

Security and Human Development in Pakistan

Written by Hamza Jehangir

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HAMZA JEHangIR, APR 18 2012

Development and security are two concepts that have been important to political economists when viewed in the context of underdeveloped countries where security tends to triumph development in certain cases. One such case is of Pakistan where the country has not only faced domestic troubles but at the international stage, the South Asian nation has been a key player in two of the most important wars of the 30 years, the cold war and the global war against terrorism. Despite having a rich 65 year history in both economic and political terms, the South Asian nation still has high levels of poverty and her citizens are still deprived of basic necessities of life (UNDP, 2011, p.144).

The current situation in Pakistan remains bleak, inflation is on the rise, economic development is almost exclusively limited to the urban areas of the country and there is significant political upheaval due to ethnic, social and political divides within the country. In order to understand Pakistan's journey which has seen the country become a recognized nuclear power but still unable to steer her path clear of underdevelopment and poverty, one must analyze the details that lie beneath the political and economic fabric inside the country. This essay will take the view that Pakistan's heavy investment in security influenced by its colonial roots has led to its failure to successfully develop economically and undertake a rigorous course of development. The main argument which will be put forth is that Pakistan's security oriented policies have prevented the country from investing sufficiently in human development. Pakistan's historical discourse will be analyzed by explaining the country's internal and external power relations and how they, along with the country's colonial past, have had a profound impact on domestic power structure in Pakistan. It will also be discussed as to how the power structure in Pakistan has led towards skewed policy making inside the country which centres on defence expenditure rather than human development.

The dream of Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the vast majority of Indian Muslims came true when Pakistan gained its independence from British colonial rule on 14th of August, 1947. The idea for Pakistan, which was taken to the political stage in 1940 at Pakistan Resolution in the city of Lahore, had gathered massive support from the Muslims of the sub-continent in less than seven years. However when Pakistan came into being, it had various political and economic problems that the newly born nation had to contend with. Along with large scale problems of government building, institutionalizing politics, generating an economy and absorbing over seven million refugees from India, Pakistan was faced with a difficult task of uniting people of different backgrounds, tribes, ethnicities, languages and cultures into a single nation (Jalal, 1990, p. 362). It was at this time that the country adopted an extensively security oriented outlook towards its existence. Pakistan's emergence as a Muslim nation out of the British colonial rule where the Indian National Congress had pushed for the independence of a United India rather than a partitioned one led the South Asian country to adopt a security paradigm (Siddiq, 2007, p. 62). The Pakistani military took up its role as a guardian of the country's identity, territory and society, based on the principles of Islam. Stephen Cohen aptly describes Pakistan's army's role, "There are armies that guard their nation's borders, there are those who are concerned with protecting their own position in a society and then there are those that defend a cause of an idea. The Pakistani army does all three" (Cohen, 1983, p.1).

To understand Pakistan's internal relations, it is important to shed light on the intricacies that lie in the structural relationship between the three most influential groups in the country since its inception as a state; the Pakistani military, the politicians and the civilian bureaucracy. The Pakistani military assumed its role as the guardian of Pakistan's realm in both ideological and territorial terms in the very first year of the country's independence when Pakistan and India went to war in 1947-1948. At stake was the status of Kashmir, whose leader had selected to enter

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into Union with the state of India despite the fact that the majority of the population of Kashmir was Muslim. This immediate war to defend the claimed territorial and the perceived ideological borders of Pakistan gave the military a unique position amongst other institutions in Pakistan, as around about 70 percent of Pakistan's first budget was allotted to defence spending (Siddiqa, 2007, p.63). The decision to spend more than half of Pakistan's first budget on bolstering the country's security despite the lack of infrastructure, basic necessities of life and a large refugee crisis further elucidates the perceptions amongst early policy makers that Pakistan was a country which faced an existential threat from India.

It should also be noted that when the above stated decision was made, Pakistan's government was almost exclusively made out of civilian bureaucrats and headed by the most influential politician in the country's history, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. A security paradigm was already gaining sway over the civilian leadership of the country and this was further compounded by the death of Jinnah in September of 1948, as Pakistan lost a leader who could have inspired further cohesion and stability in the newly born state (Tonchev, 2002, p.6, Cohen, 2004, p.102). In Pakistan's second budget, defence expenditure was 153.8 million PKR (Pakistani Rupee), whereas its development expenditure rested at just 98.1 million rupees. Out of a total of 236 million PKR of expenditure undertaken by the government of Pakistan, therefore, 65 percent was allotted to defence spending. This decision shows the security obsession that plagued the newly born nation (Zaidi, 2005, p.210).

