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PAKISTAN'S SECURITY CHALLENGES: BALANCING BETWEEN INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL IMPERATIVES

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan has faced a number of security challenges throughout its history, both from within and from outside its borders. In the early days, the country relied on security alliances with the major powers to help it cope with these challenges. However, these alliances often proved unsatisfactory. As a result, Pakistan has increasingly turned to internal balancing measures in order to protect its national security. One of the most important internal balancing measures that it has pursued is the development of its nuclear weapons program. The overt nuclearization of South Asia has somewhat diminished the chances of another all-out war between India and Pakistan. However, the security challenges confronting Pakistan continue to persist in one form or another. This paper examines Pakistan's security challenges and the evolving responses that the country has taken to address them. It argues that Pakistan's security policies have been shaped by the need to strike a balance between internal and external dimensions. The paper also discusses the implications of Pakistan's security challenges for regional and international security.

Key words: Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, USA, National Security/Security Challenges, External Threats, Balancing Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan's history shows that outside alliances have not always been reliable. In the past, Pakistan has sought security through alliances with the United States, China, and Saudi Arabia. However, these alliances have not always been able to provide the security that Pakistan needs. For example, the United States did not provide Pakistan with the support that it needed during the 1971 war with India. As a result, Pakistan has increasingly turned to domestic resources to strengthen its national security. This includes investing in its military, developing its nuclear weapons program, and improving its counter-terrorism capabilities. While these measures have not been perfect, they have helped to improve Pakistan's security situation. The development of nuclear weapons has provided Pakistan with a sense of security, but it is not a foolproof deterrent. India also has nuclear weapons, and there is always the risk of miscalculation or accidental war. In addition, Pakistan's nuclear weapons program has been costly and has diverted resources away from other important areas, such as economic development.

Pakistan has faced a number of external security challenges since its independence in 1947. These challenges have included border disputes with India. Pakistan and India have been locked in a dispute over the Kashmir region since the two countries gained independence (Kugelman, 2019). This dispute has led to a number of wars

and armed conflicts between the two countries. Moreover, Pakistan has been a major victim of terrorism in recent years. Terrorist groups, such as the Taliban and al-Qaeda, have found safe haven in Pakistan's tribal areas (Abbasi et al., 2018). These groups have launched attacks against Pakistani government forces, civilians, and targets in neighboring countries.

Pakistan is a diverse country with a large number of different ethnic and religious groups. This diversity has sometimes been a source of conflict, leading to sectarian violence between different groups (Ali, 2011). last but not the least, Pakistan has a history of political instability. The country has experienced a number of military coups and civilian governments have often been weak and ineffective (Memon, 2011). This political instability has made it difficult for Pakistan to develop a coherent and effective national security policy.

These challenges have made it difficult for Pakistan to maintain a strong external security posture. The country has often been forced to rely on outside help, such as from the United States and China, to deter threats from its neighbors. However, this reliance on outside help has not always been reliable, as the United States has not always been willing to provide Pakistan with the support that it needs. As a result, Pakistan's external security situation has appeared weak. The country has been unable to deter threats from its neighbors and has been vulnerable to terrorist attacks and sectarian violence. This has made it difficult for Pakistan to achieve its economic and social development goals. In recent years, Pakistan has taken some steps to improve its external security situation. The Pakistani military has been successful in defeating some terrorist groups, and the government has taken steps to improve its counter-terrorism capabilities. The country has also made progress in its efforts to promote interfaith harmony and reduce sectarian violence. However, these gains have been slow and difficult. Pakistan's external security situation remains challenging, and the country will continue to face threats from its neighbors and from terrorist groups. If Pakistan can continue to make progress in improving its security situation, it will be better able to achieve its economic and social development goals.

The security challenges are so profound that efforts, both national and international, are taken taking into account national security parameters. India, a very powerful neighbor, has been in conflict with Pakistan on several occasions (Ali & Patman, 2019). Afghanistan has also been a persistent adversary despite its handicaps in terms of being landlocked, militarily inferior and politically unstable (Hussain & Latif, 2012; Hussain, 2020). Despite these impediments, it can be argued that Pakistan has managed to keep its national security threats under control most of the time. With the exception of 1971, when India succeeded in mutilating Pakistan, its policies and their implementation can be deemed as successful. Undoubtedly, the development of nuclear weapons has been a welcome relief from a Pakistani perspective.

