sources available in these waters and their bottoms and the capability to technically exploit these precious sources has further enhanced the economic importance of seas. Technology is continually transforming the traditional knowledge and uses of the seas, being used for variety of civil and military purposes. In order to fully comprehend the scope and benefits of the seas, an effort is being made to categorize the uses of the oceans and the seas under three broad but very important aspects of human activity.

Economic

The foremost activity at the sea remains fishing. Sea food is one of the most preferred and healthy of the foods. Millions of individuals and their families are associated with and dependent on fishing around the world which has taken a form of a proper industry. It is estimated that over 500 million people earn their livelihood directly or indirectly through this industry⁴. Besides catching and selling fish, the industry includes manufacturing of fishing boats and trawlers, fishing lines and nets and a variety of modern equipment which is used directly or indirectly in the process. Fish processing has also become a thriving industry which gives employment to thousands and is a source of huge revenues for many countries. New techniques and equipment are being introduced regularly giving a continuous boost to the industry and adding its contribution to the overall economic activity. Rise in population and awareness about its nutritious value is adding to the demand of fish, generating more opportunities for the coastal states and individuals related with this industry.

Another vital economic activity at sea is the marine transportation. It is said that 90% of world trade is carried out

through seas. Bigger, much faster ships, loading/unloading and storing techniques provide vast economic opportunities. The transportation through sea is not only safer, but is cheaper as well. No other medium, land or air, has the capacity to lift equivalent amount of cargo in comparable size and cost. Not only the littoral states but even the land-locked countries are also dependent on the sea for a major portion of their imports and exports. Merchant shipping is a multibillion-dollar, multinational endeavour; an estimated two million people make their livelihood from seafaring⁵. There are other major activities associated with sea trade like ship-building and repairs, marine construction, and also the infrastructure and communications required for linking these ports with the hinterland. Thus the scale of economic activity generated through sea trade is enormous and has the capacity to alone turn the fortunes of the coastal states. Singapore and UAE are just two examples of states thriving on sea trade. The increase in the world trade, due to globalization, has become a primary factor that affects the international maritime environment.

Sea is also a significant resource for countless minerals. Many, perhaps, are still unknown to the mankind, however, the technology is opening up new vistas and human reach is becoming possible in the remoteness of ocean beds. So far, the most important and precious non-living product of the sea is petroleum. According to Professor Till⁶, nearly one third of the oil and gas being consumed by the world comes from the seabed; Methane hydrates are the future energy resources and sea will be used more and more for energy generation as the world has learnt to exploit fluctuating tides, the movements of waves, and water temperature differentials. The economic activity being generated by transportation and use of petroleum alone is so enormous that it would be difficult to put a figure on it. Technology is opening wider and deeper oceanic areas for exploration of minerals. It is due to modern technology that Japan is endeavouring to retrieve iron from near its coast.

The oceans hold a promising future to meet the rapidly expanding needs of the people. Governments, throughout the world, are showing close interest in the deep sea, the sea-bed and its subsoil. The United States, Germany, Japan and Russia are leading the world-wide enterprise of oceanic explorations. In addition to the vast mining of oil and gas being carried out at sea, numerous other minerals and metals are also being mined from the sea-bed. As technology advances, the volume and variety of the yield from the sea would also increase. Sea water, sea-bed and subsoil of the sea carry huge potential resources of all kinds of foods, minerals, biological and chemical resources for the coastal states.

In its hunger for more and cheaper energy, mankind is turning toward the sea with renewed hopes. The potential sources of energy from the sea are numerous including the harnessing of wave-energy and the tidal movement, recovery of hydrogen from the sea water, and development of big-mass energy from biological sources of the sea. In this last category, the energy would be obtained from Kelp, the 'king of the sea weeds' which can grow by two feet per day.⁷ Even the wind generated across the coasts is indirectly a product of the sea which is being used for energy generation.

Development of ports and harbours is a catalyst in the overall economic and industrial uplift of a country. It provides impetus to economic and social activity throughout the country. Even water sports and leisure activities provided by the seas contribute enormously in the social and economic well being of the people. It is no coincidence that most of the prosperous cities and notable commercial as well as cultural centres are located astride the seas. Recreation, real estate, ocean-related occupations, and other services associated with the ocean generate an amount of \$54 billion in goods and services each year. Revenue generated from the ocean is received through: food, recreation, mining, shipping, kelp (emulsifying agent used in food and pharmaceutical products), and biomedical products⁸.

Military

The importance of the seas as a medium of warfare and influence has grown over a period of time. The earlier military use of the seas was restricted to transportation of men and material to and from the enemy coast. The actual action was to be carried out at land. However, with passage of time and proficiency in the use of boats and weapons, it was sometimes found prudent to face the enemy at the sea. In military conflict, the sea may serve as the first line of defence for some countries and for some as the last reserve of space, to fall back upon. The sea also provides logistic supply routes to the combat forces fighting on land or operating near coastal areas. Despite advancements in warfare at sea, amphibious landing remains one of the most intricate and spectacular of military actions launched from the sea. Landings at Normandy and Inchon played decisive role in the outcome of the respective battles. It is still considered as an attractive form of power projection against weaker adversaries. Seabed also provides ideal ground for installation of long range listening devices and under-water weapons.

Mobility, flexibility and reach are some of the important characteristics of all the naval forces. Sea power plays a major part in projecting power both by direct support of operations on land and by independent action at sea. Due to increased dependence of states on sea-borne trade, the protection (or interdiction) of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) has become an important military assignment for naval forces. States are becoming more and more dependent on sea trade and any interference thereof can have serious repercussions.

Development of new weapons like the stand-off cruise missile which can be fired from any platform has made it possible for maritime forces to carryout lethal missile attacks on shore targets including the interior of the coastal cities. However, in the nuclear age, the most sought after military instrument at sea today is the submarine which provides the best assured 'second-strike' capability to a nuclear state.

Political

Political importance of any element or resource is essentially a product of the economic and military factors. With the indisputable economic and military importance of the oceans, their political importance is inevitable. Ability to use the sea enhances the overall freedom of a nation, particularly in case of those nations which are surrounded by hostile neighbours.

A state needs a wide variety of contacts and communications with the international community to advance its influence and aims for its political stability and national progress. The sea facilitates in promoting commercial, cultural, scientific and industrial contacts between the littoral states. When Mozambique became free from Portuguese domination, its re-establishment of trade ties with the world community was quick because of its access to the sea. Pakistani merchant ships also immediately started calling at the Mozambique ports to bring own exports to that country. The state of Rhodesia which has now become Zimbabwe, on the other hand, has been taking much longer to develop similar contacts with other countries because it is a landlocked country⁹. Pakistan enjoys special importance for landlocked Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Afghanistan for providing access to the world through sea.

The states having access to the sea invariably tend to have a greater voice and influence in the sphere of international trade and commerce, fixing of transportation prices, allocation of tariffs and quotas, and on policies regarding shipping and turnover of trade etc. This enhances the overall economic expertise and activities of these states. Countries like Singapore, Iran, Egypt, Panama, Turkey etc. have a role to play in the international politics due to their proximity to important maritime choke points.

The sea provides a very good medium through which show of force to serve as deterrence or as a pressure tactics can be mounted. This kind of diplomacy by force or what is

sometimes called as ‘Gun-boat diplomacy’ is being frequently used by big powers as well as the regional powers. Present trends in power-politics in the international sphere, as well as availability of new kinds of weapons and naval units indicate still wider currency and applicability of the use of naval deterrent forces in support of diplomacy.

Understanding Maritime Strategy and Sea Power

Many historians have generally used the term ‘maritime strategy’ or ‘sea power’ in the military context. It is, therefore, no surprise that people tend to mix maritime/ sea power with naval power. Hence, there is a need to put the two in their correct perspective. The word ‘maritime’ is a composite term which has various elements such as ports and harbours, merchant marine, ocean economic resources and combatant naval forces. All these elements essentially contribute towards the ‘national power’ of a state. Maritime strategy is all about the sea and management of maritime assets in the best possible fashion¹⁰; which brings riches and honour to the state that learns and applies these skills. The political, economic and technological environments have got a direct bearing on the maritime strategy of a nation.¹¹ Sea power is broadly defined to include all relevant aspects of national power, both civil and military. National maritime capabilities and potential are seen in comprehensive terms as including ports & harbours, merchant marine & maritime industry, fishing and oceanographic fleets, ocean economic resources like fish, oil & gas, minerals etc, maritime outlook and tradition, and other aspects of national power related to sea, rather than in narrow terms of weaponry alone. A strategy to enhance national sea power accordingly promotes and coordinates all aspects of maritime activity, both civil and military in order to optimize the use of available resources¹². It may be said that maritime strategy is the conviction of a nation to put to use her political, social, economic and maritime assets with the aim to promote her maritime interests¹³.

Maritime strategy determines the development of elements of sea power. It is greatly influenced by the economic, trade,

energy, defence and foreign policies amongst others. Maritime strategy therefore, regulates all the elements of sea power whereas; naval strategy deals primarily with one element i.e. the naval forces.

