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## **Transforming External Security Dynamics of Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

The geo-political environment of Pakistan is engulfed with multiple regional and international security complexities. Along with the permanent threat calculus from her eastern and western borders, the non-traditional security threats emanate from the new global and regional security realities. In this context, regional politics stands imperious in understanding the security threats and concerns for Pakistan. Even the traditional rivalry with India has been shaped by new challenges of hybrid and non-conventional warfare. This piece of research by using qualitative analysis have observed that external security dynamics of Pakistan is multifaceted and it can be divided into parametric and contemporary factors that also affect the national security paradigm of Pakistan. This research underlines some policy proposals to address the security challenges that Pakistan faces on the external front.

**Key Words:** External Security, Threats, Climate Change, India, Afghanistan, Indian Ocean.

### **Introduction**

Pakistan's security dynamics are a combination of threats on the internal and external front. Since its inception, security remains a fundamental issue for policymakers. The civilian and military stakeholders in Pakistan consider security as a core issue mainly because of the territorial issues and security threats that Pakistan faces from its eastern and western front. The security dilemma that exists between Pakistan and her neighboring states, particularly with India and Afghanistan is full of complexities and divergent interests. One's security is taken as insecurity for others. In addition, strategically Pakistan is situated in a geo-political environment where internal and external security factors have a deep-rooted connection with each other. In this respect, the security threat matrix of Pakistan mainly revolves around its relationship with India and Afghanistan and the threats stemming from the frontiers. In addition, terrorism emerged as a leading security challenge to Pakistan that too has external linkages. Therefore, Pakistan's internal and external security is interlinked with each other. Pakistan faces major internal security challenges in the shape of terrorism, insurgency in Baluchistan and

FATA (Federally administrated tribal areas), poor governance, socio-economic issues, and religious extremism. Accompanied by external threats in the shape of vulnerable borders, complex regional dynamics, the role of major powers along with the presence of transnational militant networks makes the overall security environment of Pakistan more multifaceted. The peripheral security challenges to Pakistan have a legacy. As the security framework of Pakistan's eastern borders were emanated from perspective of hostile India and unaddressed pre-partition territorial disputes whereas the security of western borders was bleak particularly because of the Durand line issue. Therefore, after independence, security and survival were the two major concerns for Pakistan's foreign policymakers. This framework of threat and security perception continues in the contemporary times as Indian threat has been a persistent threat on the eastern front and the western border security is challenged by cross-border terrorism. In this context, the existing literature has contextualized the security framework and external challenges from a multi-layered approach.

(Rizvi, 1983) has outlined a relationship between ideology and foreign policy that consequently played an influential role in setting the external security dynamics of Pakistan. But the notion of ideology also came in conflict with the foreign policy particularly in building relationship with the West and the quest for security for survival and stability. Consequently, there was a transformation of policy in the 1960s and 1970s due to changes in the international system and Pakistan's external environment in particular. The debacle of East Pakistan in 1971 was a major security, political, and psychological set back to Pakistan. In addition, the active involvement of India in this whole situation along with losing more than 5000 miles of territory to India on its western side increased vulnerabilities for Pakistan. Therefore, India remained a primary challenge to Pakistan in her security realm. The post-Cold war era brought major changes in the power structure and security framework across the globe. The security framework explained by Barry Buzan and Weaver widened the scope of security. In this context, Pakistan's overall context of security also observed several transformations. (Ahmar, 1997) emphasized that Pakistan's policy makers need to incorporate the new geo-political, and geo-economic realities of post-cold war era within the security context of Pakistan. The writer has explained the security issues of Pakistan from historical, geo-economic, strategic, and popular perspective. Historically, Pakistan derived its security perception from its military strength to deter conventional threats. After the Cold War, continued confrontation with India, spillover effect of Afghan affairs, and increasing debt burden were major external security concerns of Pakistan. It entails that geo-economic front was defined as a new security concern for Pakistan as economic and technological development and political and regional stability are linked with each other. In this respect, (Cheema, 2013) entails that Pakistan has been facing external security threats since its inception mainly because of its relationship with India and Afghanistan. The writer identifies three major sources of external security threats in the post 9/11 period, i.e., India, Afghanistan, and the threat emanated from Pakistan's own domestic environment. The security challenge from India revolves mainly around the Kashmir conflict, and its associated issues have been more intense and deep rooted. In addition, the writer identifies the terrorist incidents that sabotage the dialogue process between the two neighbors. On the other hand, external security threats from Afghanistan took various transformations from the issue of Durand Line to the issue of Soviet intervention of Afghanistan in 1979.