Until the 1970s, Pakistan relied on external balancing. The United States and subsequently the People's Republic of China (hereafter China) has been the mainstay of Pakistan’s external balancing act. Alliance building has had mixed success as it has not been able to completely ameliorate Islamabad's security woes. Pakistan’s security dilemma further compounded as a result of India opting to test its nuclear weapons in 1974 (Hussain, 2015). Pakistan’s dismemberment in 1971 was a traumatic experience for the relatively young state and proved that sole reliance on alliances was a futile exercise in terms of safeguarding its security. However, the quest for security through internal and external resources came at a price. If Pakistan sought external alliances, India opposed it vehemently; on the other hand, if Pakistan resorted to internal balancing, then the

trade-off between guns and butter posed a dilemma.

Pakistan's constant efforts to improve its national security from the beginning clearly suggest that security has continued to be its foremost priority. Perception of threat and response on part of Pakistan's security elite warrants an evaluation to fill the gap in the existing literature. Therefore, the basic thrust of the article is to focus on notion of threat(s) and how those notions have impacted policy formulation and subsequent implementation. During the process of investigation, an attempt has been made to highlight Pakistani security elites' strategic shift from reliance on alliances to the development of nuclear weapons. This perceptible shift in Pakistan's strategy to seek national security through indigenization rather than alliance building will also be discussed.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND ARGUMENT

- To identify the key internal and external security challenges facing Pakistan.
- To assess the ways in which Pakistan's security elites have attempted to balance these challenges.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts in balancing internal and external security imperatives.
- To identify the factors that has made it difficult for Pakistan to balance internal and external security imperatives.
- To explore the potential policy options for improving Pakistan's ability to balance internal and external security imperatives.

This empirical study argues that the Pakistani security elites have traditionally defined national security as being primarily concerned with the country's external threats. This is not surprising, given Pakistan's history of conflict with its neighbors, particularly India. However, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition among the Pakistani security establishment that the country also faces significant internal security challenges. These internal challenges include terrorism, sectarian violence, and political instability.

The Pakistani security elites have responded to these challenges by adopting a number of policies and measures. These include the development of nuclear weapons, the strengthening of the military, the promotion of interfaith harmony, and the strengthening of democratic institutions. However, these policies and measures have not always been successful, and the Pakistani security establishment continues to face a number of challenges in ensuring the country's national security. One of the key challenges facing the Pakistani security elites is the need to balance internal and external security imperatives. On the one hand, the security elites need to focus on the country's internal security challenges, such as terrorism and sectarian violence. On the other hand, they also need to maintain a strong military in order to deter external threats, such as an Indian invasion. This balancing act is difficult, and the security elites have not always been successful in achieving it.

Another challenge facing the Pakistani security elites is the need to deal with the impact of external factors, such as the US-led War on Terror. The War on Terror has had a significant impact on Pakistan's security situation, both in terms of the country's internal security challenges and its external security threats. The security elites have had to adjust their policies and strategies in order to deal with the challenges posed by the War on Terror. The Pakistani security elites are aware that the country faces a number of serious security challenges. However, they believe that the country has the resources and the resilience to overcome these challenges. The Pakistani security establishment is committed to ensuring the country's national security, and it is taking a number of steps to address the challenges that the country faces.

The study of Pakistani security elites' perceptions of national security is an important topic that has implications for the country's long-term security and stability. The study could help to inform policymakers about the challenges facing the security elites and the potential policy options for addressing these challenges. The study could also help to improve public understanding of Pakistani security issues. This research is both analytical and descriptive in nature. It is primarily qualitative, relying on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was obtained from interviews with Pakistani officials conducted between 2011 and 2016 as part of a PhD project. The other data includes US sources found in the State Department's Office of Historian and the British National Archives.

THREAT PERCEPTION AND SECURITY DILEMMA OF PAKISTAN

India-Pakistan: An Enduring Rivalry

India and Pakistan were both under British rule, but they had significant socioeconomic, political, and cultural differences. The Indian Muslims felt particularly unsafe and were reluctant to live under Hindu rule. They believed that the Hindus would strip them of their rights and prevent them from practicing their religion freely (Kirmani, 2016; Rizvi, 2019). As a result, they demanded a separate country for themselves. This demand was met with resistance from the Hindus, who feared that the creation of Pakistan would weaken India. However, the British colonial masters eventually agreed to partition the country into two dominions: India and Pakistan. This decision was made in 1947, and it led to widespread violence and displacement. The creation of Pakistan was a complex event with a long history. The anxieties of the Indian Muslims were rooted in the inimical attitudes of the Hindus towards them, which had been evident since the 1857 Indian Rebellion. The British decision to partition the country was a pragmatic one, but it did not resolve the underlying tensions between the two communities. These tensions continue to this day, and they have contributed to the instability of the region.