Shortly after Jinnah's death, Pakistan's hopes of turning into a democracy with development-oriented policies were dealt a strong blow when Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated in 1951. Khan's death in itself reveals further details about Pakistan's internal power relations and the effect of external power relations on domestic politics (Siddiqa, 2007, p.63b). As Pakistan's first Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan opted to ally the country with Britain and the United States of America in order to seek aid from the western powers for the fledgling state of Pakistan. Ayesha Jalal (1990) argues that Liaquat Ali Khan was betrayed by two prominent high ranking military officers, Iskander Mirza and Ayub Khan, who were dealing with the Western powers behind the back of the democratically elected Prime Minister. Jalal argues that foreign powers were interested in promoting Pakistan's security oriented approach much like the Pakistani military, as they viewed Pakistan as a counter balance to Soviet military might.

Furthermore, Pakistan's politicians who wanted to stand up to the alliance between the civilian bureaucracy and the military were not helped by the fact that most of the country's budget was being spent on defence forces, which meant less development in their constituencies and, consequentially, a lack of public belief in the political process (Jalal, 1990). After two years of political upheaval in Pakistan following Liaquat Ali Khan's death, Malik Ghulam Muhammad proclaimed a state of emergency in the country and suspended the constituent assembly. Subsequently, Ghulam Muhammad was replaced by Iskander Mirza who became the first President of Pakistan under its new 1956 constitution (Tonchev, 2002, p.7). The new constitution in 1956 reflected the apprehensions that were evident in Pakistan's political climate. The new legislature concentrated powers into the hands of the federal government, which was dominated by civilian bureaucrats, and allowed the central government to unilaterally exercise authoritative powers.

This focus on centralized power can be considered a result of Pakistan's colonial past where the British Empire effectively used the civilian bureaucracy and the military in tandem to govern over the Indian sub-continent, which lacked ethnic, cultural, social and religious cohesion (Jalal, 1990). In the state of Pakistan, where such divisions were evident these institutions saw authority vested in the federal government as a way of keeping the provinces in check against any secessionist movements to gain independence from Pakistan. The British themselves focused on development and strengthening of central authority in Delhi and, when viewed in Pakistan's context, the civilian and military leadership adopted the same path of governance through coercion which severely dented Pakistan's chances of maturing into a state where the people were adequately represented and looked after via adequate focus on human development (Inayatullah et al, 1997, p.959). This line of thought was fully revealed in 1958 when Pakistan's army took its first overt step into politics, although they were influencing policy making and the political process from behind the scenes in the lead up to Gen. Ayub Khan's overthrow of the government and the suspension of the 1956 constitution.

Post-colonial origins of Pakistan's institutional problems with regard to its domestic power structure can be

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sufficiently understood through Inayatullah's claim that, "Reared in a colonial context, the two powerful institutions (civilian bureaucracy and military)...were developed to protect colonial interests and not to serve the larger society" (Inayatullah et al, 1997, p.959). After Ayub Khan's military coup in Pakistan, the military establishment portrayed the politicians of the country as inefficient, corrupt, indecisive, irrational and dangerous to the ultimate survival and prosperity of the state of Pakistan. Politicians' inefficiencies were depicted as preventing the military from defending the country and the civil bureaucracy from running the state in a professional way (Askari-Rizvi, 1987).

Such an argument is best illustrated when viewed in the context of post-colonialism by Loomba (1998) who takes into account "interference in political and cultural structures of another territory or nation" by the colonial powers. The after effects of such an intervention are widely seen in the post-colonial establishment of Pakistan where the country suffered due to the institutional imbalances which are described as an "overdeveloped state" by Hamza Alavi (Loomba, 1998, p.6; Alavi, 1983, pp.42-43.) When describing internal power relations and their mutations as a result of colonialism in India, Loomba draws on Mahaswera Devi's fictional story where Mr. Singh, a government bureaucrat treats the poorer people of the country "like children who need to be brought in line with the rest of the country". (Loomba, 1998, p.10). This depiction can also be applied to political-military relations in Pakistan particularly in the context of military interference in the political process as the army thought of the politicians as children who needed to be disciplined in an appropriate manner. This claim gains more momentum when Ayub Khan's tenure as the country's first Field Marshall and the chief marshal law administrator from 1958-1969 is critically analyzed.

As aid from western powers such as U.S.A flowed in, Pakistan's security obsessed military government undertook a massive increase in defence spending rather than spending on social services in a state which was now beginning to crack with internal conflicts between the central government and the provinces. From 1958-1960, immediately after Ayub Khan's takeover, military expenditure increased by around about 12 percent in Pakistan (Looney, 1994, p. 421). Another 10 percent increase was experienced from 1962 to 1965 and then a massive 61 percent increase in defence expenditure was undertaken by the Pakistani military led government in 1965, when the country entered into its second war with India in dispute of Kashmir (Looney, 1994, p.421b). The 1965 war between Pakistan and India serves as an example of aid-led military expansion in Pakistan during Ayub Khan's tenure and the neo-colonial elements at play as U.S.A attempted to balance the South Asian region by playing up Pakistan as a counterweight to Indo-Soviet partnership. This factor is further established by Pakistan's incorporation into cold war defence pacts such as CENTO and SEATO (Jalal, 1990). From 1957-58 Pakistan spent more than half of her total expenditure for the budget year on defence. This security oriented policy was maintained in 1964-1965 budget year as well, when Pakistan spent 1262.3 million PKR on defence out of 2736.2 million PKR of total expenditure. This trend continued in 1970-1971 when defence expenditure consumed more than half of the country's total expenditure once again as the government spent 3200 million PKR on defence out of a total of 6002.6 million PKR of expenditure (Zaidi, 2005, p.210; Economic Survey of Pakistan, 1973, p.170).