Naturally, there is a considerable inter-linking between the two because naval strategy is designed to protect the maritime interests of the state in peace and war. Moreover, it has the potential to support broad national objectives, particularly in the foreign policy. In the context of maritime affairs, naval forces safeguard the elements which are lucrative and open to dispute because conflicts over the treasures of the sea are bound to arise.

Therefore, despite excessive use of the term sea power, by majority of naval writers, in purely military context, this study considers sea power as an all-encompassing term which includes the ability to exploit all elements of maritime power. Although Mahan's works revolved mainly around naval campaigns, he did realize the importance of other elements of maritime power as well. According to him¹⁴, sea power was essential to the growth of national strength and prosperity. He identified various factors which affected the sea power of a nation which included: geographical position, size of territory and population, political institutions and national character. All proponents of sea power unanimously agree that the ascendancy of UK and USA owes primarily to their sea power. Admiral Gorshkov expresses his views on sea power in the following words¹⁵:

“A nation's sea power is determined not only by the weapons and armed forces with which it can affect events at sea but also by its merchant marine, its fishing and oceanographic fleets, and its maritime outlook and tradition. It is true that these civil maritime activities can become vital ingredients in a nation's ability to exercise military power at sea, for example, when merchant ships carry troops and supplies in wartime, or trawlers and scientific vessels collect

intelligence in peacetime, but they are not inherently instruments of armed force.”

How much influence sea power has had on the course of history and destiny of the nations is a matter of debate. Notwithstanding, the fact that this influence has not been constant and has varied due to various factors, it would be hard, even for the proponents of continental primacy, to reject its importance outright. As noted by Professor Till,¹⁶ sea power may not be required today for colonization, but many other benefits of sea power, not visible to the early writers have arisen. For example, the adoption of the United Nation’s Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) has given a whole new meaning to the term sea power by giving rights and responsibilities to coastal states. One extremely relevant manifestation of sea power is the nuclear submarine with its capability of second strike. So while the means, and even the ends, may have changed; the importance of sea power and hence of maritime strategy has not diminished. The United States’ ability to invade far off lands and maintain its hegemony and control over resource rich areas of the globe is only possible because of its preponderance at sea. Having established the importance of sea power for contemporary littoral states, the need for a maritime strategy to exploit this power becomes only too obvious. Let us now discuss a few elements which are critical to the existence and exploitation of maritime power.

Elements of Maritime Power

“Under modern conditions, however, home trade is but a part of the business of a country bordering on the sea. Foreign necessities or luxuries must be brought to its ports, either in its own or in foreign ships, which will return, bearing in exchange the products of the country, whether they be the fruits of the earth or the work of men’s hands; and it is the wish of every nation that this shipping business should be done by its own vessels. The ships that thus sail

to and fro must have secure ports to which to return, and must, as far as possible, be followed by the protection of their country throughout the voyage¹⁷.”

Maritime elements are various and listed differently by different writers. However, there are four basic elements which are essential for a state to be considered a sea power of any stature. These include ports & harbours, merchant marine, ocean economic resources and combatant force.

Ports and Harbours

The most fundamental constituent of maritime power is the ports. Without ports and harbours, worthwhile maritime activity cannot simply take place. The possession of ports and harbours is a significant attribute of sea power. A port offers facility for receiving ships and transferring cargo. It is, in fact, a gateway between water and land transport with services for receiving and transferring cargo as well as passengers. As such, a lot of related industrial activities take place in and around the ports, giving rise to port-industrial complexes. It may also be defined as an intermediate location in the global flow of passengers and freight. As shipments by sea account for about 90 percent of international trade by volume, sea ports are vital nodes in global supply/logistic chains, as well as in supra-national and regional trade. Naturally therefore, all ports also form focal points for economic activities and for associated industrial development¹⁸.

The economic activity associated with ports can be divided into different groups. The first group involves cargo and passenger handling, storage and distribution activities as part of port function, ship repair and a number of transport-related services located in port itself and in their city centres. The second group consists of a processing industries that process imported material before their onward shipment/re-export taking advantage of the inter-modal, trans-shipment and break of bulk functions of ports. Another group of industries found in port-industrial complexes are those whose inputs

include bulk commodities imported through the port. Oil refineries and related chemical industries, iron and steel mills and sugar refineries¹⁹ may be included in this last category. Mahan further explains the importance of ports in the following words²⁰:

“The seaboard of a country is one of its frontiers; and the easier the access offered by the frontier to the region beyond, in this case the sea, the greater will be the tendency of people toward intercourse with the rest of the world by it. If a country be imagined having a long seaboard, but entirely without a harbour, such a country can have no sea trade of its own, no shipping, no navy.”

The bases, ports and harbours provide berthing, repairs and numerous logistic facilities including recuperation of personnel, without which the sustained operations are not possible. The distant bases help increasing endurance and reach of combatants. Commercial ports and harbours are focal points for economic development of any state. Modern ports' capability of handling large quantities of cargo and shipping are important assets. Finally, it is no exaggeration to say that the existence and exploitation of all other elements of maritime power depends on the availability of suitable ports.

Merchant Marine

Maritime nations have various interests, economic interdependence, and a heritage tied inseparably to their geography. Regular inter-continental business flights and direct world-wide communications have created fresh commercial opportunities and brought nations closer, though they still rely on the oceans to serve as a highway to commerce abroad. The stability of the world economy depends upon unhindered trade across the seas and the oceans. Today, even the most powerful world economies, like US, with vast industrial, technological, agricultural, and resource components, are not self-sufficient. Nations depend on the

continued flow of raw materials and finished products to and from different countries.

International trade plays an overwhelmingly important role in stimulating economic growth. With the onset of globalization and improvement in transportation and related services, the world economies have become ever more inter-dependent. The three mediums of transportation i.e. land, air and sea have certain advantages and shortcomings. For example, man is most comfortable on land, the latter being his natural habitat and source of sustenance. Land also allows free and sustained movement even without the use of any vehicle. However, the land is not continuous and sometimes the terrain is not very hospitable. Even with the use of vehicles, there is restriction on speed and capacity. On the other hand, the air is ubiquitous, uninterrupted, and free of terrain difficulties; it allows high speed movement in all directions without the need of preparing roads and rails. Nonetheless, despite huge technological improvements, the staying power and size of air vehicles remains limited, and the energy required to move them at high speed becomes exorbitantly expensive. In contrast, the sea is almost continuous and free of terrain difficulties, requires no road, rail or runway preparations and allows large and heavy cargos to be lifted at far less energy expenditure.

A merchant marine, under the national flag and nationally owned and manned is generally considered to be an important element of maritime power. It enables the state to ensure the maintenance of its trade; earn profits, create wealth and provide employment; besides maintaining a pool of trained seamen. All these traits are particularly important in times of national crisis, when in addition, it may be desirable for a state to requisition merchant ships for naval or auxiliary purposes²¹. A clear example of this, is seen in the Falklands campaign where a large number of merchant ships were commissioned by the Royal Navy to augment its strength. It is also a well known fact that some countries use their merchant (and fishing) vessels for intelligence gathering and eavesdropping as well.

Having own merchant fleet of sufficient size and capability is particularly important during war and tension. Because during such periods the Flag of Convenience ships usually refuse to ply in dangerous waters or charge exorbitant fees on account of war insurance, which despite being a burden on the national exchequer, does not assure continued supplies. On such occasions, the best and only reliable solution is to have own ships able to carry vital cargo.

Hence the possession of merchant fleet is not only important for economic reasons but for the purposes of national security as well. Negligence to build and maintain own fleet could impact a state in three different ways. First and foremost would be to lack the capacity of assured supplies during peace and war. Secondly, the state will lose an opportunity to earn vital revenues from carrying cargoes of other countries. And thirdly, it will have to pay exorbitant freight charges and, may be, even war insurance bills to flags of convenience.

The availability of shipping services to meet country's foreign trade needs in war or other emergencies has been the major reason for development of merchant shipping by many countries. Though national defence requirements do not fall within normal economic considerations, they have been an important factors in development of national mercantile marine. As mentioned earlier, a war in the region or a heightened state of tension can discourage neutral foreign shipping from operating in such an area. Resulting in denial of essential services for carrying country's trade or increased insurance premium for all cargo destined to or from a war zone. Experts have quoted five basic reasons why developing countries invest in shipping industry. These are: saving foreign exchange, reducing freight costs and consequently promoting the country's foreign trade, earning revenues from the shipping operation, providing additional employment, and assuring adequate and reliable shipping services in peace and crisis²².

Oceanic Economic Resources

Oceanic economic resources are those assets or materials, related to the oceans or seas, which help generate economic activity or contribute to the economic well being of individuals or states. Generally, this term is used to include all living and non-living organisms and materials e.g. marine animals and plants, minerals, oil and gas etc. that are found in the oceans.