Eventually, US intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 and following years of intervention according to the writer has been more complicated and multifaceted for Pakistan.

Similarly, (Malik, 2018) has described the post 9/11 security threats to Pakistan as multi-dimensional and deep-rooted. The military remains the most important factor in the security discourse of Pakistan. The security threat that emerged after US intervention in Afghanistan in 2001 had major implications for Pakistan. The armed forces of Pakistan had a major role in containing terrorism and militancy in the tribal belt of Pakistan through operational intelligence and military operations. Along with numerous minor military operation, the armed forces of Pakistan conducted major military operations mainly in the seven tribal agencies. The major military operations include Operation Al Mizan (2002-2006), Operation Zalzala (2008), Operations Sher Dil, Rah-e-Haq, and Rah-e-Rast (2007–2009), Operation Rah-e-Nijat (2009–2010), Operation Koh e Sufaid (2011), Operation Zarb e Azb (2014), and Operation Radd –ul- Fasaad (2017). This was a new role for military that extended beyond their traditional duties. In addition, it underlines a close connection between the external security factors and the internal security dynamics. The author further provides a lay out of security sector reforms that took place in Pakistan to deal with the contemporary security challenges. The structural and the institutional changes in the security apparatus highlights the complexity of security issue in Pakistan. inclusion of border and coastal guards, ministry of foreign affairs and defense, along with intelligence services and border managerial structures highlights the existence of external security challenges in the security discourse of Pakistan.

It is significant to note that the contemporary literature on the external security of Pakistan have identified some new challenges mostly stemmed from changing regional dynamics and the rise of militant forces. In this perspective, (Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, 2019) explains that peripheral security has been a challenge to Pakistan. The changing environment of the region mainly the rise of China, Indian designs to emerge as a regional power, relations with Iran, along with the presence of the US in the region all contributed to defining the multifaceted nature of external security of Pakistan predominantly in the post 9/11 years.

(Abbas, 2021) examines that the rise of Taliban in Afghanistan, footprints of Islamic State Khorasan in Afghanistan and its adjacent parts, the emergence of Hindutva doctrine in India, and revival of TTP activities are major factors that have security implications for South Asia and particularly Pakistan. Despite that terrorist activities significantly decreased since 2018 but it remained a major challenge to Pakistan. According to Pakistan Security report of 2018, there was a decline of 29 percent in terrorist activities but transnational militant groups remained a potent threat to Pakistan (PIPS,2018). The writer further explores some major factors that explain the threat of terrorism in Pakistan. The revival of TTP and its efforts to re-establish its footprints in Pakistan, the issue of targeted killing, the recruitment strategy of Islamic State Khorasan along with the resurgence of sectarianism in Pakistan describe the complex nature of militancy in Pakistan. Moreover, the connection of internal militant landscape with external militant forces has been a major challenge to Pakistan. For this reason, Pakistan has been active in completing the fencing of border to contain militant infiltration inside Pakistan. In this context, border fencing

between Pak-Afghan border is significant as it would facilitate the security forces to contain and stop cross border infiltration.

### **Methodology**

- **Search Strategy:**

This research is based on qualitative data. The study assimilates in cooperates major existing dispositions within the literature to analyze the external security challenges to Pakistan. Therefore, the search strategy was based on identifying core writers on the changing widen scope of security that included Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver, Johan Eriksson and Mark Rhinard's external and internal security paradox, along with Mely Caballero-Anthony work on non-traditional security studies was consulted. In addition, the search terms and narrations including security, external and internal security, external security challenges to Pakistan, external threats to Pakistan were used. The specific key words like Indian and Afghan factor, hybrid warfare, climate crisis, and economic issues were searched to understand the foundations and contemporary issues of external security of Pakistan.