The partition of India and Pakistan was a bloody and chaotic event. Millions of people were displaced, and many were killed or injured (Khan, 1967). The violence was particularly intense in Punjab and Bengal, where the two communities had lived together for centuries. The partition was a culmination of centuries of tension between Hindus and Muslims. The two communities had different cultures, religions, and ways of life. They also had different political goals. The Hindus wanted to maintain a united India, while the Muslims wanted to create a separate state for themselves. The partition did not resolve the underlying tensions between the two communities. The violence that accompanied the partition only served to deepen the divisions. The ill-feeling between Hindus and Muslims continues to this day, and it has contributed to the instability of the region.

Indian Prime Minister Jawaher Lal Nehru believed that Pakistan is temporary, and india would be united again (Wolpert, 2006, p.153). Reacting to the partition of India, Congress committee announced that the picture of India will "remain in our minds and our hearts" (Khan, 2007, p.15). Congress party president Achraya Kriplani said that India will not give up on the mission of "united India" (Khan, 1967, p.115). Sardar Patel went a step further and stated that India and Pakistan will soon be under "common allegiance to our country" (Ibid, p.115). Nehru and Sardar Patel on another occasion assumed:

> "Pakistan would prove insolvent after it was born and, in the not-too-distant future, Jinnah and Liaquat would beg forgiveness and ask for permission to re-join India's union" (Wolpert, 2006, p.153).

The Indian attitude towards Pakistan in its early years was one of unmitigated hostility. This was because the creation of Pakistan was seen as a mortal blow to the dream of Akhand Bharat, or

a united India. Even Mahatma Gandhi, who was a staunch advocate of non-violence, agreed with other prominent Hindu leaders that partition was unacceptable. He declared that he would never agree to the partition so long as he was alive. Before the announcement of 3 June plan 1947, Gandhi remarked "even if the whole of India burns, we shall not concede Pakistan" (Khan, 2007, p.115). The Indian leadership never accepted the existence of Pakistan. This reluctance increased their anxiety about security and territorial integrity. Even today, many Indians believe that the emergence of Pakistan was not justified and that there should have been a united India.

The Indian leadership's reluctance to accept Pakistan has had a number of negative consequences. It has led to increased tensions between the two countries, and it has made it more difficult for them to resolve their disputes. It has also made it more difficult for India to achieve its full potential as a regional and global power. Even today, many Indians believe that the emergence of Pakistan was not justified and that there should have been a united India. However, this view is not shared by all Indians. There are many who believe that Pakistan is a legitimate state, and that it has the right to exist. There are also many who believe that the partition of India was a necessary, and that it was the best way to resolve the tensions between the Hindu and Muslim communities.

Geographic proximity is crucial in the formation of a state's foreign policy. Every nation's primary responsibility is to maintain good ties with others. Political borders are real and equally important for nation to maintain peace regionally. Pakistan is India's neighbor, and because geography cannot be changed, states must coexist with their neighbors. Nations cannot pick their neighbors, but they can decide on the type of relationship they wish to have with them. Former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee famously said "we can change our friends but not our neighbours" (Sharma, 2018). This is vitally important for Pakistan; in actuality, Islamabad cannot change India's status as a neighbour. Furthermore, Pakistan's territory runs parallel to India's territory and Pakistan lacks strategic depth on its land, thus India posing a severe security danger to the country.

When partition happened, all the military and economic assets were to be divided according to the proportions of the country. India denied Pakistan's share which desperately needed to equip its armed forces. This issue caused needless bitterness and validated Muslim's belief that India was willing to go to any lengths to undo the partition of the Subcontinent. Furthermore, India threatened to divert the flow of water to Pakistan. It was an immediate and painful crisis for Pakistan. Keeping in view that Pakistan had agriculture-based economy; the obstructed water would have impinged Pakistan's economy harmfully (Ziring, 1973, pp.11-12). It was nothing more than a declaration of war by the Indians.

Apart from that, several territories occupied by India were supposed to belong Pakistan or had decided to join Pakistan. Manavdat, a small state wanted to join Pakistan but was occupied by India, Hyderabad met with the same fate, its Muslim leader Nizam fled to Pakistan and never returned to India. Junagadh, another tiny state wishing to join Pakistan, was occupied by India (Afraz, 1989). The occupation of one state after another raised concern among Pakistani leadership that India could repeat the same thing in Pakistan. Indian threat led the people of Pakistan to believe:

> "If the main quest of Christian west was to contain communism, the main concern of Muslim Pakistan was the containment of militarist and militant Hinduism" (Sayeed, 1964, p.746).

Stephen Cohen has influentially argued that the Indo-Pak enmity has the potential to become lengthiest rivalry in the modern history of the international relations (Cohen, 2013). In Europe French and German competition was the biggest

in Europe. Both the nations endured harsh conflicts before mending their relations in post-World War II. An exceptionally important element in this kind of argument is the idea that these belligerents' nations (India-Pakistan) have spent so much resources fighting each other that if they had utilized the same to fight the biggest challenges of poverty, they would have benefited.

