

Pakistan's Threat Perception from a Traditional Security Perspective

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Abstract

Pakistan's conventional security challenges have a significant impact on both worldwide and regional security. The conventional security risks to nations outside of Pakistan are summed up in this article. Terrorism is one of the main security risks since Pakistan has been charged with harboring various terrorist organizations in charge of high-profile assaults on nearby nations like India and Afghanistan. The rapid spread of nuclear technology poses a significant hazard as well. Pakistan is suspected of sharing nuclear technology with other nations outside of international law and of possessing nuclear weapons. Additionally, the state of Pakistan's internal security and the ongoing conflict with India over the disputed region of Kashmir are seen as regionally significant conventional security threats. The article's conclusion urges collaboration across nations to solve these security challenges and guarantee the security and safety of people everywhere.

Keywords: Traditional security, Terrorism, Nuclear program, Political Instability, Regional Cooperation, Soviet Assault, Kashmir Dispute, Taliban, CPEC

Introduction

Conventional security, usually referred to as conventional security, is the deployment of armed troops and armaments to safeguard a nation's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Since the nation's founding in 1947, Pakistan has placed a high priority on traditional security. Traditional security challenges to Pakistan have come from both domestic and external sources, which have influenced its security tactics and military plans. Technology improvements have made combat more information- and digital-based. The development of cyber operations has made it possible to face challenges from far-off nations as well as from nearby ones. States with sophisticated cyber security face several risks from their dependence on technology. Pakistan is not as technologically developed as the first-world nations, yet despite this, it is gradually becoming more and more digital. Additional regional forces now pose a threat to Pakistan's security due to the evolution of weapon systems' greater destructive power and range. With the use of the created weapons, a foe might endanger Pakistan's security without even entering its borders. Pakistan's relationship with India is one of the most significant historic security risks to that country. Pakistan and India have had tense ties since their separation from Britain in 1947 as a

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result of three major wars, continuous border conflicts, and a protracted dispute over the Kashmir region. As a result of persistent hostilities between the two nations, which date back to the partition of India, there has been a sizable military buildup on both sides of the border.

Pakistan confronts serious domestic security issues connected to rebellion and terrorism in addition to tensions with India. Militant organizations like the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other extremist organizations have plagued the nation and launched countless attacks on both civilian and military targets. The organization is behind several well-known incidents, such as the 2008 Mumbai attack and the 2014 Peshawar school massacre. The historical disparity between the two is one of the key causes of this. India has a vast number of conventional forces and weaponry, as well as a security budget that is around five times that of Pakistan. Due to this mismatch and India's expanding prosperity, Pakistan is under a lot of pressure to appear hostile and dangerous. By proposing ideas like the "Cold Start Doctrine" and "Limited War under Nuclear Alteration" against Pakistan, India has also taken part in a game of ideological sleight-of-hand. In reaction to India's Cold Start policy, which was directed towards Pakistan, Pakistan initially proposed a nuclear deterrence regime against India but then revised its position to credible minimum deterrence. Along with holding such views, the Indian government has also set aside \$120 billion for defense spending to increase its arsenal and solidify the country's longstanding partnership with Pakistan. Until it can compete with Indian traditional forces, Pakistan needs to gain some advantage over them.

Pakistan has made significant investments in its conventional military capabilities to address these security problems. The nation has a sizable military budget and has invested in cutting-edge fighter planes, tanks, and missiles. With businesses like Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF) and Heavy Industries Taxila (HIT) producing weapons and equipment, Pakistan has also grown its own domestic defense industry. Furthermore, a large number of nations, notably China, the United States, and Saudi Arabia provide military assistance and support to Pakistan. Even though Pakistan's investments in conventional security have reduced some of the threats it faces, they have also come at a high cost. Military expenditure has put a burden on the nation's economy and prevented investment in other fields like education and healthcare.

Furthermore, Pakistan frequently neglects non-traditional security issues like climate change and cyber threats, which present serious threats to the security and stability of the nation, in preference for concentrating on traditional security issues. Pakistan has made an effort in recent years to change its emphasis from traditional security to a more all-encompassing strategy that handles a wider range of security issues. The nation has made measures to strengthen border control and counterterrorism activities and has also worked to foster more regional security cooperation. Furthermore, Pakistan has taken action to address these issues through programs like the Green Pakistan Program after realizing the significance of unconventional security challenges like pandemics and climate change. The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive overview of these conventional threats or traditional security threats out of

Pakistan, their root causes, and their impact on Pakistan's economy, society, and political stability.