In addition, systematic literature review was conducted to identify the permanent and contemporary factors that affect the external security paradigm of Pakistan. It was identified that existing literature on the external security dynamics of Pakistan covers the traditional issues particularly India, Afghanistan, and the internal security issues of Pakistan. The major research gap is the limited academic work on the issues and link between external security, climate change, and the security risk emanated again from non-state entities.

### **Parametric Factors in Pakistan's External Security Paradigm**

- **Indian Factor**

The Pakistan-India border is a constant security challenge for Pakistan. Pakistan's security options have always been encircled around the Indian factor. Pakistan has fought three wars with India (1948, 1965, and 1971) and a limited war at Kargil in 1999, along with major border incursions. The unresolved territorial disputes between India and Pakistan have been the source of conflict escalation between both states. From this perspective, the Kashmir conflict is the main source of dissent, conflict, and hostility. In August 2019, the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35 (A) by India in the Illegal Indian Occupied Kashmir further escalated tensions between India and Pakistan. India not only denied the basic right of self-determination and identity to the people of Kashmir but also negated the UN resolutions on Kashmir. Furthermore, the yearlong lockdown in Kashmir, the use of extrajudicial tactics, and human rights violations have limited the scope of dialogue and reconciliation between Pakistan and India. Therefore, Indian aggression in occupied Kashmir generates a hostile security environment between Pakistan and India. In this respect, Sten Widmalm explained that the conflict in J&K was the unforeseen outcome of the pursuit of power politics of the political elite (Widmalm, 2002). He warns that the leaders in Pakistan and India, to retain Azad Kashmir and J&K, may take isolated decisions, which may lead to unexpected consequences which they would have never thought of or taken into account. He points out that distrust and lack of reliable information about the actions and intentions of the leaders may end up in a situation that they had not predicted (Widmalm, 2002). Keeping in view this framework, the

aggressive political and military approach of Narandra Modi toward Pakistan based on his Hindutva ideology has emerged as a challenge for Pakistan on the diplomatic front (Iqbal, 2019). Indian aggression in Kashmir, violations at the Line of Control (LOC), and Pakistani air space along with covert activities within the Pakistani territory acted as destabilizing factors in Pak-India relations. In addition, the use of hybrid tactics by India to disrupt peace within Pakistan is a new security challenge to Pakistan. India is reportedly involved in supporting anti-Pakistan militant groups mainly TTP to disrupt peace in the tribal belt, Balochistan, and main urban centers of Pakistan. In a joint press briefing by DGISPR and the then foreign minister of Pakistan, Shah Mehmood Quershi stated that “Today, the Indian intelligence agencies are patronizing banned outfits that are against Pakistan. Organizations like Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), and Jamaatul Ahrar (JuA). These organizations were defeated by Pakistan, they were flushed out of the country, [now India] is trying to breathe life into them again. They are being supplied ammunition and IEDs (improvised explosive devices) and are being provoked to target Ulema, notables, and police officials” (www.dawn.com, 2020). Furthermore, Indian involvement in covert activities to disrupt the CPEC project is also a leading challenge to Pakistan. CPEC, a flagship project between Pakistan and China is a part of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to create connectivity across regions. Therefore, CPEC along with its strategic significance is directly linked with the economic security of Pakistan. During a press briefing DG ISPR Major General Babar Iftikhar revealed that, “For sabotaging CPEC, India had raised a militia of 700 militants to conduct terror activities in Balochistan. A commission comprising 24 members was created which included 10 RAW operatives. \$60 million were dedicated for this force” (Marwat, 2020). Similarly, Moeed Yusuf, the former National Security Advisor also showed his concern that India is behind supporting anti-Pakistan militant groups operating from third countries (www.tribune.com.pk, 2022). In addition, India has been using the tool of espionage for covert campaigns and intelligence information. The arrest of Kulbhushan Jadhav on 3rd March 2016 in Baluchistan on account of spying and illicit terrorist activity gives an insight into how covert human intelligence is being used by India within Pakistani territory.