The coastal areas are by far the most biologically productive zones, endowed with rich, unique natural ecosystems that can contribute significantly towards national economy and growth. It is estimated²³ that one hectare of mangroves, if properly managed, could produce an annual yield of 100kg fish, 25kg shrimp, 15kg crab meat, 200kg mollusc, and 40kg sea cucumber, in addition to supplying indirect support for 400kg of fish and 75kg of shrimp that mature in off-shore areas. The economic wealth of coastal areas is derived from five major sources²⁴.

Products of direct economic value e.g. shrimp and finfish, which earn millions of US dollars in foreign exchange; minerals; sand mining; beach recreation and tourism that generate revenue, apart from providing support to livelihood of many rural communities along the productive natural systems.

Products of natural systems that are intangible and are not accounted for by the market economy. These are the output of economic functions performed and services provided by those systems e.g., supply of rich nutrients to support productivity of biologically diverse fauna and flora, of direct and indirect economic value to humans such as food, firewood, honey; fodder for animals, cattle and wild life.

Coast dependent activities such as coastal aquaculture, marine transport and shipping, beach related activities, tourism, ports and harbour etc.

Coastal linked activities include fish processing, agricultural activities along the coastal belt, marine coastal installations, laying of submarine cables and pipelines, ship building, power station etc.

Coastal services activities include housing, real estate, business industries and other professional services.

Thus, the total economic wealth generated by the natural systems, coast depended activities and services, contributes billions of US dollars to national Gross National Production (GNP). Many nations depend on the common resources of the oceans for enhancing their economic power. Since the access to the ocean is free, it allows the states to enjoy unlimited bounties offered by the ocean. Admiral Gorshkov considers seas, oceans and inland waterways to be of huge importance in terms of resources, the environment and conservation, trade and industry, marine sciences and leisure activity. He writes²⁵:

“The exploitation of the natural resources of the World Ocean, combined with the advance of science and technology making such exploitation possible, opens new vistas of economic and political integration for the socialist states of the world, widens the sphere of their international cooperation and heightens the prestige of the Soviet State in the international arena.”

Combatant Naval Force

After establishing importance of the oceans and various elements of maritime power, it becomes common understanding that a state would need a capable force to safeguard not only its sovereignty but all its assets and resources as well. It is, therefore, of paramount importance that a coastal state must possess a potent naval force to protect its maritime interests. The sea plays a crucial role in the economic, military and political affairs of a state. If adequate maritime force is not maintained, the sea can become a liability rather than an asset.

Man lives on land but the predominant support to his life comes from water. Besides the fact that the sea is inextricably linked with every aspect of man's life, the potential resources possessed by the sea are infinitely greater than those of the land. Those who can harness the resources of sea, would always have more resources at their disposal for development. It is inevitable that the nations which have the capability of controlling the sea would become the dominant nations in the world. Khairuddin Barbarossa rightly understood the importance of naval power, when after his conquest in the battle of Preveza, in 1538, he uttered his famous words:

“He who rules over the sea will undoubtedly rule over the land.”

In the recent history, natural resources of the seas have attracted great interest around the world. The land is becoming scarce of some of the traditional raw materials due over-exploitation, while the demand is still on the rise. While with advancement in technology, it is becoming increasingly possible for man to work at sea and exploit the unlimited resources, it offers. Parallel with this increase in the access and demand of marine resources goes, of course, an increase in their strategic significance²⁶. The conflicts over the use of ocean space arise principally from two developments: first, an explosion of technological advances in exploiting fish, petroleum, and minerals in ocean space; and second, the rising influence of developing countries in asserting their claim to the benefits of such exploitation²⁷. The UNCLOS has given a large area of the seas under the jurisdiction of coastal states to exploit and reap its benefits. However, mere claims and resolutions do not guarantee protection of a nation's interests. A coastal state requires a potent military force to be able to protect its interests and deter intrusion.

Notwithstanding the above, the realm of a naval force extends much beyond mere protection of maritime interests. Their unique composition and special characteristics set them apart from both, the land and air forces. Hence modern naval forces are used as military as well as political instruments in

support of national policies. Naval presence is used to provide a regional stabilizing influence, foster strong alliances, and encourage multinational friendships. Development of new weapons, the capability to strike beyond just the coastal areas, and the second strike capability, has increased the importance of navies manifold. A naval force can be engaged or disengaged easily without fear of unintended escalation. By being on the high seas or in foreign ports, a navy can communicate threats, offer reassurances, or earn prestige in a way that troops or aircraft in their home bases cannot do. Naval forces operate in an international medium and can reach and operate around the globe, besides having the capacity to sustain themselves for longer periods.

The navy remains at the core of a country's military preparedness and war-fighting proficiency. As a team, operating around the seas, naval forces are able to shift their focus, in no time, from passive, low-profile, forward deployed operations to high-tempo crisis response. In this environment, the naval forces are expeditionary in character, a force whose flexibility, readiness, self-sustainability, and mobility is capable of preventing and, if necessary, winning regional battles, resolving crises, or serving as a vital element of joint task forces, to guard national interests. It is, therefore, considered an important element of not only the maritime power but that of the national power.

Conclusion

The progress and prosperity of mankind is crucially linked with the seas. With dwindling resources at land, the importance of seas has become manifold. The seas possess enormous opportunities as provider of food, hydrocarbons and minerals and also as the most convenient and cheapest medium of transportation. It is also the single most influential element that affects and regulates the climate and environment. Having access to sea offers political, economic and military options to the littoral and enhances its prestige in the comity of nations. The advancement in technology and the new laws facilitate the coastal states in exploiting the

resources in their maritime domain but at the same time, it is a challenge to be able to protect the maritime interests. In order to benefit from the bounties of the oceans, it is important that a nation invests in all the elements of maritime power. The management of these elements of maritime power requires a comprehensive and well thought out maritime strategy based on national goals and objectives.

Notes

¹ Holy Qur'an, Surah Al-Nahl, Ayah 14.

² O. S. Verma, "UNEP Theme: Wanted! Seas & Oceans Dead or Alive", *Journal of Extension Systems* 20, no.2 (December 2004) available at <http://www.jesonline.org/2004dec.htm>.

³ S.G. Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State* (Oxford : Pergamon, 1979), 2.

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainable_fishery, accessed on February 8, 2012.

⁵ Daniel Sekulich, *Oceans Titans: Journeys in Search of the Soul of a Ship*, (Guilford: Lyons, 2007), 32.

⁶ Geoffrey Till, *Sea Power: A Guide for Twenty First Century*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2009), 2.

⁷ <http://www.usc.edu/org/seagrant/Education/Kelp/>, accessed on March 5, 2014.

⁸ Project Oceanography, University of Florida, 1998 available at <http://www.marine.usf.edu/pjocean/packets/f98/f98u1e1.pdf>.

⁹ Maritime Warfare Docket (Islamabad: National Defence University, 2009), 46.

¹⁰ Muhammad Anwar, *Role of Smaller Navies: A Focus on Pakistan's Maritime Interests*, (Rawalpindi: Army Press, 1999), 9.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² M. A. Morris, *Expansion of Third World Navies*, (London: Macmillan, 1987), 94.

¹³ Anwar, op.cit., 2.

¹⁴ Mahan, op.cit., xxix.

¹⁵ Quoted in Hedley Bull, "Sea Power and Political Influence", ed. Jonathan Alford, *Sea Power and Influence: Old Issues and New Challenges*, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, (England: Gower & Allanheld, Osmun, 1980), 3.

¹⁶ Geoffrey Till, *Maritime Strategy and the Nuclear Age*, Second ed. (London: MacMillan, 1984), 5.

¹⁷ Mahan, op.cit., 26.

¹⁸ Michael Dunford and Godfrey Yeung, "Regional Development: Port-industrial Complexes" in Kitchin, Rob and Thrift, Nigel (eds.) *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* 8, 2009, 285-294.

¹⁹ Ibid., 287.

²⁰ Mahan, op.cit., 35

²¹ Anwar, op.cit., 16.

²² Raja Rab Nawaz, *Maritime Strategy in Pakistan*, Master's Thesis (Monterey: Naval Post-Graduate School, 2004), 11-29.

²³ Data from National Institute of Oceanography, quoted in Babar Bilal, *Pakistan's Maritime Assets*, Individual Research Paper (Islamabad: National Defence University, 2008), 14.

²⁴ Shahid Amjad, "Marine Resource Development" (Karachi: National Institute of Oceanography, 2005).

²⁵ Gorshkov, op.cit., 79.

²⁶ Erik Moberg, "The Protection of Resources", in Jonathan Alfred, op.cit., 19.

²⁷ Robert E. Osgood, "Military Implications of the New Ocean Politics", *Ibid.*, 12.