Literature Review

In order to protect people and property from theft, damage, and loss, conventional security refers to the use of conventional security measures, including security guards, surveillance cameras, access control systems, and alarms (Cho, 2009). Governmental buildings, military installations, commercial buildings, and private assets are typically protected by it. This type of security frequently focuses on protecting physical locations, such as structures, facilities, and infrastructure. To achieve its objectives, traditional security typically incorporates people, technology, and procedures. It is based on threat reduction, detection, and reaction. A proactive rather than reactive security strategy is necessary for comprehensive security, and organizations must regularly review and upgrade their security protocols to remain ahead of new threats. This strategy also needs cooperation and coordination from a variety of stakeholders and departments, including security staff, IT teams, HR, legal, and senior management (Cho, 2009).

Traditional security issues that Pakistan has had to deal with throughout its history include threats from both local and foreign terrorists, border conflicts, and political instability (Latif & Khan, 2011). Several significant historical occurrences have influenced Pakistan's security environment. In addition to creating Pakistan and India as independent nations, the partition of India resulted in significant bloodshed and mass population relocation, especially in the northern parts of the country (Bharadwaj & Mirza, 2016). As a result, the developing nation faced security issues as it attempted to control the refugee crisis and uphold law and order. Because both India and Pakistan claim the region as their own, the Kashmir dispute has long been a source of hostility between the two countries. Multiple wars and border clashes have resulted from the conflict, which has also fueled the expansion of militant groups in the area (Iqbal & Hussain, 2018). By giving Afghan militants and refugees sanctuary and support, Pakistan played a crucial part in aiding the Afghan struggle against Soviet rule (Weinbaum, 1991).

However, the conflict also gave rise to extremist organizations in the area, which later turned their attention to the state of Pakistan (Hilali, 2002). With terrorist organizations attacking the government and citizens, domestic terrorism has significantly increased as a result of Pakistan's involvement as a vital partner in the US-led war on terror. Despite the government's efforts, which have included military operations and anti-terror laws, the country continues to face serious challenges from the threat of terrorism. Throughout its history, Pakistan has seen a number of instances of political instability, including military takeovers and ineffective civilian administrations (Memon, Memon, Shaikh, & Memon, 2011). This has made it challenging to solve long-term security issues and has resulted in a lack of continuity and consistency in security policies and activities (Staniland, 2008). As a whole these historical occurrences have influenced Pakistan's complex and varied security environment, which is characterized by a variety of conventional security issues.

The literature review suggested that traditional security issues have been experienced by Pakistan outside of its borders. An important security problem for Pakistan has been the ongoing disagreement between India and Pakistan over the disputed region of Kashmir. The two nations engaged in countless wars and clashes as a result of this struggle (Swami, 2006). Prior studies have concentrated on the origins, effects, and methods for resolving conflict. Due to the presence of terrorists and rebels on both sides of the border, the area between Afghanistan and Pakistan has been a significant source of instability for both nations (Cheema, 1983). Previous studies have concentrated on the factors that contribute to instability, how war affects regional security, and possible solutions. The Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and ISIS are just a few of the terrorist organizations that have targeted Pakistan in their attacks. Previous studies (Ur Rehman & Economics, 2015) have looked at the origins, effects, and prevention measures of terrorism in Pakistan.

Given Pakistan's history of political instability and terrorist activity, the existence of nuclear weapons has raised concerns among the international community (Chakma, 2009). Previous studies (Krepon & Asia, 2012) have looked at how Pakistan's nuclear weapons program may affect national security as well as deterrent measures. Pakistan's reliance on the Indus River, which has its source in India, has been a significant cause of hostility between the two nations. Previous studies (Wirsing & Jasparro, 2006) have looked at the reasons why there are water conflicts, how such conflicts affect regional security and possible solutions. Millions of migrants have sought asylum in Pakistan, particularly from nearby Afghanistan (Borthakur, 2017). As some of the refugees may be involved in terrorist activities, the influx of refugees has put a strain on Pakistan's resources and caused security concerns. Due to Pakistan's location along the route of the drug trade, drug-related crime and violence have increased. Additionally, the nation is a significant producer of opium and heroin.