For the past few years, India has been using the cyber domain for espionage against Pakistan. India’s overall software and hardware industry is far more developed than Pakistan’s. This may provide a strategic edge to India over Pakistan in the cyber domain. Indian hacker groups have been reportedly involved in cyber-attacks and espionage against state institutions. For example, in 2017, Indian hackers attacked 500 Pakistani government-run websites including the website of Pakistan’s railways (www.swarajyamag.com, 2017). In 2019, The Guardian reported that Indian hackers attacked around two dozen Pakistani officials cell phone WhatsApp data through ‘Pegasus’ spyware owned by Israeli NSO company (Kirchgaessner, 2019). Furthermore, infected mails have been used to hit the computer system of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Pakistan’s largest data center in 2021 when hackers were able to breach the break Hyper-V software by Microsoft. As a result, it brought down all the official websites linked with the tax machinery (Rana S. , 2021). Former Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin stated that Indian hackers were behind this attack and a similar kind of attack was attempted in 2019 but it failed (www.pakistantoday.com.pk, 2021). Recently, in July 2022, a private group of

Indian hijackers was involved in a cyber-attack on the Pakistani military, government, and business assets. This group named, SideWinder, also known as Rattlesnake has carried out around 1000 attacks since 2020. They intend to hijack, steal or modify the content from the computer systems. They were reportedly involved in launching a new malware, “WarHawk” that affected the official website of NEPRA (National Electric Power Regulatory Authority) website and targeted their distribution system. Similarly, the group also created phishing<sup>1</sup> sites of Pakistan’s Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Mishra, 2022). Another incident linked with the Pakistan Air Force was initially kept secret but later it was revealed that critical military information was taken from breaching the computer systems (Mishra A., 2022). In this regard, a Chinese cyber security company also revealed the involvement of India in cyber-attacks on Pakistan and China’s military and defense units along with state-owned enterprises (www.tribune.com.pk, 2021). Therefore, this new theatre of war between the two nuclear neighbors can be an escalating factor that can disrupt the existing deterrence. Pakistan has been much more pragmatic in its approach in dealing with the security complexities vis-à-vis India but Indian coercive rhetoric towards Pakistan is one of the main impediments in initiating any peace and conciliatory measures.

**Figure No I:**

**Threat Matrix between India and Pakistan**



Source: Composed by the author

- **Security Situation in Afghanistan**

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<sup>1</sup> Phishing is a type of social engineering attack often used to steal user data, including login credentials and credit card numbers. It occurs when an attacker, masquerading as a trusted entity, dupes a victim into opening an email, instant message, or text message