Islamabad and New Delhi have spent billions of dollars to purchase weapons that could have been used for the development of more than 1/5th population of the entire planet that resides in these two impoverished countries (Guruswamy, 2019). They compete rather than cooperate. They fight rather than talk, and they isolate each other on every regional and international forum instead of putting combined response (Lodhi, 2017). The zero-sum mentality underlines the tense relationship between these neighborly countries and this trend continues to endure.

Geographic configuration and presence of hostile neighbors on its east and west are the primary drivers of Pakistan's insecurity. Several of Pakistan's major cities, industrial units, cantonments, and communication infrastructure runs perilously close to the Indian border. In case of another war, there are fears among the Pakistani security establishment that India can drive a wedge by dividing the country into two thereby inflicting serious damage to the territorial integrity (Rizvi, 2002; Memon, 1994). To address this vulnerability, Islamabad has sought refuge in flawed strategies like Afghanistan as Pakistan's strategic depth that have had negative implications for Pakistan. Lack of defensible features along Pakistan-India border (except for a limited portion in the north) has forced Pakistan to employ the bulk of its armed forces along its eastern borders. Many regions around the world are coming closer of economic and trade purposes, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is chiefly an ineffective organization, and the onus lies on both India-Pakistan. Both nations have fought three major wars. The large concern of this line of argument is that the wars have prevented both nations to normalize relations and has had a retarding impact on bilateral trade. Notwithstanding Indian numerical superiority during the wars fought in 1948 and 1965, Pakistan managed to come out of these conflicts unscathed. However, it could not prevent dismemberment of the country because of 1971 war. This was also a validation of India's resolve to go to any lengths in order to undo Pakistan. In 1974, India compounded Pakistan's security concerns by testing nuclear weapons. Pakistan had no other option but to take nuclear route mainly because the idea of becoming subservient to India is abhorrent. Between 1971 and until now, Pakistan and India have been involved in several limited conflicts, but the crisis has not escalated to a full fledge war. In 1999, the Kargil crisis once again put both the states in a precarious situation but the nuclear dimension helped avoid another major conflict. In 2001, 2008 and more recent crises like Pathankot and Pulwama attacks, India and Pakistan have been involved in grave crisis (Majid, 2017).

Recent years for Pakistan have been characterized with issues of governance and economic crunch. It has not been able to compete with India in conventional weapons. India is one of the leading importers of weapons. In the period 2005-2010, India was at the top of the list of arms purchase lists from the world market. India has embarked on the course of the fifth generation/hybrid war to destabilize Pakistan internally. It supports a plethora of terrorist groups that are involved in terrorist activities throughout the country. Although Pakistani security forces have effectively countered these groups, the terrorists still retain the capacity to carry attacks.

The Modi government has exacerbated India-Pakistan relations to such an extent that the chances of war loom over the subcontinent. India has adopted a strategy of isolating

Pakistan, which has failed miserably. It has also refused to resume dialogue with Pakistan, thus closing the door to any reconciliation. More recently, India has revoked Kashmir's special status by revoking Article 370. This article gave Kashmir autonomous status to make its own laws except foreign affairs, defense, and security. Theoretically speaking, this makes Kashmir a part of the Indian Union. This has pushed India-Pakistan relations to the brink of yet another crisis.

The people of Kashmir have firmly resisted the illegal and unilateral actions of the Modi government. A year has passed, and Kashmir remains a boiling point. Violations of human rights have also increased. The Indian government is also working to change Kashmir's demographics by allowing non-Kashmiris to purchase land and obtain residence permits in Kashmir. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan has asserted that Indian actions have turned Kashmir into a "humanitarian crisis" and a "prison." He has called for the international community to intervene and help resolve the Kashmir issue “open-air prison” (Nation, 2020). The hostility and fighting between India and Pakistan is a long-standing problem. The two countries have fought three wars over Kashmir, and there have been numerous smaller clashes. The latest developments show that the two countries are still unable to resolve their differences peacefully. The hostility and fighting between India and Pakistan is a long-standing problem. The two countries have fought three wars over Kashmir, and there have been numerous smaller clashes. The latest developments show that the two countries are still unable to resolve their differences peacefully.

Afghanistan: A Weak but Politically Irritant Neighbor

Pakistan-Afghanistan relations have been strained by historical challenges and security threats. The refusal of Afghanistan to recognize the Durand Line as an international boundary has been a major point of contention. Additionally, Afghanistan's irredentist claims to Pashtunistan have further strained bilateral relations. These issues have fueled a rivalry between the two countries, especially between 1947 and 1980 (Hussain, 2020).