Pakistan's historical institutional imbalances have hampered the country's ability to provide her citizens with better social services, infrastructure and a higher standard of living as most of the country's resources have been diverted towards defence spending, which is largely seen as a public good amongst the policy makers in Pakistan (Siddiqa, 2000, p. 20). The Western influence, which defined Pakistan as the protector of territory and ideology, coupled with the presence of excessively strong institutions from the colonial era, such as the civilian bureaucracy and the military, further mutated the internal power structure (Siddiqa, 2007; Jalal, 1985, Tonchev, 2002, Loomba; 1998). Such policy making continued in Pakistan even when the martial law had come to an end in 1971, after the country itself was divided into two pieces following the 1971 popular uprising in East Pakistan which later became Bangladesh.

From 1972-1979 under a civilian government, led by Z.A Bhutto, Pakistan still invested highly in defence spending at the cost of economic and human development, by beginning work on its nuclear programme. This development can be best encapsulated in the former Prime Minister's words that the Pakistani nation would "eat grass" if necessary in order to match India's nuclear power which came to the fore in 1972 (Siddiqa, 2007, p.80). From 1972-1975, Pakistan saw a 10.5 percent rise in defence expenditure per year and from 1977 onwards under martial law rule of Gen. Zia Ul Haq military and security spending gained additional prominence as after a slight fall from 1975-77 in defence

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spending, the growth rate for military expenditure again underwent a boost in economic terms as annual rise of approximately 10 percent was sustained per year from 1977-1982. From 1982 onwards, there was another 17 percent increase in defence spending which ended in 1985 when the growth in defence expenditure was stabilized at 10 percent once again (Looney, 1994, p.421). Military expenditure in comparison to expenditure on social services such as health and education elaborates further the troubles in Pakistan's political economy and the security oriented approach of the policy makers even after a return to democracy following Zia Ul Haq's death in 1988.

From 1981 till 1990, even though there was a system of partial democracy in the country, Pakistan's president, Gen. Zia Ul Haq, remained head of the armed forces. His death in 1988 allowed politicians to re-emerge and take hold of the electoral process, but with little success due to institutional supremacy of the military and the civilian bureaucracy, the continuing legacy of colonialism in Pakistan (Siddiqi 2007, pp.84-106; Zaidi, 2005, pp.499-515, Loomba, 1998, p.19). During the period ranging from 1981-1990, Pakistan spent an average of 6.6 percent of its GNP per annum on defence expenditure. In the same period, the percent of GNP spent on health was almost negligible at just 0.7 percent of total GNP on average. This was the case despite the fact that the nation was lagging behind in delivery and development of social services due to the absence of health care. During this time, Pakistan's expenditure on education as a percentage of its GNP also pales in comparison, amounting to 1.9 percent of GNP on average (Siddiqi, 2002, p.4545).

This paints an accurate picture of the effect that the excessive military spending was having on people's lives as 45 percent of Pakistan's population lived without access to health care services in the country from 1985-1990. The situation was worse in the rural areas, where 66 percent of the population resided. In these areas, 65 percent of the population had to make do without health care services and 30 percent lived in absolute poverty (UNDP, 1996, p.145-170).

Despite the fact that a fledging democratic government emerged in the country from 1990 onwards, the policy makers were still unable to look beyond the narrow security paradigm. This was partly due to the praetorian nature of the democratic governments which emerged in the 1990s in Pakistan, a characteristic that still holds value in the present democratic setup in the South Asian nation courtesy of her colonial roots and the alleged existential threat from India. (Zaidi, 2005; Siddiqi, 2007)

From 1990-1999, Pakistan's praetorian democratic governments undertook little shift from the security oriented policies of the military government that preceded them. From 1990-1999, Pakistan spent an average of 6.2 percent of its GDP on defence expenditure annually. In comparison, Pakistan only spent an average of 2.3 percent of its annual GNP on education from 1990-1999. Furthermore, Pakistan's health expenditure actually decreased during 1990 to 1999 as it amounted to an average of only 0.5 percent of its GNP, which is 0.2 percent decrease when viewed in comparison with figures from the 1981-1990 (Siddiqi, 2002, p.4545).