Threats from Afghanistan

The Taliban insurgency, the Afghan government, several regional and international forces, and bordering nations like Pakistan are all parties to the ongoing struggle in Afghanistan. The Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, which launched a decade-long war and ensuing political and social unrest in the nation, is seen as the origin of the conflict. Since the beginning of the Afghan conflict, Pakistan has taken part in various ways. Pakistan played a significant role in the Afghan resistance against Soviet occupation in the 1980s by helping to arm, train, and finance the Mujahedeen fighters. But with the Soviet Union's exit in 1989, Afghanistan descended into a civil war that lasted until the Taliban took over in 1996. One of the three nations, Pakistan, recognized the Taliban administration and gave it a lot of assistance, including military assistance and training. Pakistani intelligence agencies assisted several Taliban commanders (Akhtar, 2008) who received their education there. Taliban members and other militants working in Afghanistan were also given safe havens in Pakistan. Following the 9/11 attacks in America, a coalition led by the US invaded Afghanistan and toppled the Taliban

regime. Since then, the Taliban have begun a new insurgency against the government of Afghanistan that the US supports as well as foreign armies.

Although it has refuted these accusations, Pakistan has been accused of supporting the Taliban insurgency and giving it safe havens. These persistent conflicts have strained ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Both nations have accused one another of backing terrorist organizations and compromising one another's security. Cross-border terrorism is still a major source of friction between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Pakistan accuses Afghanistan of harboring militants who carry out attacks on Pakistani territory, while Afghanistan accuses Pakistan of harboring the Taliban and other extremists. The violence in Afghanistan shows no indication of ending despite several peace attempts and dialogues over the years, and Pakistan's involvement in the fight continues to be a sensitive matter. The Afghan conflict has had a considerable influence on regional stability and security, notably ties between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Enhancing regional security and stability requires peaceful dispute settlement.

For many years, militant organizations operating in Afghanistan have been the major source of cross-border assaults and terrorist actions in Pakistan. Numerous thousands of lives were lost as a consequence of these attacks, and significant infrastructural and property damage was also caused. The Taliban, who are actively engaged in an ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, are a significant contributor to cross-border assaults in Pakistan. The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a terrorist organization that has been implicated in a number of incidents in Pakistan, has been suspected of receiving backing from the Taliban. Al-Qaeda and other organizations have also launched attacks in Pakistan, frequently focusing on civilians, security personnel, and religious minorities. Due to the unsecured border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as the presence of local sympathizers and facilitators, these groups have been able to operate in the area. Pakistan has undertaken several counterterrorism measures, including military operations against militant organizations, a border fence, and improved intelligence sharing with Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the situation is still difficult, and more must be done to deal with the root causes of militancy and extremism in the area.

India: The Traditional Foe

Since the partition of India in 1947, there has been a long and convoluted history of hostility between India and Pakistan. Bangladesh was created afterward. Many people were killed and millions were displaced as a result of the communal riots and widespread violence that occurred after the partition. Since then, there have been several border clashes and military standoffs, three major wars (1947–1948, 1965, and 1971), and other conflicts. The territorial dispute over the Kashmir area, which both nations claim, is one of the primary causes of animosity between the two nations. Both India and Pakistan continue to have sizable military forces stationed in the area despite having fought two wars over Kashmir (in 1947–1948 and 1965). Differences in religion (India is largely Hindu, whereas Pakistan is predominantly Muslim), political and economic rivalry, and mistrust and suspicion resulting from the bloodshed and agony of Partition

are further elements that contribute to the rivalry. The legacy is present. Despite sporadic attempts at rapprochement, such as the Lahore Declaration of 1999 and the Agra Summit of 2001, tension and hostility still exist between India and Pakistan. Long-term peace is thwarted by persistent problems, including terrorism, cross-border shooting, and the disputed Kashmir area. These problems feed animosity. When India and Pakistan obtained independence from British control in 1947 and the princely state of Kashmir was given the choice to join either country, the Kashmir conflict was first raised. After being attacked by terrorists with support from Pakistan, Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir finally acceded to India despite his original desire to maintain his independence. Since then, Kashmir has been claimed by both India and Pakistan, each of which is in charge of a distinct region. Territory Gilgit-Baltistan, which Pakistan calls "Azad Jammu and Kashmir," is administered by Pakistan, whereas the bulk of the territory is administered by India as the core part of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Kashmir conflict is significant for a number of reasons. It is first and foremost responsible for multiple wars between India and Pakistan, as well as innumerable incidents of militancy and cross-border violence. Additionally, the area has contributed to unrest and conflict in the larger South Asian region. Second, Kashmir is crucial from a geopolitical standpoint because it connects South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. It is also abundant in natural resources, such as lumber, minerals, and water. Third, the Kashmir conflict has a significant impact on the alliance between India and Pakistan as well as the stability and security of the surrounding area. The Kashmir dispute resolution would require a fundamental change in both nations' political and strategic thinking and might have far-reaching effects on the rest of South Asia.