Post-9/11, the presence of Indian influence in Afghanistan has added to Pakistan's security anxieties (Hussain & Latif, 2012). India's involvement in Afghanistan is perceived as a threat to Pakistan's interests and influence in the region. The Indian-Soviet support for Afghanistan's irredentist claims has also been a cause of concern for Pakistan's security establishment (Khan, 2007, p.18). While Afghanistan's military strength has rarely posed a direct threat to Pakistan, the support it has received from India and the Soviet Union has been a cause of concern. However, it is important to note that Afghanistan does not possess the power to forcefully annex Pakistani areas in Pashtunistan or invalidate the Durand Line treaty.

Afghanistan's historical stance on the Pashtunistan issue, where it claimed parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan as part of a greater Pashtunistan/Pakhtunistan, has not been supported by the Pashtun population on the Pakistani side of the border. The Afghan perspective on the issue has created tensions and contributed to Pakistan's security concerns. Afghanistan has been a source of security threats for Pakistan since its independence. Afghanistan refused to recognize the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) as part of Pakistan and opposed its UN membership. Despite Pakistan's efforts to foster cordial relations, successive Afghan governments maintained anti-Pakistani sentiments.

Pakistan pursued strategic depth in Afghanistan, initially focusing on human development and later on establishing a sphere of influence among pro-Pakistan elements. The Soviet Union's invasion in 1979 brought significant changes to

Pakistan's geostrategic environment, and Pakistan played a crucial role in supporting the Mujahideen against the Soviet forces. However, the subsequent rise of the Taliban became a strategic nightmare for Pakistan, as they sheltered international terrorist groups, including Osama Bin Laden.

The events of September 11, 2001, further heightened Pakistan's security concerns regarding Afghanistan. The presence of Al-Qaeda and the proximity of Pakistani tribal regions added a global dimension to Pakistan's security challenges (Hasnat, 2011, p.1-20). The Indian presence in Afghanistan has also been a source of anxiety for Pakistani security elites (Hussain, 2020). The complex history of Pakistan-Afghanistan relations has contributed to security challenges for both countries and has necessitated a nuanced approach to address these issues.

PAKISTAN'S RESPONSE: POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The discussion now turns to the second question: how to overcome security challenges. As we have discussed, Pakistan has had its fair share of problems, both internal and external. When Pakistan gained independence, the world was divided into two hostile camps. The eastern camp was led by the USSR and the western camp by the US. Both camps were trying to forge alliances with Pakistan to convert them to their cause.

Pakistan and External Alliances: External Balancing

Pakistan's foreign policy in the early years of its independence was non-aligned. However, it soon became clear that Pakistan needed a major power to provide military and economic assistance and to balance India. Pakistan first turned to the United Kingdom, but the UK was more interested in cultivating relations with India. Pakistan then turned to the Islamic world, but it faced resistance from Egypt.

Finally, Pakistan turned to the United States. The US and Pakistan signed a bilateral defense agreement in 1954, and Pakistan joined the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) in 1955. However, the US did not always live up to its commitments to Pakistan. In 1965 and 1971, the US did not provide Pakistan with the military assistance it needed during wars with India. As a result of these disappointments, Pakistan began to move away from the US in the 1970s. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who became Prime Minister of Pakistan in 1971, scrapped all of Pakistan's defense treaties with the US. Pakistan's efforts to balance India through international alliances have had mixed results. Pakistan has been able to secure some military and economic assistance from its allies, but it has not been able to achieve its ultimate goal of security against India.

The Pakistan-US alliance was an alliance between asymmetrical partners. The US was a major power, while Pakistan was a small state. The US had global interests to contain communism, while Pakistan only wanted to balance India. As a result of these differences, the Pakistan-US alliance has often been strained. The US has not always been willing to provide Pakistan with the assistance it needs, and Pakistan has not always been willing to follow the US lead. Despite these challenges, Pakistan has continued to pursue a strategy of international alliances in an effort to balance India and to ensure its security. The US and Pakistan never had a true alliance because the US looked at Pakistan through the prism of its own global interests, while Pakistan wanted the US to support it against India. The US augmented Indian security by providing weapons in the early 1960s to counter China. As a result, the alliance never really took off.

In 1971, India dismembered Pakistan and created Bangladesh with the active participation of its long-time ally, the USSR. Pakistan was defeated and demoralized, and its external

patron, the US, chose to look the other way. This event showed that the US and Pakistan had different interests and that the alliance was not as strong as it seemed. It also showed that India was willing to use military force to achieve its goals, even against its own neighbors. Mushahid Hussain Syed summed it up appropriately:

> "The Caesarean birth of Bangladesh was midwifed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi with the Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, actively assisting with ruthless surgical precision" (Hussain, 2006).