POLARIZATION OF BALOCH SOCIETY: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Muhammad Ihsan Qadir and Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmed

Abstract

All federating units of the state of Pakistan have diverse ethnic makeup, distinct cultures, assorted languages and even incongruent life style. These sociological differences have resulted in social division of overall Pakistani society which is evident from emergence of few very serious internal conflicts during past few decades. The enigmatic state versus province conflict in Balochistan has been ongoing since independence of Pakistan in 1947 having multiple causes and dimensions. The conflict has adversely affected Baloch population resulting into rising dissatisfaction level from the state. The prolonged sufferings of population have translated into solemn grievances over the years and set in symptoms of social polarization in Baloch society. Polarization, being a wide ranging phenomenon, has many contributory causes. The article focuses on polarization through the prism of three contributing variable; state of education, health & civic amenities and hypothesises that despite prevailing polarization in Baloch society, province of Balochistan cannot secede from federation of Pakistan.

Introduction

Balochistan is the largest but least developed province of Pakistan which has transitioned from being a loose tribal confederacy to the province of federation of Pakistan since 1970. The socio-political turmoil, faced since independence, had consequential effects on Baloch segment of society of the province. From macro-social standpoint, challenges faced by the Baloch society include limited economic opportunities, demographic imbalance, ubiquitous violence and subversive acts of nationalist groups. These inadequacies had long lasting effects and have caused psycho emotional damage to the society. Having passed through this tumultuous state of affairs

during last few decades, feelings of dissatisfaction and disassociation have entrenched in Baloch society. Lot has been written on existing precarious situation however, there is a need to examine causes and establish consequences of polarization in Baloch society. This phenomenon has entwined causal relationship which needs to be looked through the social, political and economic prisms for drawing meaningful conclusions. The article aims to contribute towards narrowly researched dimensions of social polarization of Baloch society and hypothesises that polarization in Baloch society has not yet touched alarming level where population considers secession as a viable option.

Society & Social Polarization - Defined

Since beginning of humanity, society has been continuously passing through evolution. As per Concise Oxford Dictionary (8th edition), “society is a sum of human conditions and activity regarded as a whole functioning interdependently”. Etymologically, the term “society” draws origin from the Latin word *societas*, which in turn, is derived from the noun *socius* (comrade, friend, and ally) used to describe a bond or interaction among parties that are friendly. Adam Smith underscores other aspect of the process highlighting that society may subsist among different men, as among different merchants, from a sense of its utility without any mutual love or affection, if only they refrain from doing injury to each other¹. Other social scientists have described society as a system of human organisations generating distinctive cultures, patterns, institutions and usually providing protection, security, continuity and national identity to its members². Pakistani society in general, is a multi-cultural, multi lingual, ethnically diverse and heterogeneous mix of five³ major groups. Baloch segment of overall Pakistani society has remained socially and economically marginalized as compared to the other ethnic groups since last six decades. The social unrest in Baloch society is indicative of gradual transcend of society towards social polarization.

Polarization is a wide ranging phenomenon which starts entrenching in societies where economic and job opportunities are scarce and socio-political aspirations of people remain unaccomplished. The cumulative effect of these elements gives rise to social deprivations and internal conflicts. The sociology literature outlines various notions of polarization. Chakravarty defines polarization as the appearance or disappearance of groups in distribution⁴. The social instability pushes societies towards polarization which is intimately connected with conflict⁵. Seshanna and Decornez describe that polarization means a movement towards the poles on any given issue including low income versus high income groups, liberals versus conservatives or the lower class versus the upper class⁶. Wolfson also asserts that polarization is the disappearing middle of a group to either side of scale⁷.

The concept of social polarization is even more complex as it is perceived differently by different people. Hamnett concludes that social polarization remains most unclear and ill defined concept; there is uncertainty over its units of measurement, variables and the definition itself.⁸ It is associated with the segregation within a society that may emerge from income inequality, economic displacements and results in such differentiation that would consist of various social groups, from high-income to low-income.⁹ Esteban and Ray describe that social polarization has direct causal relationship with possibility of emergence of social conflicts in a society and explain the process; polarization results from the interaction of within group identity and across group alienation.¹⁰ From theoretical standpoint, these scholars highlighted that intensity of conflict increases with the increasing level of polarization.¹¹

Social polarization has four basic characteristics; individual groups as main actors, high degree of groups' heterogeneity, increased intensity with increased homogeneity and lesser number of significant groups.¹² Historically, social polarization had devastating effects on societies and has resulted in disintegration of republic of Weimar,¹³ end of Russian revolution¹⁴ and few other political order

breakdowns.¹⁵ Esteban and Ray maintain that presence of three features is essential for occurrence of polarization in society; there must be homogeneity within in each cluster, there must be heterogeneity across clusters and there must be small number of significantly sized groups.¹⁶ Lozada theorizes that social polarization entails concentration of groups or clusters based on class, ethnicity or race.¹⁷ Interestingly, Blanco and Ramos concluded that the larger the inter-group heterogeneity, more alienation and larger the intra-group homogeneity greater the dilemma of identity thus more the social polarization¹⁸.

Baloch Society

For the last few centuries, Balochistan has been inhabited by three major racial groups; Baloch, Pashtun and Brauhis with a sprinkle of few other small communities. Demographic distribution as per 1998 census (last censure undertaken in the country) is; Baloch and Brauhis 54.76%,¹⁹ Pashtuns 29.64%, Sindhis 5.58%, Punjabis 2.52%, Saraikies 2.42%, Urdu speaking 0.97% and Hazaras, Makranis, Kurds and others altogether about 4.11%.²⁰ North part of Balochistan is dominated by Pashtun community whereas southern swaths are populated by Baloch segment. The peculiar tribal structure of Baloch society is the most significant feature.

Baloch segment of society has strong sense of ethnic consciousness, political alienation and socio-economic deprivations. Out of many causes of polarization, social indicators in terms of education, healthcare and civic amenities have been selected as contributing variables for analysis of polarization.

Social Indicators

Social indicators are like barometer for determining the quality of life of the population. From psychological stand point, perceptions are driven by comparisons. A segment of society observing other part enjoying better quality of life starts feeling deprived and dissatisfied. Prolonged

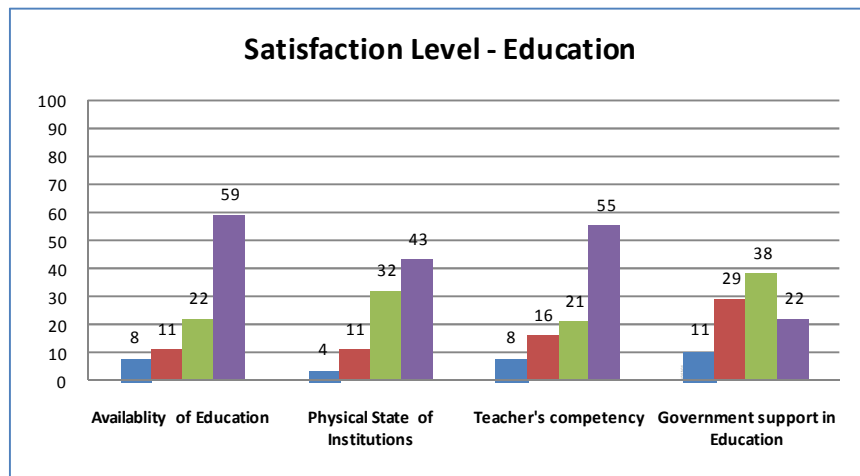
deprivations breed dissatisfaction and consequently result in dissociative proclivities. Townsend contends that people are deprived if they lack the types of diet, health, clothing, housing, household facilities, fuel, educational, working and social conditions, activities and facilities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies to which they belong.²¹ Almost all elements for deprivation, as identified by Townsend, are abundantly present in Baloch society. A comparative table of summary for education, health and few other amenities between Balochistan and other provinces of Pakistan clearly show the dearth and deficiencies.

Provincial Comparison

Social Indicators	Provinces			
	Sindh 30.43 M	Punjab 73.62 M	Balochistan 6.55 M	KP 17.73 M
Literacy Rate	45%	46%	24%	35%
Net Enrolment Rate	53%	61%	47%	51%
PSDP for Education	Rs 4.5B	Rs 10.4B	Rs 1.6B	Rs 9.3B
Hospitals	330	306	122	209
Doctors	52,847	50,514	3,760	14,390
Specialist Doctors (out of total no of doctors)	7,929	13,565	927	3,553
Infant Mortality Rate/1000	68	77	82	63
Unemployment Rate	14%	19%	34%	26%
Access to Drinking Water	43%	51%	20%	45%
Access to Sanitation	61%	78%	7%	71%

Sources: Table compiled from data of Pakistan Education Statistics 2011-12, Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement Survey (PSLM) 2011-2012, Population figures as per 1998 census of Pakistan, Punjab Health Department and Population Welfare Dept Govt. of KP

For establishing level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction of masses as a measure for polarization estimate, an independent field survey with respect to education and healthcare facilities through a questionnaire in 8 districts of Balochistan (Gwadar, Kalat, Khuzdar, awaran, Kech, Kohlu, Kharan and Dera Bugti) was undertaken. One hundred respondents per district were randomly selected for input through stratified random sampling where education was the first stratum, healthcare facilities was the second stratum and civic amenities formed third stratum. The age group of the respondents ranged from 18 to 60 years having different education levels and backgrounds. Response from 590 (73%) respondents was received for further analysis. For simplification, graphs depict percentages of the response rounded off to 100. Findings of the survey with respect to education are depicted through graph and are explained below:



Source: Graph is based on respondents' input of field survey undertaken for this article.