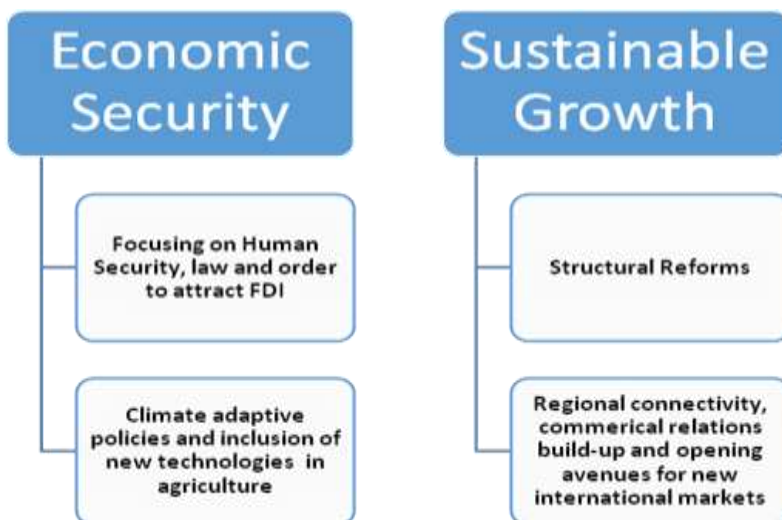
US withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021 has increased security complexities for Pakistan. Insecurity in Afghanistan has always been a main epicenter in Pakistan's security environment, due to the close geographical proximity with Pakistan. Cross-border infiltration and resurgence of militants in Pakistan, safe haven to banned Baluch groups and TTP in Afghanistan, Afghan refugees, and the spillover effect of the insecurity in Afghanistan is a serious concern for Pakistan's security apparatus. UNHCR reported that since the Taliban took over Afghanistan, more than 300,000 Afghans have fled to Pakistan. The close ties of the Afghan Taliban with TTP is a real test case for Pakistan that how Pakistan can balance its relationship with Afghan Taliban by demanding measures against the TTP who got a safe refuge in Afghanistan since 2014 when Pakistan started Operation Zarb-e- Azb in the tribal belt. The gradual rise of militant activities particularly in Balochistan and KPK explicates the security dilemma that Pakistan faces after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. In 2022, it was reported that 27 percent of terrorist activities increased in Pakistan. the report also entails that sixty percent of the total attacks are conducted by three main militant groups including Terek Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), and Islamic State-Khorasan (IS-K) (Pakistan Security Report 2022, 2023, p. 11). It is significant to note that the insurgency led by the Islamic State-Khorasan Province (IS-KP) in the east and parts of the north Afghanistan has increased violence as they have been involved in high-profile targets and the killing of ethnic Hazara. Therefore, the presence of IS-KP in Afghanistan has negative repercussions for Pakistan (Sarkar, 2021). In addition, the apprehension of the international community increased with the presence of foreign militants in Afghanistan when Al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri was killed in a US drone strike in Kabul in July 2022. The US termed it as a violation of the Doha agreement by the Taliban government (Qandil, 2022). Any major counter strategy by US against the foreign militants can be a challenge for Pakistan's border security as Zawahiri's presence indicates that the Taliban still share close ties with Al-Qaeda and its affiliates. Whether Pakistan fully supports or opposes the measures of Taliban- controlled government in Afghanistan, they would always be seen as a by-product of Pakistan's support in the past. Therefore, the main concern of Pakistan is the ability of the Afghan government to reduce violence and to the extent the Taliban government can acquire international legitimacy that would eventually ease Pakistan as well to develop a viable working relationship with the government without any international pressure. As their counterterrorism commitments would directly affect Pakistan's internal security paradigm (Pakistan's Hard Policy Choices in Afghanistan, 2022).

- **Economic Security**

Economic security has been an integral part of Pakistan's national security and stability. As Pakistan's energy and industrial needs are directly linked with her foreign relations with other states. Therefore, the economic security of Pakistan is linked with external financial viability. The fundamental problems lie with the issues associated with the current account deficit, low exports, high energy imports, and exploration of new markets for diversified products. In addition, Pakistan needs to develop an environment conducive to foreign investment and business. On the other hand, dealing with the IMF is another issue that has engulfed Pakistan with uncertainty as IMF bailout package is critical for her external payments and to avert

default (Peshimam, 2023). Though, Pakistan has been able to capitalize on financing guarantees from China, Saudi Arabia, and UAE but such short-term effects may not facilitate Pakistan in the long run. Therefore, Pakistan needs to develop and focus on increasing commercial relations with Iran, Central Asia, Russia, Europe, and the Middle East to increase its exports and resolve the issues of low export and energy needs.