Pakistan's alliance with China began in the 1970s, even though it had previously been aligned with the United States. This shift was due to a number of factors, including the Sino-Soviet split, the Indian-Pakistani wars, and the US's increasing support for India. Despite its close ties with China, Pakistan has also maintained a strategic relationship with the United States on two occasions. The first was during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s, when Pakistan provided the US with military bases and training facilities for its mujahideen fighters. The second was after the 9/11 attacks, when Pakistan joined the US-led War on Terror.

Pakistan's decision to cooperate with the US on these occasions was motivated by a number of factors, including the desire to counter Soviet and Afghan influence in the region, and to receive US military and economic aid. However, these alliances have also been controversial, as they have put Pakistan at odds with its close ally, China. In recent years, Pakistan has sought to balance its relations with China and the US. It has continued to cooperate with China on economic and infrastructure projects, while also deepening its security ties with the US. This balancing act is likely to continue in the years to come, as Pakistan seeks to maintain its influence in the region and secure its economic and security interests.

The alliance between Pakistan and China is based on a number of factors, including shared strategic interests, economic cooperation, and cultural ties. Pakistan and China share a common interest in countering Indian influence in the region. They also cooperate on security issues, such as counterterrorism and nuclear non-proliferation. China is Pakistan's largest trading partner and has invested billions of dollars in the country's infrastructure and development projects. Pakistan and China have a long history of cultural exchange, dating back to the Silk Road. There are also large Pakistani and Chinese communities living in each other's countries. The alliance between Pakistan and China has been a major factor in the stability and prosperity of both countries. It has also helped to counterbalance Indian influence in the region.

However, the alliance has also been criticized by some for being too close and for giving China too much influence over Pakistan. There have also been concerns about the potential for China to use its economic and military power to pressure Pakistan into making decisions that are not in its best interests. Despite these concerns, the alliance between Pakistan and China is likely to remain strong for many years to come. The two countries share a number of important interests, and they are committed to working together to achieve their common goals.

The key differences between Pakistan's alliance with China and its alliance with the US are as follows: China is Pakistan's closest ally. The two countries share a number of strategic interests, including countering Indian influence in the region. They also have strong economic and cultural ties. The US is Pakistan's largest trading partner. However, the US has also been critical of Pakistan's human rights record and its support for terrorist groups. Pakistan's alliance with China is more formal. The two countries have signed a number of treaties and agreements, including a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. Pakistan's alliance with the US is more informal. There is no formal treaty between the two countries. The future of Pakistan's alliances with China and the US is

uncertain. The two countries are increasingly competing for influence in the region, and this competition could put pressure on Pakistan to choose one side or the other. However, it is also possible that Pakistan will be able to continue to balance its relations with both countries.

Pakistan's Internal Balancing

Pakistan's nuclear weapons program began in the early 1970s, in response to India's nuclear weapons program. The program was initially focused on developing nuclear power for civilian purposes, but it was soon diverted to weapons production. Pakistan decided to develop nuclear weapons mainly to deter Indian aggression. India has a much larger population and military than Pakistan, and Pakistan felt that it needed to develop nuclear weapons to deter India from attacking. Another reason was the desire to achieve parity with India. India was the first country in South Asia to develop nuclear weapons, and Pakistan wanted to match India's nuclear capabilities. Finally, Pakistan also saw nuclear weapons as a way to gain international prestige and influence. By developing nuclear weapons, Pakistan would be able to play a more important role in regional and international affairs.

Pakistan's nuclear weapons program has generated some criticism both domestically and internationally. Some people in Pakistan have argued that the program is a waste of resources and that it could lead to an arms race with India. Others have argued that the program is necessary to deter India and to protect Pakistan's national security. The international community has also been critical of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) prohibits the development of nuclear weapons by non-nuclear weapon states, and Pakistan is not a member of the NPT. The United States has imposed sanctions on Pakistan for its nuclear weapons program.

Despite the controversy, Pakistan has continued to develop its nuclear weapons program. In 1998, Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in response to Indian nuclear tests. Since then, Pakistan has continued to improve its nuclear arsenal. It is possible that Pakistan will continue to develop its nuclear weapons program in order to deter external threats.

So, Pakistan's decision to develop nuclear weapons can be understood as a means of balancing India. Pakistan's pursuit of nuclear weapons dates back to the aftermath of the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War, wherein East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) seceded from Pakistan. This event, coupled with the growing conventional military disparity between India and Pakistan, fueled concerns within Pakistan's security establishment about their ability to defend themselves against potential Indian aggression. India's nuclear weapons program, which became publicly known in 1974 with the "Smiling Buddha" nuclear test, further exacerbated Pakistan's security anxieties. India's nuclear capability created a sense of vulnerability for Pakistan, pushing it towards developing its own nuclear deterrent (Hussain, 2006). Pakistan's nuclear program initially focused on acquiring the necessary technological know-how and materials. This involved clandestine procurement networks and cooperation with other countries. The development of nuclear weapons was kept covert until Pakistan conducted its first nuclear tests in May 1998, shortly after India's nuclear tests.