The graph illustrates findings of various aspects of state of education in the province. Response against four most important modules have been shown in the graph. The bars show the percentage of respondents' feedback against each

attribute which had few sub clauses as well. Eight percent of respondents were satisfied with availability of education facilities, 11% were less satisfied and 22% were generally satisfied whereas remaining 59 percent were completely dissatisfied. Findings of the survey further revealed that only 4% of the population was fully satisfied with physical state of educational institutions of the province whereas 43% were completely dissatisfied. The survey showed that only 8% of the sample population was fully satisfied against 55% of completely dissatisfied with teacher's competency. The level of satisfaction against government support for education was 11% against 38% of generally satisfied people, however 22% of the sample was completely dissatisfied. The inference drawn out of these findings was that population is completely dissatisfied with respect to educational facilities in the province.

Healthcare Facilities

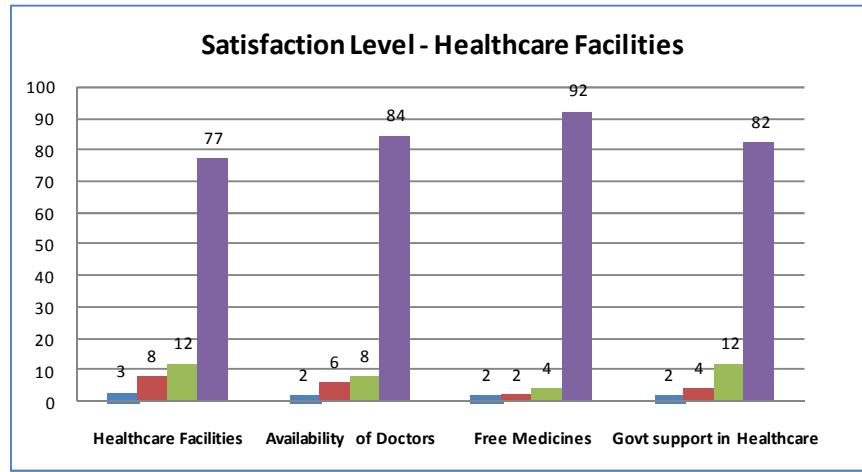
Non availability of good healthcare facilities is a major source of discontentment amongst population. Perpetual absence of these facilities directly affects the general health, life expectancy, infant and maternal mortality rates. From analysis of Health Deprivation Index data research report of SPDC,²² it is concluded that Balochistan has the highest average health deprivation index in comparison to other provinces: (Balochistan: 35.15, KP: 27.16, Punjab: 23.52 and Sindh: 29.93). A comparison of existing healthcare facilities among other provinces is shown below:

Comparison of Healthcare Facilities

Healthcare Facilities	Province			
	Sindh	Punjab	Balochistan	KP
Hospitals	330	306	122	209
Dispensaries	2152	1501	580	730
Maternity & Child Welfare Centres	150	515	94	87
Number of Beds in hospitals	28671	47033	6923	19669

Source: Pakistan Statistical Year Book 2011,

The second part of survey questionnaire consisted of sample's feedback with respect to availability of healthcare services. Questionnaire addressed various aspects of healthcare for establishing satisfaction level of survey sample. Response of the sample has been illustrated through graph and explained below:



Source: Graph is based on respondents' input of field survey undertaken for this article

It is evident from the graph that 77% of the respondents were completely dissatisfied with the availability of healthcare facilities. The meagre 3% satisfied population lived in cities rather than in remote villages. For availability of doctors, 84% of the sample was completely dissatisfied against 2% of fully satisfied. Non availability of free medicines remained the most dissatisfying aspect of healthcare services. Malpractices and corruption of officials was attributed as main cause by respondents. Government's will in establishing of healthcare facilities was adjudged as negligible as 82% of the respondents showed their complete dissatisfaction in this regard. Graph shows that majority of the sample population is falling in most dissatisfied bracket with respect to available healthcare facilities. The inference drawn from these findings is that

population is extremely dissatisfied with respect to availability of healthcare facilities in the province.

State of Civic Amenities

Apart from education and healthcare facilities, access to daily life civic amenities like electricity, clean drinking water and sanitation are the bare minimum requirements of good living which attributes towards satisfaction level of population. The province visibly lags behind in social and physical infrastructure. Only 25% of the villages have been provided with electricity, 20% of population has access to safe drinking water and 7% of the houses have sanitation facilities.²³ Natural gas was discovered in 1952 and supplies 38% of Pakistan's domestic (now reduced to 19%) and commercial energy needs but only 6% of Balochistan's population has a gas connection.²⁴ Non availability of these basic amenities as compared to other provinces has generated sense of deprivation amongst masses of Balochistan Province.

Stable safety and security environment reduces polarization to a larger extent. However, state of law and order in the province has remained very volatile for the last few decades. People have been targeted by nationalist groups fighting for independence/secession of the province. External interference is another cause for poor security situation thus, polarizing the society. During last 8 years, 3476 people (including civilians and security personnel) have lost their lives. This carnage had lasting impact on the psycho-social behaviour of the people of Balochistan in general and Baloch people in particular. Its after-effects are more pronounced in younger population who is exceedingly resorting to violence to avenge the losses. This is one of the major contributory causes for general unrest and polarization in Baloch society. The table amply manifests the poor law and order situation in the province.

Fatalities in Balochistan

Year	Civilians	Security Forces	Terrorists	Total
2006	226	82	142	450
2007	124	27	94	245
2008	130	111	107	348
2009	152	88	37	277
2010	274	59	14	347
2011	542	122	47	711
2012	690	178	86	954
2013	130	13	1	144
Total	2268	680	528	3476

Source: Data retrieved from South Asian Terrorist Portal

Despite presence of many polarizing agents and existence of medium level polarization in society, field survey brought out very interesting finding with respect to secession of province from the state of Pakistan. Selected sample of districts having active separatist movement showed that only 12% of the population perceives seceding as a fruitful option and rest 88% rejected the idea which is a good sign for the federation of Pakistan.

Social Consequences

Demographic balance is fervently guarded by communities living in socially polarized environs. A large ethnic Baloch population has migrated towards Sind because of economic compulsions and as a result, today more ethnic Baloch live outside Balochistan than inside. Moreover, during Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, a large number of Pashtuns migrated to border areas of Pakistan. As per United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report 2013, Balochistan still hosts 1.6 million Afghan refugees (Pashtuns) settled in border areas in North Western part of Balochistan. The ethnic Baloch community having low population density²⁵ became apprehensive that large influx of Pashtuns has

disturbed existing demographic balance of the province thus increasing friction between two major communities living peacefully side by side for centuries.

Furthermore, ethnic Baloch also fear that their representation in the government, both provincial and national level would be affected which will in turn, jeopardize their political aspirations. Concurrently, this apprehension induced unification of Baloch and Brauhi tribes to safeguard their common interests of maintaining majority against Pashtuns.

Geographic vastnesses, absence of commuting infrastructure complemented with nomadic way of life are major impediments in developing civic infrastructure in Balochistan. Despite all these inherent difficulties, the central and provincial governments did not fulfil their responsibilities by adopting pragmatic strategies for development of the province. The role of political leadership has been found amiss in development matrix of the province due to internal power struggle and tribal divide. Consequently, as an alternate means of livelihood illegal activities like smuggling, drug trafficking and other social crimes have permeated deep into the society. This aspect is another factor affecting negatively on society and slipping it towards polarization.

Vibrant economy produces stable society and both are complimentary to each other. In case of Balochistan, neither sound economy nor dynamic society could thrive because of multiple reasons which have attributed to this remorseful state include; mismanagement of resources, unbridled corruption and peculiar internal dynamics of tribal structure.

The land of Balochistan is endowed with rich natural resources having immense economic prospects but has not been fully explored even after six decades of independence. Lack of skilled workforce, lower technological and industrial base, absence of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in the mineral projects due to security reasons are a few causes to mention. Consequently, Baloch society economically suffered

which pushed the poor majority further into the vicious circle of poverty. Endemic poverty, negligible economic growth, and unemployment has fetched hopelessness causing grave sense of alienation. These feelings of deprivation are not completely unjustified and are embedded in the society.

The successive federal and provincial governments cannot be exonerated from the responsibility of not investing much in the province and human resource development. On the other hand, *Sardars* availed all opportunities of economic emancipation but did not distribute the dividends to the members of the tribes. Consuelo Corradi argues that violence is the instrument used with purpose of obtaining the redistribution of scarce resources; power of authority, economic privileges, access to opportunity or changes in the political system.²⁶ The negative psychosomatic sentiments of Baloch society are regularly inflamed by nationalist elements for furthering their own political cause.

