



**Centre for Land Warfare Studies, New Delhi**

**Pakistan: Prevailing Internal Situation And Its Implications For India**

**13 Aug 2014**

**Seminar Report**

**Welcome Address and Introduction of Panellists: Col HPS Hansi, Senior Fellow, CLAWS**

**Session I: Regional Environment and its Impact on Pakistan**

**Key Issues and Views Emerging from Discussions by the Panellists and Interactive Sessions during Session I of the Seminar**

All debates and panel discussions on Pakistan commence with strategies to contain it but end up giving something to them instead. This has created a monster. It is correct to refer to Pakistan as a **state acting as a state suicide bomber standing before the world and saying, we will implode unless you give us something**. Internationally, billions of dollars have been given to Pakistan, not realising that through this dynamic, an internal situation has been created in Pakistan where those in power enjoy the benefits while the larger country is pushed into crisis. Unless the cost is imposed on those who are perpetuating these, the situation can never be influenced. India has in fact focused on soft and politically correct options in the search for peace, not understanding that a misplaced search for peace is no more than a prelude to even greater destruction. If we need peace we must locate it in the actual character of the enemy. The idea of hatred towards India is deeply ingrained in Pakistan and it will only change if Pakistan is put in an existential threat and it seems, this choice Pakistan has already made, as it is on course to suicide. Pakistan is in grave crisis in and it is a self-inflicted one.

**Impact of Developments in the Arab World on Pakistan**

The pertinent question on everyone's mind is will there be an Arab Spring in Pakistan? There are some basic contours of the Arab spring. One is what happened in the Arab world and the other is what is going to happen in Pakistan. It is important to understand that there is no unique Pakistani identity while there definitely is an Arab identity and secondly are conditions in Pakistan similar to those in Arab world for regime change?

In the Arab Spring, the drama spread from one country to another unfolding differently in each theatre. Each was different in its own way and the only commonality was the people's desire for change. Largely it started in Tunisia and two months later spread to Egypt. There were some structural factors, primarily the economic crisis, extreme corruption and extremely repressive and violent regimes, which led to resentment and the movement against these regimes.

Different impacts were seen in different countries. In Tunisia and Egypt there was an immediate collapse of the regime, while in Libya there was civil war resulting in killing of President Gaddafi. Syria and Yemen too saw violent protests. Many governments made minor reform movements to appease the public and prevent any backlash. In Tunisia and Egypt, the army reacted in support of the people. Egypt was one country where there was a course correction. In Libya and Syria the regimes were brutal and the rebels were inferior. In Saudi where there is extreme centralisation of power, they also tried to bring in reforms and monetary incentives were doled. Thus is all the Arab Spring, the revolution classically failed to structurally and politically change any country.

It is true that Pakistan never found a place in the Arab world as there are many differences between Arabs and Pakistani's. First and foremost there is no Pakistani identity though both use Islam as a card. There is no mobilisation of civil society in Pakistan, without which sweeping protests are hard to come by. All changes and movements in Pakistan have always been by the army. Even among the political parties there is no internal democracy. Will Dr Quadri or Mr Imran Khan bring in the Arab Spring? They have the backing of the army; though many observers believe that the Pakistan army will observe and will directly intervene only in case of an extreme situation, otherwise it will use someone else. The youth bulge that is being talked about is certainly not there.

### **Afghan Elections and Impact of Drawdown of US Forces**

There are some serious issues with the recently held elections in Afghanistan, forcing US to act as interlocutor between the two presidential candidates. The public is disappointed. Millions of Afghans defied Taliban threats to take part in the first round of the election held on 05 April 14. Under the watch of UN and international agencies, the criteria on the invalidation of votes has been decided, which has been broadly agreed upon by both the candidates. Additionally reports indicate that there will be a chief executive nominated by the losing candidate. There will be leader of opposition who will play a key role in selection of appointments. The Loya Jirga will be convened within two years to revamp the constitution. This indicates a move towards Parliamentary form of government.

