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Dangers of Pakistan's New Comprehensive Security Framework

News:

A few weeks ago, Pakistani Prime Minister, Imran Khan at the Islamabad Security Dialogue: Together for Ideas 2021 emphasized the need for a new security paradigm known as the comprehensive security framework. He said, "People think that if we only strengthen the armed and the security forces, it would be sufficient for national security. National Security today includes many aspects that have been ignored in previous decades, including climate security, food security and economic prosperity". [1]

Comment:

Khan was joined by Bajwa who spoke about the need to broaden the concept of national security into "providing conducive environment in which aspirations of human security, national progress and development could be realized". [2] The departure from state-centered traditional security to encompass non-traditional security is an effort by Bajwa-Khan to reframe Pakistan's national security based on geo-economics instead of geo-politics.

During the Cold War, traditional security—where the monopoly of state power underpinned by military force provided internal and external security—influenced relations between states. The chief concern of traditional security is defence and deterrence, and to redistribute power amongst states to achieve balance (peace) and minimize war. Another variation is for the state to maximize enough power to dominate the international system and overcome vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the West's understanding of traditional security is derived from the Westphalian model of the 17th century and nationalism of the 19th century. The security of the state is contingent on military power that extends to the fixed borders of the state. Peace is attained through the balance of power system and the international order is pluralistic.

The Islamic concept of security differs from the Western idea of traditional security. In Islam, security is about safeguarding the supremacy of Sharia within the borders of the Islamic state, and externally between the Islamic state and non-Muslim states. Security at all times must be in the hands of the Muslims. Domestically, security entails protection of rights for all citizens—irrespective of Muslim and non-Muslim. As the borders of the state are not fixed, the security continuously adapts to ensure supremacy of Sharia. Externally, security is about enablement of Islamic expansion through invitation and jihad. The Islamic world order is not pluralistic nor does it deploy the balance of power system to accomplish peace. In Islam, the world is divided in Dar Islam and Dar Harb. Peace is achieved via submission to Sharia or through the enforcement of treaties governed by Sharia rules with non-Muslim states.

The Messenger of Allah (saw) established the first Islamic State in Madina—where the security guaranteed the implementation of sharia, even when the borders changed. The Messenger of Allah (saw) made sure that security was sufficient to execute Islamic rules and protect the rights of citizens with the conquests of Khaybar and Mecca, and also with treaties concluded amongst Arab tribes living in close proximity to the Roman Empire. Abu Bakr and Omar (may Allah be pleased with them) did not strike deals with Romans and Persians to achieve balance in the region. On the contrary, the nascent Islamic state in Madina fought the two great powers simultaneously to ensure primacy of the Islamic world order. The Khalifahs who proceeded the Messenger of Allah (saw) followed his Sunnah regarding security.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Western scholarship questioned the merits of state centric security and instead, advocated human security supported by cooperation as a means of organizing relations between states. In 1994, the UN declared two main pillars of human security: freedom from fear and freedom from want. [3] Freedom from fear is primarily focused on the prevention of violence and more recently has sought to puncture state sovereignty to protect civilians. This has spawned the concept of humanitarian intervention and responsibility to protect (R2P). Freedom from want is about providing accessibility to amenities that facilitate the preservation of life such as education and healthcare. Additionally, the UN

stipulated several important components of human security, which include economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. [4]

In reality human security (non-traditional security) is not universal as espoused by its adherents. It is based on Western Liberalism and promotes secular values. Bajwa-Khan wants to broaden the country's national security to include human security which will make liberal solutions and Western values the prominent aspect of Pakistan's comprehensive security framework. For instance, economic security places great emphasis on neoliberal policies enshrined by the Washington Consensus. America and India will use these policies to pry open the Pakistani economy through the pretext of regional integration.

In Islam there is no concept of human security predicated on liberalism. Islam secures the human life, mind, human dignity, private property, religion, and race for its citizens. The Islamic sharia is more than sufficient to guarantee rights for all humankind, regardless of place and time. For example, Pakistan's inclusion of food security as part of the comprehensive security framework is intended to alleviate food scarcity. However, this is a self-inflicted wound. In the past, Pakistan has exported staple foods to earn foreign exchange to service external debt. This is forbidden by Islam. Additionally, Pakistan possesses millions of hectares of uncultivated agricultural land belonging to landlords. Under Islam, uncultivated agricultural should be seized by the state to feed Pakistan's growing population.

Likewise, Bajwa-Khan wants to include economic security as part of the comprehensive security framework. This means transforming Pakistan into an economic hub and integrating the neighbourhood through neoliberal economic policies. Such policies create interdependencies, erode economic sovereignty, and are advantageous to powerful economies. Germany greatly benefits from the EU, while peripheral countries like Portugal, Greece, Italy and Spain continue to suffer economically. Meanwhile, America and Europe benefit the most from globalization, which comes at the expense of the third world. Pakistan's attempts to execute CPEC projects has clearly advanced China's economy. If Pakistan was to become a regional hub, India will benefit the most. Under Islam, the economy is secured by accelerating industrialization on a war footing to accomplish self-sufficiency and avoid dependency on a country that can become the enemy in the future. The Covid-19 crisis aptly illustrates this point—countries are decoupling their supply chains to move them onshore thereby securing self-sufficiency.

Pakistan's strategic community must oppose the new security paradigm for the country's national security. The strategic community must work to expose the flaws in Bajwa-Khan's plans and ensure that Pakistan's national security is in harmony with Islam that safeguards the sovereignty of the Ummah.

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