State of education in Balochistan, in comparison with other provinces, is dismal. The absence of this most important element of social life, which helps in shaping the future of generations, has been left unattended. The outcome has long term adverse effects in societal development of Balochistan. As a consequence, local human resource could not be developed to fill the available jobs both in government and private sectors.

Condition of health infrastructure in Balochistan is not very encouraging as well. It is of rudimentary level which repudiates even reasonable healthcare facilities for the masses. The cumulative effect of this leads to dissatisfaction and disappointment in society which is evident from the demand of the population, hospitals and schools being the foremost.

The inaccessibility to various civic facilities has negative emotional and psychological effects on population which is suffering from sense of relative deprivation.²⁷ Ted Gurr affirms that psychological and social sources that nourish

potentials of collective violence are to be found in a feeling of relative deprivation.²⁸ Hence, relatively deprived Baloch society is going through trauma and has started resorting to violence for their rights.

Political Consequences

Balochistan has been in political turmoil since its accession with the state of Pakistan. Elected provincial governments have been dismissed by the central government on various pretexts which has precluded development of sustained political thought giving rise to nationalistic proclivity. The nationalist movements with separatist leanings have been politically active since early 70s and have managed to take political charge of the province occasionally. Interestingly, whenever nationalist elements were in power in Balochistan, province further slipped deeper into political unrest because of internal tribal power struggle. This political polarization in the province resulted in non-addressing of social needs of common people.

The violence in the province and state response through military means has complemented each other. Baloch perceive these military accesses by federal government as infringement to their basic right of freedom. Manwaring observes that 'lack of faith in improvement makes reform difficult if not impossible'²⁹ which has been a case in Balochistan. The net effect of all this turmoil and bloodletting has been social seclusion which is a multidimensional process of progressive social rupture, detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions and preventing them from full participation in the normal, normatively prescribed activities of the society in which they live.³⁰

The separatist forces of Balochistan are trying to carve out an independent state by seceding from federation of Pakistan since long, without much success. As per 'no-fault' theory secession should be granted whenever people of certain territory express their will to form an independent state through a referendum however, majority of scholars argue

that secession should be granted only when a qualified 'super majority' expresses its will for independent state³¹. Horowitz suggests that secession can only be sustainable when over 70% of the population supports the idea³². In case of Balochistan, secession is less likely to succeed because only 3 out of 27 noticeable tribes are involved in separatist activities only, critical mass and organization for outright rebellion are missing and Sardars can easily be divided and conquered³³. Presence of large number of Pashtuns (30%) population in the province is another big hurdle against secession. Low population density is another major cause for non accomplishment of separatist agenda. Under these hard realities, secession, if ever attempted, will result in civil war and bloodshed and may engulf Pashtuns of Afghanistan as well.

Polarization of Baloch population is mainly because of marginalization and dispossession. The compulsive non-participatory role given to Baloch politicians in development projects and general masses has taken the population further away from the centre.

As highlighted by Sandole who quotes Zeeman 'efforts to continue socializing oppressed people into compliance normative systems via punitive means reaches a critical threshold... then given a small increase of further realist stimulus, a given person may catastrophically change direction on the obedience – resistance gradient and attack the oppressor'.³⁴ This scholarly conclusion is applicable in Balochistan. The fear is that any fresh watershed event (like killing of Akbar Bugti) may create a snowball effect of disobedience from general masses by challenging state writ.

The ongoing sectarian killings of Hazara community are also a source of serious concern. Though the magnitude of this problem has not yet reached to a very alarming level, however, it has the potential to expand and explode. As a consequence, Hazara community may take up arms against foes in vengeance if pushed to the wall.

Conclusion

Balochistan is a land of great potentials having rich history, culture and traditions. Baloch people are brave, sturdy, hospitable and have flavour of arrogance in their demeanour. They are proud inhabitants of this 'graveyard of empires'. Since accession to Pakistan, Balochistan has faced many upheavals; blow to the tribal structure, political suppressions, economic degradation and social turmoil. The psycho-social fibre of Baloch society has suffered with long-lasting marks of deprivation and alienation. On the other hand, widespread poverty in Baloch society is the cause of internal unrest as well as the instigator of feeling of deprivation. The indifferent attitude of leadership has resulted in sinking the Baloch society deeper into the poverty quagmire. The influx of Afghan refugees has created a demographic imbalance in Baloch society which is perceived as a marginalization attempt. During the course of research for this article, physical interaction with many ethnic Baloch young and old men and women revealed that they needed respectful treatment, economic empowerment and proportionate share in the political dispensation and jobs which are considered rightful demands. State level interventions for increase in funds allocation from divisible pool The 7th National Finance Commission (NFC) Award with revision for distribution formula are well taken by majority of the population.

Introduction of 18th constitutional amendment has fulfilled the demand of provincial autonomy to quite an extent and it was an encouraging finding of this research article that despite all these upheavals, Baloch population still hopes for better future while being with the state of Pakistan. The present despondency, despair and dejection being symptoms of polarization have not yet overrun the Baloch society but need a quick fix.

The political exclusion of Baloch population from the power precluded it from integrating into main stream politics of the country. The protracted political isolation had brought

Baloch people to a stage where it believes less in political dialogue. However, general election of 2013 brought nationalists' political forces to power in the province once again. In a recent interview (January 22, 2014), Chief Minister of the province has categorically stated that Baloch are regaining trust in federation and now it depends on federation to deal province justly which is an encouraging development.

Decentralization through 18th constitutional amendment has further consolidated power in the hands of provincial administration which is helping in overall social and political integration of the province with federation and gradually reducing secessionist proclivities. Nationalists' narrative with small exceptions is also of accommodative orientation and needs minor nudge for positive snowball effect for stimulating positivity. All these indicators based on writers' personal experience require policy response and if actions are not generated quickly, phenomenon of polarization will take effect which will be even more difficult to eradicate.

Notes

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THE DRAWDOWN OF US AND NATO FORCES FROM AFGHANISTAN IN 2014 – IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The speedily sprouting security scene in Pakistan, Afghanistan and the region has fashioned a set of challenges viz-a-viz opportunities for regional and extra-regional countries, to fine-tune their strategic priorities in accordance with the altering security architecture. For Pakistan, to survive peacefully in the present imbroglio of evolving security and political landscape, it has become incumbent to make an impact of its genuine importance in the region to secure its short and long-term interests in Afghanistan. Being one of the key players in the post drawdown of NATO forces in Afghanistan, Pakistan is facing multi-faceted internal as well external challenges on one hand. It demands Pakistan's urgency to deal with the internal worsening law and order situation on the other; it has to respond to the evolving complex Afghan end game. Furthermore, Pakistan has to revisit its security, political and economic priorities in the regional and international context, to convert and reduce the challenges into fruitful opportunities.

Introduction

The impending drawdown of the US and NATO forces is likely to complete by the end of 2014.¹It has sparked discussions about the impact of this drawdown on the security situation in Afghanistan and the region. US and NATO forces will switch over their role from combat to “train, advice and assist.”²It will shift the onus on the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to take the leading role in maintaining law and order of the country and to undertake, effective counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency operations and standalone against the Taliban and other insurgent groups. The Afghan National Army (ANA) can play a constructive role in the

country's transition after 2014.³The foreign forces drawdown has shifted the international attention towards reconciliation, negotiations and finding a viable political solution of Afghan stalemate.⁴

The strategic milieu of Afghanistan is intricate, and has many dimensions. The future of Afghanistan does have the equation of four key players: the Afghan government, Taliban and other insurgent groups, US and Pakistan. It does not necessarily mean that the other regional and extra-regional actors are less important or they do not have stakes in the Afghan end game.⁵

Importance of Afghanistan for Pakistan

Pakistan and Afghanistan are together entertaining approximately 43 million ethnic Pashtuns and being the immediate neighbour; Pakistan has seriously become a victim of these the developments in Afghanistan.⁶ It is not the first time that Pakistan is facing volatile security situation for supporting Afghanistan. In this backdrop, Pakistan has faced the consequences of the Afghan-Soviet War, which started in 1979 and ended in 1990. Since 1979, Pakistan has paid the price of being the immediate neighbour of Afghanistan. This cost is not limited to sacrifices of Pakistani people and security personnel; rather it also encompasses the political, economic and social costs with worst psychological impacts.

After 9/11 attacks, Pakistan became a frontline state in the war against terrorism and paid a huge price for that role. According to a recent report, Pakistan has lost 51000 lives,⁷since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, including 4000 military casualties.⁸ On economic front, Pakistan has suffered \$90 billion losses.⁹ The cost of Pakistan's participation in 'war on terror', both human as well as material terms, has been heavier than any member of the foreign coalition fighting inside Afghanistan.¹⁰In return, Pakistan has received \$15 billion from United States, which included the provision and maintenance of essential military equipment and initially a meager amount as compensation.¹¹Additionally, Pakistan has

faced huge burden of ‘Afghan Refugees’ since the Afghan-Soviet War. According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), Pakistan hosts over 1.6 million registered Afghans, the largest refugee population in the world, staying for the most protracted period in a single country.¹²In addition to this, approximately one million undocumented Afghans are also living in Pakistan. The continuous stay of the Afghan refugees, combined with the growing security challenge posed by the illegal immigrants in Pakistan, has affected the strategic and socio-economic equilibrium of Pakistani society. It has injected an element of extremism and militancy in otherwise pluralistic society of Pakistan.