Meanwhile the Taliban has changed its tone towards the elections. The thrust of the Taliban was in portraying that democracy is not compatible with Islam as it would push out *Sharia* and lead to emancipation of the women. Post elections, the thrust has changed as the people were not supportive of the Taliban view. In their latest statements, Taliban has opined that since Afghanistan is under occupation, the elections cannot produce legitimate leadership: in other words they are moving away from attacking democracy to attacking democracy as it is being practiced at present in Afghanistan. Surprisingly, the Afghan media, on its own, decided not to publicise Taliban attacks because it would create insecure circumstances. The people of Afghanistan have reacted in a very self-righteous aggressive manner, in a way of professing their rights. There were six million votes cast and that's a strong mandate for democratic governance and against insurgents. Thus, to meet the aspirations of the population and ensure smooth democratic transition of power, there is a need to make a determined effort to move ahead and form an all-inclusive government.

Looking at the current situation in Afghanistan, the casualties have gone up since 2002. NATO has failed in weakening the Taliban. Similarly, the economy of Afghanistan is also totally dependent on foreign assistance and with withdrawal of NATO troops, the unemployment would also rise. A case in point is Baghram, where approx. 50,000 workers were employed, effecting approx. 250,000 people.

For ANSF to optimally perform its mandated role, it should have strength of approx. 382,000 personnel while presently it is holding about 250,000. The final figures suggested is 372,500 troops which would cost about \$5-6 billion. The critical problem remains of financing the defence forces. The military strength of the Afghan army will be challenged in the days post withdrawal, but the Afghan National Army (ANA) will be able to hold on to cities and central capital towns or provinces. The desertions and ethnic clashes are however expected to continue for a short while at least.

With the situation in Afghanistan, there is resurgence of violence propagated by Afghan Taliban with some criminal gangs also aligning with them. But in spite of the deteriorating situation, the country is holding together, there is construction everywhere and the people are hopeful. The ANSF though being in bad shape, has not allowed Taliban to take over, so they will hold.

What is Pakistan's reaction to the new developments? If we see the language of Pakistan, they have toned down their demand for Taliban being part of the government. They have opened up to Uzbeks and Tajiks and even talked to the Afghan High Peace Commission. They have requested US not to withdraw as the three criteria US had promised to fulfil prior to leaving Afghanistan, i.e. conditions for free and fair elections, the BSA and a strong Afghan army have not been fulfilled yet. The Pakistani's are scared that if US withdraws, ANSF will collapse leading to civil

war in Afghanistan, which does not auger well for Pakistan. It seems things will remain a mess in the foreseeable future.

## Session II - Internal Fault Lines

### Session II: Key Issues and Views Emerging from Discussions by the Panellists and Interactive Sessions During the Seminar

With approximately 52,000 civilian casualties in the past 13-14 years, there is a realisation in certain military factions in Pakistan that they have brought this trouble on to themselves. Pakistan is currently caught in an internal conflict which has spiraled much beyond its control, coupled with an economy that is surviving on huge debts. To justify their present state, they do blame India for trouble in Baluchistan etc. but there is a larger understanding that they have failed their nation. Whether the realisation softens their stand on ground is not quite visible yet.

### Security Challenges and Economic Situation

In the recent past there have been two attacks on Karachi airport followed by an attack on Peshawar airport resulting in three international airlines stopping there flights into Pakistan. This is a clear example of how its security situation is impacting the country financially. There are three major security problems that challenge Pakistan today:

#### Sectarianism.

Sectarianism emanates from the two nation theory which classifies Muslims as a separate state. In 1953, the problem as to who is a Muslim first came to fore when there were huge anti-Ahmedia riots in Pakistan. It resulted in the constitution of Munir Kayani commission which was assigned the task to find the **definition of a Muslim**. The commission interviewed 23 different sets of Ulemas but there was no unanimity on any one definition and thus the commission couldn't decide if Ahmedias were Muslims or not.