From Pakistan's perspective, possessing nuclear weapons serves as a deterrent against potential Indian aggression and provides a level of strategic parity. The nuclear capability is seen as a means of ensuring Pakistan's national security and safeguarding its independence. By having a credible nuclear deterrent, Pakistan aims to prevent any conventional military escalation that could threaten its territorial integrity. Pakistan's nuclear doctrine emphasizes a policy of "credible minimum deterrence," whereby it seeks to maintain a sufficient nuclear arsenal to deter any potential aggression without engaging

in an arms race. The focus is on maintaining a secure second-strike capability, which ensures the ability to retaliate even after a preemptive attack. In conclusion, Pakistan's development of nuclear weapons as a means of balancing India is rooted in its perception of security threats and the need to maintain strategic stability in the region.

INDO-PAKISTAN CRISIS AND NUCLEAR DIMENSIONS

In 1998, both countries conducted nuclear tests, which raised the stakes of any future conflict. The first major conflict between India and Pakistan after they became nuclear-armed was the Kargil conflict in 1999. Pakistani forces crossed the Line of Control (LoC), the de facto border between the two countries, and infiltrated into Indian-controlled Kashmir. India responded with a major military operation, and the conflict lasted for several months. It is alleged that Pakistan threatened to use nuclear weapons during the Kargil conflict. This threat is believed to have deterred India from launching a full-scale attack on Pakistan. In December 2001, terrorists attacked the Indian parliament building. India blamed Pakistan for the attacks, and the two countries came close to war (Noor, 2007). However, the nuclear dimension again played a role in deterring India from launching a full-scale attack on Pakistan.

In November 2008, terrorists attacked Mumbai, India's financial capital. India blamed Pakistan for the attacks, and the two countries again came close to war (Javaid & Kammal, 2020). However, Pakistan's threat of early nuclear use deterred India from launching a major military operation. In February 2019, a suicide bomber killed 40 Indian soldiers in the Pulwama district of Indian-controlled Kashmir (Dar & Parliament, 2019). India responded with air strikes against what it said was a terrorist training camp in Pakistan. Pakistan denied that the camp existed, and the two countries exchanged fire across the LoC. However, India was unable to launch a retaliatory attack throughout Pakistan due to Pakistan's ability to launch a similar attack in India. The standoffs between India and Pakistan reveal a clear pattern. Pakistan has successfully used its nuclear arsenal to dissuade India from doing anything reckless. With the growing conventional disparity between India and Pakistan, nuclear weapons have become an effective expedient to counterbalance India's conventional pre-eminence.

However, it is important to note that Pakistan's nuclear weapons do not give it *carte blanche* to cross the border and attack India. While nuclear weapons have indeed given Pakistan deterrence, they do not afford it the ability to freely discipline India. The only way to overcome Pakistan's security anxieties is for India and Pakistan to seek rapprochement and resolve all outstanding issues amicably. This will require both countries to make concessions and take risks. However, it is the only way to ensure long-term peace and stability in the region. Pakistan's efforts to balance internal and external security imperatives in order to deter threats from India and Afghanistan have had mixed results. On the one hand, Pakistan's nuclear weapons program has been a major deterrent against Indian aggression. India has never launched a full-scale war against Pakistan since both countries became nuclear-armed in 1998.

Pakistan's internal security situation has also been a challenge. The country has been plagued by terrorism, sectarian violence, and political instability. This has made it difficult for Pakistan to focus on its external security challenges. Overall, Pakistan's efforts to balance internal and external security imperatives have been somewhat successful. The nuclear weapons program has been a major deterrent against Indian aggression, but cross border terrorism has strained relations with both India and the United States. Pakistan's internal security situation has also been a challenge. However, it is important to note that Pakistan is a complex country with a

long history of conflict. It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of any single policy in addressing all of the security challenges that Pakistan faces.

However some additional factors that will enhance the effectiveness of Pakistan's efforts to balance internal and external security imperatives:

- The level of cooperation between Pakistan's civilian and military leadership.
- The effectiveness of Pakistan's intelligence agencies.
- The strength of Pakistan's economy.
- The level of support for the government among the Pakistani people.
- The regional security environment.