The US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 has given birth to tsunami of violence across the region; consequently, Pakistan is facing the aftershocks of eruption of the worst kind of terrorism in the modern history. It is generally believed that Pakistan’s strategy of “cooperation” with the United States is one of the primary causes of contemporary terrorism directed at Islamabad.¹³ The terrorists and insurgent groups killed innocent civilians and security personnel by exploding bombs, Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and suicide bombings.

After the establishment of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in 2007, the terrorists used sophisticated techniques against the law enforcements agencies to demoralize and inflict unaffordable damage to them. They have attacked the Mehran Base, key strategic installation at Kamra Airbase, and the General Headquarters (GHQ).¹⁴

In short, Pakistan being the neighbour of Afghanistan and located at an important geo-strategic position has legitimate security, political and economic interests in Afghanistan’s end-game. As it is evident from history thePakistan can play a key role in Afghanistan.¹⁵ Thus, Pakistan has been working closely with the international community and Afghanistan at all levels to support Afghan reconciliation process. Pakistan strongly looks forward for the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan. Pakistan has come to the conclusion

that peace and stability of Pakistan lies in the peace and stability of Afghanistan and vice versa.

The role of regional countries, importantly Pakistan is critical in reaching a sustainable peaceful settlement of Afghanistan conflict. Recently, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said, “Pakistan would support Afghan led, Afghan owned”, reconciliation process initiated by the Afghan High Peace Council, established in 2011.¹⁶ In recent months, Pakistan has played an essential role in bringing the reluctant Taliban leadership to negotiation table. According to Pakistan’s Foreign Office spokesperson, Mr. Aizaz Ahmed, “we (Pakistan) are convinced that an intra-Afghan dialogue and Afghan-owned peace process is the way forward to achieve peace in Afghanistan.”¹⁷

Internal and External Challenges

There are a number of internal and external factors that influenced and impeded the ability of Pakistan to play a constructive role in shaping the Afghanistan end-game for the regional stability. Pakistan is faced with internal challenges in the shape of violent extremism, growing sectarianism, militant separatism, foreign fighters, extra-state actors, failing economy and natural disasters. Furthermore, the country is facing the worst kind of onslaught of terrorism and violence in the contemporary history. It has created a rift in the society, resultantly; it has been divided into two blocs: the right wing or the conservatives and the liberals or moderates. The two different and opposing views created confusion among the Pakistani society and generated an unending debate regarding the future course of action of Pakistani state vis-à-vis tackling the growing terrorism in the country. The conservatives are of the view that it is ‘US led war’ and they should get out of it as soon as possible. Also, they support the idea of reconciliation with the Taliban. On the other hand, the liberals are of the view that although, this was not their war, but they have been suffering the onslaught of terrorism since 2001, terrorists are killing the innocent civilians and the security personnel,

therefore, the government is not obliged to talk to them, rather crush the militant with a full-scale military force.

The grave internal security challenges remain unaddressed, as being portrayed by the prevailing security situation of Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Balochistan mainly, and the rest of the country as a whole. Poor coordination among the security agencies and lesser attention to the capacity building measures of law enforcement agencies are adding to the problems. Pakistan, as a state, is facing tremendous and diverse challenges and the country has yet to formulate a comprehensive and wide-ranging counter-terrorism and national security policy.

The assault of TTP against Pakistan's law enforcement agencies and civilians has increased at a dangerous level. Currently, TTP is based at Kunar, Afghanistan. Maulana Fazlullah, the leader of TTP is residing inside Afghanistan along with approximately 700 militants. On many occasions, Pakistan has raised this issue with the Afghan officials to crackdown on TTP and its affiliates, but Afghan officials particularly province government did not show any interest in this regard. Moreover, Pakistan demanded the custody of the Taliban leader, as he has blood of many innocent Pakistanis on his hands,¹⁸ However, the provincial Afghan government refused to hand over senior TTP leader Maulvi Faqir Mohammad to Pakistan.¹⁹

In short, the ongoing 'War on Terror' in Afghanistan has grave geo-strategic consequences for Pakistan. Pakistan has paid huge cost in form of militant insurgency in FATA, uprising in Swat, religious extremism, rampant rise of domestic terrorism, the backlash of US drone strikes and deep rift in the society regarding the 'War on Terror' and its aims and objectives.

In the wake of US and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) drawdown from Afghanistan, the uncertainty among the Pakistan's political and military leadership is increasing due to evolving Afghan complex end-game, intense

rivalry between the regional players and competing strategic interests in the region. Pakistan has to re-position its security, political and economic priorities in the regional context. Pakistan, being the neighbour of Afghanistan, has certain legitimate security interests and stakes in the 'deep game', which has been played on its western borders. Pakistan and US faced the lowest point in their relations in 2011, as Washington and Islamabad's principles and strategies differed. Since 2001, there had been several issues i.e. killing of Osama bin Laden (OBL), Salala attack, Raymond Davis issue, replacement of Military Liaison Officers, use of NGOs for malicious reconnaissance, highlighted the differences between both the countries. As a result, Pakistan's relations with US have gone mired in deep mistrust that left Pakistan on the margins, even after making massive sacrifices in the 'War on Terror'.²⁰

Pakistan-Afghan Troubled Ties

Despite Pakistan's numerous sacrifices, it has failed to win the support and sympathy of the Afghan political elite. Islamabad and Kabul never had good relations at the top level. Afghanistan's Ex President Hamid Karzai and his affiliates used to blame Pakistan for creating trouble inside Afghanistan and throw all responsibility on Pakistan. They saw Pakistan as a part of problem rather than solution.

In addition to this, there are other issues, which are major irritants and serve as a cause of disagreement between the two neighbouring states, such as; unresolved issue of Durand line; influx of Afghan refugees and their continued presence in Pakistan for last three and half decades; border management issues; drug trafficking; and cross border movement of the terrorists and saboteurs.

The issue of Durand Line has been a source of conflict between the two neighbours since 1947. Afghanistan is of the view that the treaty of Durand Line was signed in 1893 between the British India and Afghanistan, and it is no more valid after the termination of British rule.²¹ Afghanistan also

claimed with little validity that the border treaty was inked by a state that no longer existed. On the other, Pakistan considers the Durand line, as an established international border and a settled issue.²²

All the other issues, such as influx of refugees, drug trafficking and cross border infiltration are the byproducts of unresolved border issue, as it does not allow better border management. The difference between the two sides has deepened due to ongoing wave of instability in Afghanistan, weak state structure and continued mistrust between the two parties. However, both the neighbouring countries have great prospects to co-operate not only in the fields of security, trade and economy but also health and education.

Indian Footprints in Afghanistan: A Cause of Worry for Pakistan

The growing Indian influence in Afghanistan was supported by US and Karzai governments. It is evident from the Indian pledged amount of \$2 billion in Afghanistan against Pakistan's contribution of less than \$350 million.²³ Moreover, India has become Afghanistan's leading regional development partner and its fifth largest donor. This has added to Pakistan's mistrust for the Indian policy objectives in Afghanistan. The primary objective of India's Afghan policy is to counter Pakistan's influence in Afghanistan, to weaken Pakistan's influence over Taliban groups, uninterrupted access to Central Asian Republics', natural resources and lastly, to encircle Pakistan.²⁴ Pakistan's uneasy relationship with Afghanistan and US created space for India to expand its footprints inside Afghan territory and to have a greater say in the evolving end game. An un-abating US and Afghanistan blame game, that Pakistan is responsible for deteriorating security situation inside Afghanistan, forces Pakistan to re-visit its policy vis-a-vis Afghanistan, US and India.

This has led to a more cautious approach by Pakistan vis-à-vis Afghanistan. On the other hand, India is busy in expanding its range of diplomatic activities i.e. opening up of two

consulates. Furthermore, India is investing in large scale development projects such as Zaranj-Dileram Highway, Hydro-Electric Dam in Herat and huge investment in developing 1.8 Hjjagak Iron ore mines in Bamiyan Province.²⁵ Additionally, Indian Agency for Partnership in Development (IAPD) will take the lead from Ministry of External Affairs to expand development activities in Pashtun areas, bordering Pakistan.

The expansion of Indian footprints along the Pakistani border is a serious cause of worry for Pakistan. It has serious consequences for the domestic peace and stability in the country. Islamabad is of the view that there is a clandestine link between the increasing Indian presence in Afghanistan and the rampant rise of TTP terrorism activities inside Pakistan. India is also aiding and fueling insurgency in Balochistan by giving financial and logistic support to Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) militants.