In 1974, the sectarian fault lines deepened when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto used Taqfeer to push Ahmadias out of the fold of Islam. This was first time that any modern day country had pushed a sect outside the fold of Islam using constitutional means. Zia-ul-Haq went a step further by withdrawing their rights of calling themselves Muslims and their places of worship as Mosques, additionally they were even denied the right to use Ayahs from Quran on their gravestones.

Today the scenario in Pakistan has deteriorated to the point that Sectarianism is not just Shias fighting Sunnis but there are deep fissures running even within the fold of

Sunni Islam where Deobandi's are targeting Barelvi's and within Shia sect, Ismaili's and Dawoodi Bohra's are considered as apostates. Shias claim to be 30% of the entire Pakistani population, whereas Sunnis believe them to be only 10%.

Off late Taliban has started moving into Punjab and Sind where it has aligned itself with the Sunni sectarian militias. Together they are actively involved in attacking Shia, Sufi and Barelvi shrines including the security forces. Further, Baloch has been completely alienated and the Sindhi Nationalism is on the rise where they are mobilising their resources to prevent internally displaced people from entering their region. Nevertheless, the continuing sectarian violence in Pakistan can only weaken but cannot disintegrate Pakistan.

Global sectarian conflicts have also impacted Pakistan in a manner not seen before. The advent of Saudi Arabia's forces in Bahrain, desecration of Bibi Zainab's Shrine, conflict in Syria and Iraq has evoked strong reactions within Pakistan. Pakistani's are currently fighting from both sides in the Iraq conflict.

### **Changing Demography of Karachi.**

Another cause of conflict is the rapidly changing demography of Karachi. There is huge influx of Pakhtoons in Karachi causing their population to swell while the numbers of Mohajirs is sharply declining. A huge conflict is brewing in the city owing to the weakening hold of Mohajir's over Karachi.

### **Talibanisation.**

Radicalisation is inherent in the ideology of Pakistan. Since 1947, an all Muslim identity was promoted to subsume the Pakhtoon nationalism. At the same time FATA was kept frozen in the time without educational, economic or political initiatives, fumed with religious thoughts making it the perfect breeding ground for Taliban. Post 9/11, Taliban was pushed out by Pakistan from the main picture and in 2004 it launched Operation Anaconda against it, but suffered heavy casualties. Pakistan signed number of peace agreements trying to appease Taliban, but Taliban instead raised the level of violence spreading it from South Waziristan to North Waziristan initially and then to Bajour, Mohmand, Khuram, Khyber etc, threatening to spread it further.

### **Economic Situation.**

After the partition, Mr Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi believed that Pakistan cannot survive economically and would hence fall back, but contrary to the belief till 90's Pakistan's per capita income was higher than India. However, presently all has not been well with the Pakistan's economy. The GDP growth of

Pakistan was smeared in controversy with Finance Minister claiming the growth to be 4.3 % but when documents were submitted to the World Bank they pitched the growth at 3.3 % only. In the past 5 years the GDP growth has been 2.9% on an average which is equivalent to the population growth implying that the per capita income in Pakistan is actually going down.

The industrial production has been contracting with state units incurring huge losses. In 2013, the railways came to a grinding halt with no money to pay for fuel. The power generation capacity of Pakistan has increased but the actual generation of power has reduced due to circular debt.

## **Political Fault lines and Indian Response Options**

### **Political Situation.**

The efficacy of the last election held in Pakistan has been questioned time and again. The ruling party, Pakistan Muslim League (N) has been constantly accused of lack of effective governance. There have been factions and internal squabbling within the government groups. The Tekreek-i-Insaaf (PTI) meanwhile is confused about the political goals and the ways to achieve them. They have not exhibited any clarity on the issue of Taliban with Imran Khan sometimes being soft on the issue and on other occasions he has openly supported the action taken by the Army against Taliban. The Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) has enjoyed a strong support amongst moderate Islamists and women while PPP has been reduced to a regional party. Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) on the other hand has been losing ground in Karachi whereas the Pashtun nationalism is resurging.