It is also important to remember that the effectiveness of any policy can change over time. What may be effective in one context may not be effective in another. The security situation in South Asia is constantly evolving, and Pakistan will need to continue to adapt its policies in order to address the challenges that it faces. Nevertheless, following are some of the factors that have made it difficult for Pakistan to balance internal and external security imperatives:

- The long-standing rivalry with India. Pakistan and India have fought three wars since their independence in 1947, and there have been numerous other smaller clashes. This rivalry has led to a high level of distrust and suspicion between the two countries, making it difficult for them to cooperate on security issues.
- The porous border with Afghanistan. Pakistan shares a long and porous border with Afghanistan, which has made it difficult to control the flow of people and weapons across the border. This has allowed terrorist groups to operate on both sides of the border, posing a threat to both Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- The internal security situation in Pakistan. Pakistan has been plagued by terrorism, sectarian violence, and political instability. This has made it difficult for the government to focus on its external security challenges.
- The lack of cooperation between civilian and military leadership. Pakistan's civilian and military leadership have often been at odds with each other on security matters. This has made it difficult to develop and implement a coherent security policy.
- The influence of external actors. Both India and the United States have played a significant role in shaping Pakistan's security policies. This has sometimes led to Pakistan being caught in the middle of a regional rivalry, making it difficult to pursue its own security interests.

These are just some of the factors that have made it difficult for Pakistan to balance internal and external security imperatives. The security situation in South Asia is complex and ever-changing, and Pakistan will need to continue to adapt its policies in order to address the challenges that it faces.

Some potential policy options for improving Pakistan's ability to balance internal and external security imperatives include:

- Pakistan should improve relations with India. This would reduce the level of distrust and suspicion between the two countries, making it easier for them to cooperate on security issues.
- Pakistan must also increase security cooperation with Afghanistan. This would help to control the flow of people and weapons across the border, and make it more difficult for terrorist groups to operate in the region.
- Pakistani security policy tailor should address the internal security situation in Pakistan. This would require the government to take steps to reduce

terrorism, sectarian violence, and political instability.
- There is a need to improve cooperation between civilian and military leadership. This would help to ensure that Pakistan has a coherent security policy that addresses both internal and external threats.
- Pakistani leaders also work to reduce the influence of external actors. This would allow Pakistan to pursue its own security interests more effectively.

These are just some of the potential policy options that Pakistan could consider. The best approach will vary depending on the specific circumstances. It is important to note that there is no single solution that will address all of Pakistan's security challenges. The government will need to carefully consider all of its options and develop a strategy that is tailored to its specific needs.

In addition to the policy options mentioned above, Pakistan could also consider the following:

- Investing in education and economic development. This would help to create jobs and opportunities for young people, reducing the appeal of extremism.
- Promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding. This would help to reduce sectarian tensions and build bridges between different communities.
- Strengthening the rule of law and human rights. This would create a more just and equitable society, making it less attractive to extremists.
- Promoting good governance and transparency. This would help to build trust between the government and the people, making it easier to mobilize support for security efforts.

These are just some of the long-term measures that Pakistan could take to improve its security situation. It is important to remember that there is no quick fix, and that it will take time and effort to address the challenges that Pakistan faces.

CONCLUSION

Pakistan is a country with a complex security situation. It faces both internal and external threats, and has had mixed success in balancing these imperatives. The factors that have made it difficult for Pakistan to balance these imperatives include the long-standing rivalry with India, the porous border with Afghanistan, the internal security situation in Pakistan, the lack of cooperation between civilian and military leadership, and the influence of external actors. There are a number of potential policy options that Pakistan could consider to improve its ability to balance internal and external security imperatives. These include improving relations with India, increasing security cooperation with Afghanistan, addressing the internal security situation in Pakistan, improving cooperation between civilian and military leadership, and reducing the influence of external actors. In addition to these policy options, Pakistan could also consider taking long-term measures such as investing in education and economic development, promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding, strengthening the rule of law and human rights, and promoting good governance and transparency.

It is important to note that there is no single solution that will address all of Pakistan's security challenges. The government will need to carefully consider all of its options and develop a strategy that is tailored to its specific needs. It will also need to take a long-term view and be prepared to invest in the necessary resources and reforms. The security situation in South Asia is complex and ever-changing, and Pakistan will need to continue to adapt its policies in order to address the challenges that it faces. However, by taking the necessary steps, Pakistan can improve its ability to balance

internal and external security imperatives and create a more secure future for its citizens.

Pakistan will also need to strike a balance between major powers. Pakistan's recent thaw in bilateral ties with Russia illustrates the flexibility on part of the former. During the Cold War, Pakistan's alignment with the US prevented any meaningful relationship with the Russians. Russia was India's main supplier of the weapons. But in post 9/11, 2001 era, Indo-US relations have seen an upward surge and this strategic shift has provided space both to Pakistan and Russia to reconsider their options. There is an increasing consonance in the interests of both Pakistan and Russia. This includes a lasting peace in Afghanistan, stability of CARs and taking advantage of the opportunities presented by CPEC.

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