Short and Long Term Objectives of Pakistan in Afghanistan

The fate of Pakistan and Afghanistan is intertwined due to geographic proximity, strong religious bonds, shared culture and historic connections. In the post 2014 Afghanistan, Pakistan has a significant role to play for peace process and the political settlement. Pakistan has opted to play a part of facilitator for negotiations among Taliban, US and Afghanistan, in order to move towards durable peace in the region.

The short-term interests can be; peaceful and smooth drawdown of American and NATO forces from Afghanistan; sustainable peace in Afghanistan; effective border management; politically stable government in Kabul; destruction and dismantlement of remaining Al-Qaida members from Afghanistan; and ensuring that TTP, BLA and other insurgent groups do not use Afghan territory, as a launching pad of terrorism and anti-state activities against Pakistan.

Long-term interests can be; peace and stability in Afghanistan; friendly government in Kabul; immediate departure of Afghan refugees to Afghanistan; bolstering security, economic and trade relations with Afghanistan and Central Asia; and making sure that India does not use its presence in Afghanistan, to pursue an anti-Pakistan policy.

In recent months, there is a significant realization in Islamabad that Pakistan's domestic peace and stability is vital for the national security. Therefore, it is in Pakistan's interests to eliminate terrorist networks and carry out operations against them. This realization had a major impact on Pakistan's Afghan policy. Fundamentally, four drivers have shaped Pakistani decision-makers' strategic vision of Afghanistan which include; the rampant rise of violence, terrorism and worsening security situation in the country; increasing Indian presence inside Afghan territory and Pakistan being pushed to margins; emerging political consensus in Islamabad that war through proxies has hurt Pakistan badly; and public pressure on the policy-makers to disassociate from GWOT.

The recent calculated shift in Pakistan's policy vis-à-vis Afghanistan, manifests that Pakistan neither wants chaos, civil war in Afghanistan nor the complete Taliban's rule, both of which, it believes, would create domestic instability and militancy, in FATA and other parts of the country, having negative impacts on the state of Pakistan. Therefore, stable, united and progressive Afghanistan is in the best interest of Pakistan.

Afghanistan a Puzzle: Opportunities for Pakistan

In the backdrop of US and NATO forces drawdown from Afghanistan, key regional players are competing to secure their interests in Afghanistan. Countries such as Pakistan, India and Iran are attempting to align supporters to enhance their bargaining positions inside Afghanistan, allowing them to gain political and economic advantages after US and ISAF drawdown, in 2014. The Afghan end-game is offering a golden

opportunity to Pakistani decision makers to rethink and head towards a fresh beginning with Afghanistan by forgetting the bitter memories of the past. The fresh start should be based upon the notion of mutual respect, non-interference and mutual prosperity.

Pakistan must facilitate US and NATO drawdown from Afghanistan. The steady reduction of foreign troops will undermine the narrative that fuels insurgency in Afghanistan. Consequently, it will end the perpetual agony of the Afghan people, after thirty years of continuous war. This is the best thing which Pakistan could do for Afghanistan and it should seize this historic opportunity, which is knocking at its door. It is also an appropriate time for Pakistan to mend its ties with the Northern Alliance and other ethnic groups in Afghanistan. This will give an extra edge to Pakistan in the post 2014 scenario. In this backdrop, Pakistan's political and military leadership need to cautiously evaluate the changing notions of security in the region and craft a policy which could serve Pakistan's national interests as well as respond to the aspirations of the Afghan people and international community.

Chaos, instability or civil war in Afghanistan would have serious consequences upon the domestic stability of Pakistan. The spillover effect will be disastrous for neighbouring and regional countries, as it has the potential to travel and affect the international peace and stability. Wars always end with reconciliation and dialogue between the warring parties. Therefore, the initiative taken by the Afghan High Peace Council and reconciliation process led by the Afghan government, not the Americans, can find a lasting solution to the country's violence, lawlessness and corruption. Pakistan must support this initiative and play its due role in this regard.

Following the departure of US troops from Afghanistan, Pakistan is likely to re-visit its policies towards Afghanistan to deal with the challenges posed by US drawdown. There is no doubt that the troops drawdown from Afghanistan would cause serious consequences and threats for Islamabad, as

Pakistan is already facing grave issues regarding Afghanistan's situation after NATO forces pull out. If the Afghan conflict is resolved through negotiations, this could be in the favour of long-term interest of Pakistan, as it strongly believes that stability and peace in Afghanistan is guarantee to Pakistan's peace and stability. Being an immediate neighbour, Pakistan cannot have peace until Afghanistan is stable and powerful. The policy makers in Pakistan strongly believe that increased ties between Pakistan and Afghanistan can lead to deal with the menace of terrorism more effectively. Pakistan's efforts to facilitate peace process would help to represent itself a responsible state in the eyes of international community, and also it would help to re-construct its repute regarding the peaceful settlement of Afghanistan.

Security Vacuum created by the US Drawdown

After US drawdown from Afghanistan, there are mixed reactions of Afghan government and Afghan people about the security vacuum created by the withdrawal of NATO. There are legitimate questions: what will be the nature of security vacuum? Who will fill this gap? And what will be the terms of engagement in Afghanistan? Afghan people have concerns that the Taliban would come back, take over and lead Afghanistan. Haji Rokai, a tribal elder said, "as soon as these forces leave this province not only Wardak, but even some parts of Kabul, will be occupied by Taliban and Kabul security will be in danger."²⁶ There are concerns that the US troops' drawdown would strengthen the insurgents after the arrival of spring, which traditionally considers the start of Afghanistan's fighting season. Post 2014 scenario is likely to see increase in violence and insurgent' attacks, launched by various groups such as Taliban, the Al-Qaida linked Haqqani Network and Hizb-i-Islami etc. Some people are doubtful that US Special Forces are expected to play a vital role after NATO combat troops drawdown by the end of 2014 and Afghan government decision could intricate negotiations between the United States and Afghanistan over the scope of US operations after the pull-out.²⁷ According to local communities and media sources, militants have already started ambushes, shooting

attacks and suicide bombings on American and Afghan forces there in Wardak.²⁸ The doubts are also expressed about the training and capacity of Afghan National Army (ANA) both by the Afghan people and regional countries, as they are already at a deplorable condition, because they lack training and equipment and could become less effective, when the Americans are set to leave.

Is Afghan National Security Forces Ready to Take Lead?

The government of Afghanistan has appreciated the decision of US troops' withdrawal and stated that the Afghan forces are ready to take responsibility for the country's security.²⁹ On the other hand, Afghan government has signed a legal framework with the US for next 10 years regarding limited presence of US troops, and its nine military bases, post 2014.³⁰ According to this agreement, US would cooperate and facilitate socio-economic development and would support to reconstruct its security and institutions.

Afghan people are not happy on the decision of US troops' drawdown and have concerns that this would destabilize the country, which is suffering from war for the last 35 years. They also fear that the nearly 3, 52,000 Afghan army and police forces are not ready to take the lead for security.³¹

Peaceful Settlement of Afghanistan's Conflict: Possible Endgame

As United States and NATO forces plan for limited withdrawal, the security situation in Afghanistan is still a major concern for regional and international actors.³² Till now many efforts have been made to maintain peace and stability in Afghanistan, but all have failed due to lack of proper planning, changing policies and reliance on military power. If US and other players have emphasized upon negotiations the circumstances would be much different, as compared to the current situation. Various rounds of talks by US and Afghanistan as well as Pakistan conducted with Taliban, but

none of these efforts could result into concrete outcomes. The issue of how to initiate a long-lasting peace process is a troublesome for Washington, Islamabad and Kabul, and for other regional and international actors, especially, Afghan people for whom the process should be clear in direction and transparent.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Pakistan is facing grave internal and external challenges to its national security. Consequently, factors, such as domestic instability caused by Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), downturn in Pak-US ties and uneasy relations curtailed Pakistan's ability to play a constructive role in Afghanistan's peace process and Afghan end game. However, Pakistan has certain legitimate geo-strategic interests in Afghanistan and in the region. Pakistan's willingness to endorse "Afghan led—Afghan owned" reconciliation process approved by Afghan High Peace Council, is a strong indication that Pakistan wants peaceful, stable and united Afghanistan. Pakistan aims to broaden its sphere of activities to entire Afghanistan and desires to create goodwill among the common people rather than focusing only on Pashtun territories. Pakistan desires to work with the regional stakeholders, including China, to increase its range of activities from development to education, health and social welfare for the Afghan people. Pakistan needs to come up with a comprehensive socio-economic development plan for Afghanistan. This could be in the shape of small-scale development projects for Afghan rural areas and building strong connections with the Afghan companies through Public Private Partnership initiatives. These projects may be based on the local partnership and local ownership to form the basis of mutual cooperation. This would, resultantly, reduce the space for its strategic rivals in Afghanistan. The peace process must be in the best interest of Afghans. The regional and international actors should facilitate the peace process and the outcome should reflect the aspirations of the Afghan people. It should be arranged in such a way that they may not destabilize the regional peace and stability. This is a world, beaming with

economic options, so whosoever first turns these opportunities into own advantage, would be the winner, to stay with pride, on the globe.

Notes

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