In view of the long march by Imran Khan's against the electoral fraud, the Army has been called in for a three month period in aid to the civil authorities. The reason for such an action could either be to send a strong signal to Imran Khan to behave himself or it could be a battle between the elites to gain control over Punjab. Meanwhile, Nawaz Sharif has requested the chief justice to form a three Judge enquiry commission to probe into electoral fraud allegations to assuage the concerns of PTI and PAT.

### **Civil Military Relations.**

While on one hand Army seems to have gained political and social ground due to recent events, the civil population is apprehensive of the Army's rule even when PML-N's non governance is clearly visible. Nawaz Sharif on the other hand is trying to build a rapport with the military personnel which was evident in his recent visit to the General Headquarters.

The lack of proper arrangements for Internally Displaced People (IDP) from FATA has led to a series of blame shifting between political parties and Army with the Army maintaining that they will send back IDP to FATA once the operation is over.

The issue of Gen Pervez Musharraf is still a major cause of disconnect in the civil - military relations. Whether, the courts or the PML (N) will decide the fate of the General remains to be seen.

### **Coping with Militancy.**

The Pakistan army is trying to make peace with certain factions of Taliban while attacking others. News reports claiming that some Taliban leaders like Hafiz Gul Bahadur are enjoying safe haven in the Army camps in Kurram areas and with no major TTP leader being killed so far raises serious questions on the Army's stance regarding Taliban. There is also a belief that Pakistan is preparing to push the war back to Afghanistan post withdrawal of forces to regain control and ensure continuity of foreign aid flowing into Pakistan.

The capacity of State Police mechanism to deal with terrorists remains doubtful. Recently a new act called the Pakistan Protection Act (PPA) was passed to ensure maintenance of internal security in Pakistan which has been criticised by many including retired police personnel who believe that it impinges on human rights.

There is also ambiguity about the role of army towards the radical outfits like Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jamaat-e-Islami, whether the Army will continue supporting these non-state actors using the Islamic crutch to further their agenda. Meanwhile, the ongoing Operation Zarb-e-Azb has been criticised openly and its efficacy questioned.

Pakistan wants to minimise the damage caused by internal strife in Afghanistan and at the same time wants to control South and South East Afghanistan through the Afghan Taliban, the support to which it continues unabated.

### **India's Response Option.**

- India should continue to engage with all political elements engaged in the democratic transition of Pakistan and simultaneously assess the attitude of the main player in the country - the Army.
- In the wake of any further attacks on India by Pakistan, it should retaliate through covert and overt measures. India needs to enhance its homeland security structures, improve intelligence gathering abilities, rebuild covert capabilities and raise stakes for Pakistan army for aiding cross border terrorism and infiltration.

- With Pakistan deeply embroiled in internal strife and strong government in India, there is a window of opportunity to expeditiously develop own capabilities and explore options short of war as response to Pakistan's provocations.
- Concurrently efforts must also be made to improve trade relations, build people to people contact and develop CBMs to ensure better ties with Pakistan.

### **Concluding Remarks by Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch, Director CLAWS**

- At the national level there is a need for India to draft a doctrine to deal with Pakistan. A two line statement of intent to be enunciated and defence forces made responsible to execute it.
- Any discussion to resolve issues even military between Armies of both sides is not possible as discussions are fruitful only if done between equals. The power vested in the Army is very different in both countries.
- Today the cost of turmoil caused on the Indian soil is being felt only by the infiltrators / terrorists who are either captured or killed and not by the Pakistani Army. The same needs to be reviewed and Pakistan Army, who are the real perpetrators, must be made to pay for their indulgence in fermenting unrest in India.
- Additionally, efforts must also be made to hurt Pakistan economic and cultural interest by undercutting Pakistan's trade and boycotting it culturally.