

Holistic National Growth and Security

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Historically, it is seen that national growth and development have an inextricable link with national security. Only those nations can protect their liberty and territorial integrity, if they can flex their muscles militarily. This can only be achieved if a nation has a sound industrial base, which itself is intimately connected with a sound economy and national growth or a sound economy only for weapon acquisition. The clear manifestation of this in the present times can be seen with the emergence of China not only as a military power, but also as an economic power. The Belt and Road initiative which spreads over 4 continents and has 138 countries on its orbit has a GDP of 29 trillion US dollars and effects the lives of 4.6 billion people. With the cutting-edge technology in all major areas of S&T, China has already surpassed major developed countries and the economic benefits of this progress are now transcending its borders. This has seen the center of gravity shifting rapidly from West to East.

The spectrum of traditional threats to regional and global peace, stability and security is indeed very broad and has diversified faster than expected. Out of these interstate and intrastate armed conflicts and the likely use of weapons of mass destruction, clearly stand out as major dangers to peace and dominate all other security concerns. Additional major challenges and threats are posed by proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear and conventional arms race in some parts of the world, terrorism and the consequences of failed or failing state due to economic challenges.

The major flash points which pose grave challenges to peace are Sudan, Mali and Somalia in Africa, Afghanistan, Kashmir and Koreas in Asia Pacific region, Iran Iraq, Israel, Syria, Yemen, Kurdistan and Lebanon in the Middle East and Near East Asia and disputes in the South China

Sea. Afghanistan where a coalition of 43 countries have been fighting a war for over a decade, with major budgetary outlays of USA and European countries are finally realizing that the solution only lies in negotiated settlement.

The issues of conflict, war and peace hinges on how nations define and protect their economic interests. Nontraditional security challenges like socio economic risks caused by economic uncertainties and political factors also pose serious challenges to regional and global security. Other issues like global financial instability especially in the recent times due to pandemic have increased the risks manifold. It has resulted in resource scarcity and inability of global governance institutions to meet the challenges of large-scale youth unemployment and industrial shutdown. The knee jerk reactions of opening the economy without taking the rising number of Covid cases even in the most developed countries have worsened the situation further.

US efforts to rebalance Asia in order to contain or counter China economic rise has exacerbated the situation further. The situation demands global formulas and solutions not only to meet challenges of pandemic but also the worsening economic situation in the developing countries already badly ridden by the mounting debts and payments. This paradigm of national security and economic interdependence therefore needs to be redefined through requisite strategic measures and economic policies. The major global transformations being witnessed in the recent phase of the fourth industrial revolution, this nexus has become even more pronounced. With increased connectivity and global interdependence, economic growth has become a major determinant of national security and so has national development. Trade and investment, capability of human resource, effective

governance, efficient use of natural and financial resources, secure social environment have acquired critical importance. Along with diplomatic maneuvers the inherent strength of the nation lends credible role in shaping global agenda. It also creates space for promoting national interests through cooperation rather than competition. The Belt and Road Initiative for example is a project that encompasses socio-economic uplift of various regions through growth and development. The infrastructure development and the setting up of financial institutions are aimed at creating systematic and uninterrupted flow of supply chain for unhindered trade. National consensus on policies and the constructive engagement of people give added boost to national growth and security as a whole. The economic sanctions and the threat to use force is another risk factor which affects the economy of various countries. Israel and US threat to use force and to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and but also economic sanctions US and other western sanctions pose a greater risk not only to Persian Gulf but also to Middle East and South Asia. US knows that Iran Pakistan gas pipeline is vital for energy needs of Pakistan yet opposes this project because of Iranian sanctions. They ignore the fact that energy shortages not only can destabilize Pakistan but can also have disastrous effect on the economy of Afghanistan. Similarly, these sanctions have destroyed the trade between Iran and Afghanistan and is a major cause of devaluation of Iran and Afghan currency.

With the potential for increased proliferation and growing concerns about nuclear security, risks are growing that future war in South Asia and Middle East would risk inclusion of nuclear deterrent. The Middle East and South Asia are two regions likely to trigger broader instability. An increasing multi polar Asia lacking in well anchored economic and regional security framework could constitute one

of the largest global threats. An unstable Asia would cause large scale damage to the global economy. World leaders therefore must be aware of general notions and percepts of peace and imperatives of intervention by the international community as well as the UN to meet these security and economic challenge and avert all threats to peace. This can only be achieved through a holistic approach to national growth and security that quintessentially take multiple factors and determinants in view.

Author Biography



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Muhammad Tahir
Graduated from Pakistan Military Academy Kakul in 1971. He followed the Bachelor of Arts (Honors) from Government College Lahore and Master of Arts (English Literature) from Punjab University in 1976. He Holds the degrees of BSc (War Studies) from Balochistan University Quetta, MSc (War Studies) from University of Cairo Egypt and MSc (Defense and Strategic Studies) from Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. He has served in Pakistan Army for 35 years. Maj Gen (RETD) Muhammad Tahir was awarded Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military) for meritorious services.