**Figure II: Linking Economic Security**



Source: Compiled by researcher

### **Contemporary Factors in the External Security Paradox of Pakistan**

- **Power Competition in the Indian Ocean Region**

Indian Ocean Region acts as a main strategic line of communication and energy route to the littoral states as well as to the major powers. Maritime competition in the Indian Ocean Region between the US and China, along with the extensive focus on naval development by India is a concern for Pakistan. Unfortunately, Pakistan since its inception had a non-active approach and did not focus on its naval and maritime development despite the fact that Pakistan has a long coastline of 1001 km, divided into Sindh and Makran Coast (www.pc.gov.pk, 2023). The growing power contestation between US and China in the Indo-Pacific region particularly in the IOR would have implications for Pakistan because of Pakistan's close alignment with China. Secondly, the US containment strategy for China has been advantageous for India as well. Therefore, India's growing influence in the IOR region is a security concern for Pakistan at the bilateral level as well along with India's role within its partnership with the USA and other alliances like the Quad squad. IOR is central to India's geopolitical, economic, and strategic theatre. In 2009, the then US Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates termed India has a net security provider in IOR. India has been designated as a major defense partner by the US since 2016. US-India defense trade reached around 20 billion dollars in 2020 which was near zero in 2008. In addition, India got the status of Strategic Trade Authorization Tier 1 in 2018 that



grants India a license-free access to a range of dual-use technologies and military<sup>2</sup>. This defense cooperation between India and the US has been further stretched through five major arrangements that include the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) signed in 2016<sup>3</sup>, Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) in 2018<sup>4</sup>, the Industrial Security Agreement (ISA) in 2019<sup>5</sup>, along with Space Situational Awareness arrangement and Defense Artificial Intelligence Dialogue in 2022 for cooperation in space and joint cyber trainings (US Department of Defense, 2022).

These agreements illustrate that India is in the close military sphere of the US and is considered as an ally by the US as both states can take benefit from each other's facilities. Along with this, in the past few years, the US-India joint military exercises have considerably increased that particularly including the Malabar exercises, and the 2019 Tiger Triumph, the first-ever bilateral exercises including land, naval, and air force United States and India from the past few years are conducting joint military exercises that shows their cooperative security arrangement and strategic engagement. In this perspective, The Malabar naval exercise that started in 1992 has been a significant feature in US-India strategic partnership. It was later joined by other states including Japan in 2015 and Australia in 2020. Then in 2019, US and India conducted Tiger Triumph, its first disaster relief and humanitarian assistance exercise (Ministry of Defense, 2021). Therefore, within this tri-polar strategic competition in the Indian Ocean region, a free, secure, and navigable Indian Ocean is directly linked with the geopolitical and economic security of Pakistan.

- **Climate Change and Security Risk**

United Nations has linked security and climate change by showing concerns over its impact on local conflicts, forced migration, displacement, food, water, competition over natural resources, and energy supplies (United Nations Environment Programme, n.d.). Climate change has become one of the leading non-traditional security challenges for Pakistan. The rise in atmospheric temperature, scarcity of fresh water, reduction in a crop yielding contributing to food insecurity, the rise of sea level, record heat waves, unprecedented floods smog and health related-hazards, and climate-driven migration are all major issues faced by Pakistan. According to one estimate, it is expected that more than two million people in Pakistan would become climate migrants in 2050 (Kunbhar, 2022). The Global Climate Risk Index

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<sup>2</sup> It is regulated by Department of Commerce

<sup>3</sup> This agreement establishes the basic conditions and procedures linked to logistics between US and India including medical, transportation, communication, refueling, storage, calibration and maintenance services, support in terms of training, repair, spare parts and food, fuel, and water supplies. LEMOA focuses on four areas, i.e., port calls, training, and storage, joint exercises, disaster and humanitarian assistance

<sup>4</sup> This communication agreement between India and US is linked with encrypted communication, equipment and systems that can be used by us. It ensures the security and secrecy of command, control, communication, computer along with intelligence, surveillance system. Indian and US air force and navy can communicate through these networks

<sup>5</sup> ISA facilitates the defense industries of US and India in exchange of information

has ranked Pakistan as eighth countries within the ten most affected countries from 2000-2019 and that possesses long-term climate hazards (Global Climate Risk Index 2021, 2021). The external dimension of environmental security is significant in explaining the threat of climate change. The devastating floods of 2022 affected more than 33 million people in Pakistan. One of the main reasons identified by climate scientist includes rising temperatures for which the rich countries are responsible (Nabi, 2023). It was discussed at the United Nations climate summit that 50 percent of global warming is due to the extraction of fossil fuels and industrialization by Western European countries, the United States, Japan, and Canada (Plumer, 2021). In addition, it is observed that smog has become a transnational boundary issue. Stubble burning is a common issue in India and Pakistan that contributes to forming smog along with pollution, emission of fuels, and burning of coal. It has resulted in severe health issues. Besides this, a number of times it has affected the flight schedule, and the highways (M-1 and M-2) in Pakistan were closed due to smog (Maryam Shabbir, 2019, pp. 1-8).