Pakistan's continued policy of prioritising defence expenditure as a result of its security oriented outlook was particularly unrewarding for the people of the country who suffered from a severe lack of human development in the country. In 1994, Pakistan was ranked at 132 in the human development index behind the likes of Iraq and Vietnam and only two places ahead of India which was ranked at 134. Moreover, the adult literacy rate in the country was at just 36 percent with life expectancy at birth at 58 years (UNDP, 1994, p.133). Only 24 percent of the Pakistani population had access to sanitation facilities and 56 percent had access to clean water whilst 35 percent of the country's people lived in absolute poverty (UNDP, 1994, p.135). There was also increasing rural urban inequality in context of social development since, despite the fact that 67 percent of the population lived in rural areas, the urban centres of the country had a larger access to clean water, health and sanitation services than those in the rural areas (UNDP, 1994, p.149). The situation in the country didn't improve in 1999 either as Pakistan still spent more on defence and less on her own people. In 1999, Pakistan had fallen down to 138 in the human development index as countries such as India, Ghana and Cameroon had surpassed it in terms of development. In 1999, Pakistan's adult literacy rate lay at 40 percent and 44 percent of the population lived without access to sanitation facilities (UNDP, 1999, p.136-147). Pakistan's economic situation improved under General Musharraf's rule from 1999 till 2008 but even during this period, Pakistan's defence expenditure was increased rather than curtailed. From 2000-2007, only an average of 0.5 percent of Pakistan's GDP was spent on health expenditure annually (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2007, p.178).

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However, the military expenditure experienced a constant increase and at the peak of Gen. Musharraf's government in 2007, the defence expenditure in Pakistan received a 10 percent boost as it was increased from 250 billion PKR in 2006-07 to 275 billion PKR in 2007-08 (Chandran, 2008, p.3). In light of this, the small increase from 2.2 percent in 2000-2001 to 4.9 percent of the GDP in 2006-2007 in development expenditure from seems bleak and insignificant (Pakistan Economic Survey, 2007, p.29). Additionally, despite witnessing an increase of 7.7 percent in its GDP growth rate in 2005 and 5.7 percent in 2007, 73.6 percent of Pakistan's population still lived on less than two dollars a day (UNDP, 2007, p.239). Moreover, life expectancy in Pakistan had only increased by 5 years from being 58 years in 1994 to 63 years in 2005 (UNDP, 2007, p.263). Furthermore, the Pakistani government's expenditure on education also remained low at 2.3 percent of GDP in 2005 (UNDP, 2007, p.267).

Pakistan's newly elected government which came to power in 2008 after Gen. Musharraf's exit from the political arena has also kept up the tradition of security oriented policy. In the 2009-2010 budget, the government allocated 378,135 million PKR for defence spending which was increased to 442,173 million PKR in the 2010-2011 budget. Defence spending compromised a total of 22 percent of the budget whereas health affairs and services, combined with educational affairs and services as well as social protection only amounted to 2.1 percent of the total budget (Ministry of Finance, 2011, pp.23-25). The effects of such policies for the people of Pakistan may be observed, for example by the fact that Pakistanis currently ranked 145th in the human development index, a downwards slide of seven places from its position as 138th in 1999. Furthermore, 61 percent of Pakistan's population still lives on less than two dollars a day (UNDP, 2011, p.129; World Bank, 2011). This shows that Pakistan has been unable to undertake a successful discourse of human development, as most of the state's resources have been diverted towards defence expenditure rather than towards health, education and alleviation of poverty.

It has been argued that Pakistan's security oriented policies emerged as a result of her colonial past, manifested in excessively strong civilian bureaucracy and military that dominated the decision making and the policy formulation in the South Asian state to date. Pakistan's internal relations are captured by the military's position as the most powerful institution in the country, which works in tandem with the civilian bureaucracy and draws strength from the perceived existential threat from India. These two institutions inform policy making in the country and their ability to centralize power demonstrates a colonial modus operandi, a hangover from Pakistan's colonial past.

The decision to allot over 70 percent of the country's first budget towards defence spending set a dangerous precedent for subsequent policy makers who have continued to prioritize military spending over development in the country. This trend was carried forward in Gen. Ayub Khan's government as well as during the subsequent praetorian democratic governments which emerged in 1990s and the late 2000s. The drive towards defence spending has continued in the 2010-2011 budget for Pakistan, which demonstrates the stronghold of military and civil bureaucracy over policy making in Pakistan thanks to their colonial roots. Lack of funds invested in sectors such as health and education only confirm the lack of attention paid to the people of Pakistan and their needs and the country's slide down the human development index continues to show the price that it is paying in developmental terms.

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*Written by: Hamza Bin Jehangir
Written at: University of Salford
Written for: Dr. Phoebe Moore
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