Pakistan and India are both nuclear-armed powers; Pakistan's first nuclear test took place in 1998, while India's first nuclear test was performed in 1974. Moreover, there is a sizable arsenal of nuclear weapons. Regional security has been significantly impacted by both nations' nuclear arsenals. Given the long-standing tensions and conflicts between India and Pakistan, having nuclear weapons increases the possibility of a nuclear conflict between the two nations. A nuclear war between India and Pakistan would be catastrophic for both nations as well as for the rest of South Asia and beyond. The possession of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan also affects worldwide security, particularly in light of non-proliferation initiatives and the international nuclear order. Concerns regarding the possibility of nuclear proliferation and the transfer of nuclear weapons to other nations or non-state actors have been raised (Kapur, 2008) by both countries' holding of nuclear weapons, particularly in a volatile region like South Asia.

The Concerns of China

In Pakistan, a number of infrastructure and economic projects are now being carried out as part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The project was started in 2013 as a part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The construction of a network of roads, railroads, and pipelines as part of CPEC would link the port of Gwadar in southwest Pakistan with Xinjiang in northwest China. Along the route, energy projects and industrial zones will also be developed

(Kanwal et al., 2019). The significance of CPEC lies in its ability to drastically alter Pakistan's economy by expanding access to China's sizable market and enhancing the nation's infrastructure. The project is anticipated to bring major foreign investment and thousands of jobs to Pakistan. As a substitute for using the congested Strait of Malacca to transport oil and other products from the Middle East, CPEC is a significant strategic Endeavour for China. Additionally, the project strengthens China's ties with Pakistan, a significant regional partner. CPEC has been criticized for its potential to raise Pakistan's debt load as well as for its effects on the local economy, the environment, and local residents (Surahio, Gu, Mahesar, & Soomro, 2022). Concerns regarding the project's potential to increase Chinese influence in Pakistan and the region at large have also been voiced.

Concerns have been expressed in numerous nations over China's expanding military footprint in the area. Over the past few decades, China has been modernizing and enhancing its military capabilities (Cordesman & Colley, 2016), raising concerns among its neighbors and the international community. The favoritism shown by China in international conflicts, particularly those involving the South China Sea, is one of the key issues (Schofield & Storey, 2009). Tensions have increased with neighboring claimant nations, including the Philippines, Vietnam, and Taiwan, as a result of China's construction of military bases and manmade islands in the area. Concerns have been expressed concerning China's intentions and capacity to project military might beyond its boundaries as a result. In addition, China is growing its military footprint in other areas of the region, notably the Indian Ocean (Khurana, 2008), where it maintains a naval base in Djibouti and runs naval patrols. Concerns have been expressed concerning China's strategic goals and its capacity to challenge the hegemony of other regional powers like the United States. Additionally, India and other nations in the region are concerned about China's expanding military ties with Pakistan, which include sales of cutting-edge weapons and joint military drills.

There are various possible points of contention in the area between the US and China that may escalate into a bigger confrontation. The US is undertaking Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS) in the South China Sea to contest China's territorial claims, which is one of the key flashpoints of hostility (Kuok, 2016). The likelihood of a military clash has increased as a result of China's response, which includes expanding its military presence and making more strong assertions. Taiwan, which China claims as part of its sovereignty and has vowed to annex with force, presents another potential flashpoint. In the case of an attack that may result in a direct military war with China, the United States has vowed to protect Taiwan and has a long-standing commitment to its security. In addition to this, there are worries about the likelihood of an economic or cyber confrontation between the two nations. Due to allegations that China has stolen intellectual property from American businesses and engaged in cyber espionage, there have been trade tensions between the two countries, and the United States has imposed tariffs on Chinese imports.

Iran: Friend or Foe?