- **External Support to Militant Groups and Hybrid Warfare**

The resurgence of militancy and the use of hybrid tactics by anti-Pakistan elements are directly linked with external security. Links of TTP across the border and their reported safe heavens near the Pak-Afghan border have been a serious concern within the security apparatus of Pakistan. One of the press releases issued by the foreign ministry of Pakistan stated that,

“Terrorists are using Afghan soil with impunity to carry out activities inside Pakistan. Unfortunately, elements of banned terrorist groups in the border region, including TTP, have continued to attack Pakistan’s border security posts, resulting into martyrdom of several Pakistani troops. On 14 April 2022 as well, 7 Pakistan Army Soldiers were martyred in North Waziristan District by terrorists operating from Afghanistan.”

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). In addition to TTP, separatist Baloch groups, particularly the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) supported by external elements and the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP). The Indian interference in Pakistan by supporting militant groups has been a major issue that disrupts Pakistan’s national security. The arrest of Kulbhushan Yadav in March 2016 and a spying network working for India was revealed and resultantly eight Indian High Commission members were expelled from Pakistan in November 2016. Reportedly, they had contact with TTP and intended to disrupt peace and stability in Pakistan (Khetran, 2017, pp. 113-114). This kind of incident entails Indian designs of using hybrid tactics to interfere in the Pakistani territory.

### **Policy Recommendations**

- Pakistan needs to continue strict surveillance of its border check points and should ensure economic zones near borders to facilitate more trade between neighboring countries as it would facilitate political cooperation and would enhance economic activity
- Continuity in intelligence based operations against militant groups

- Pakistan should focus on blue economy and develop a comprehensive maritime strategy to ensure Pakistan's security and its presence in the Indian ocean region. In addition, Pakistan needs to develop a clarity regarding its opportunities in the Indo-Pacific region as well in order to respond to the growing competition in the region
- Containing hybrid warfare through artificial intelligence and incorporation of new technologies is very significant. The law enforcement agencies must be equipped with new tools to combat non-traditional security issues
- Climate security needs to be incorporated within national security resolve of Pakistan. In addition, every province needs to chalk out an area specific strategy to contain climate risk
- Pakistan needs a viable geo-economic approach in her foreign policy to deal with the issues of economic growth and energy security. Pakistan does not afford to have an import-driven energy policy. Therefore, Pakistan needs to develop an economic- centric foreign policy to deal with economic issues by outreaching new economic markets in Asia, Europe, Russia Africa and Latin America.

### **Conclusion**

Pakistan faces external threats which combine with the internal ones creates complex environment for Pakistan. Therefore, political will, threat identification and containment through traditional and non-traditional means are significant to respond external security challenges. Moreover, it put immense constraints on Pakistan's foreign policy options. Furthermore, Pakistan needs to combat terrorism and extremism at home in order to strengthen its external outlook. Along with this, regional stability and engagement is also essential for peace and security in the region. Pakistan is currently facing a multitude of external threats, which, when combined with internal issues, create a complex and challenging environment for the country. In order to effectively address these external security challenges, it is crucial for Pakistan to have strong political will and the ability to identify and contain threats through both traditional and non-traditional means. These challenges also greatly limit Pakistan's options in terms of foreign policy. Additionally, in order to improve its external outlook, Pakistan must also address and combat terrorism and extremism within its own borders. Furthermore, promoting regional stability and engagement is essential for achieving peace and security in the region Pakistan needs a viable security strategy that can address the traditional and non-traditional realm of security.

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