There has been a long history of political, economic, and cultural ties between Pakistan and Iran. Relations between the two nations have existed since the Persian Empire expanded its influence into the Indus Valley in antiquity. Iran was one of the first nations to recognize Pakistan's independence after it was founded in 1947. However, it wasn't until the 1950s that the two nations established official diplomatic ties. Iran was a significant contributor to Pakistan's economic growth in the early years of its existence. Pakistan received financial support from Iran, and the two nations also negotiated a number of economic deals. When Iran and Pakistan signed the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) pact with Turkey in the 1960s, bilateral relations between the two countries took off (Zweiri & Staffell, 2009). The RCD sought to foster economic integration and collaboration among the three nations. Since both nations had a stake in regional security and stability during the 1970s, relations between Iran and Pakistan kept improving. Iran helped persuade the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to support Pakistan's position on the Kashmir dispute by endorsing it. But because of the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, ties between the two nations soured (Alam, 2004). Iran accused Pakistan of aiding its adversary while Pakistan helped Iraq. Pakistan and Iran saw an improvement in their ties throughout the 1990s as both nations expressed worry over the Taliban's growth in Afghanistan. Iran has aided Pakistan in its attempts to contain the Taliban, and the two nations have collaborated economically through the signing of many accords.

In the past, Pakistan has been charged with aiding Iranian extremists, notably those operating in the region of Sistan-Baluchistan. Recent years have seen substantial turmoil in the area, which borders Pakistan, as a result of multiple terrorist strikes against Iranian security personnel. Iran claims that Pakistan supports the terrorists by giving them weapons, training, and safe havens. The charges have been refuted, and Pakistan has stated that it is taking measures to stop cross-border assaults and strengthen border security. To address these worries, efforts (Asim, 2022) have been undertaken to enhance security force collaboration between the two nations in recent years. A memorandum of agreement between the two nations was signed in 2019 to improve security cooperation, including efforts to combat terrorism and stop smuggling and other illegal activities over the border.

Despite these initiatives, there are still issues between the two nations, and occasionally there are border clashes. In order to address border security issues and stop extremist organizations from utilizing their territory as a base of operations, the two nations have emphasized the necessity for increased collaboration. The conflict between Pakistan and Iran might have a variety of effects on regional security. One of the biggest dangers is that it can worsen already ongoing hostilities in nearby nations like Afghanistan and Iraq. Both Pakistan and Iran have a stake in these nations and have contributed to regional efforts to advance security and stability. If tensions between the two nations increase, the war may also worsen, which might have a destabilizing effect on the entire area. Another danger is that it would boost backing for armed opposition on both sides of the border. The Taliban and other extreme groups may be able to exploit the situation and increase their influence in the region if Pakistan and Iran are viewed as being at odds with one

another. This may increase the number of terrorist attacks, cross-border smuggling, and other violent crimes, further destabilizing the area.

Beyond Pakistan's borders, there are numerous, complex security challenges. They necessitate a comprehensive strategy that considers the many characteristics of each situation. Regional security is significantly impacted by Pakistan's traditional safety challenges outside of its boundaries. All nations in the area must work together to address these issues, and there must be international support and collaboration. To reduce Pakistan's conventional security difficulties outside its boundaries, cooperation with its neighbors and the international community is crucial. This calls for a long-term outlook that prioritizes peace, security, and prosperity for all parties, as well as a dedication to communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding.

Conclusion

Pakistan's conventional rivals are its next-door neighbor, India, with whom Pakistan has a long history of disagreements and hostilities. The two nations have engaged in a number of significant wars and smaller skirmishes over a variety of territorial and ideological disputes, including the conflict over the Kashmir area. There are also modest conventional threats to Pakistan from other nearby nations including Afghanistan, Iran, and China. Pakistan has made significant investments in its defense capabilities, including the creation of nuclear weapons and the modernization of its military forces, to counter this danger. Additionally, Pakistan and China have a robust military alliance that benefits Pakistan both militarily and economically. Despite these efforts, Pakistan's conventional threat continues to pose a serious threat to its national security, and the nation is working to improve its defense capabilities in order to keep up its strategic deterrence against potential aggressors. To reduce Pakistan's conventional security difficulties outside its boundaries, cooperation with its neighbors and the international community is crucial. This calls for a long-term outlook that prioritizes peace, security, and prosperity for all parties, as well as a dedication to communication, collaboration, and mutual understanding.

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