
SUMMARY of the Article “Securing borders,” Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, February 4th, 2024

Pakistan faces security challenges on both its eastern and western borders. The article highlights India’s aggressive posture, accusing it of deploying assassins to eliminate so-called anti-India elements on foreign soil, including in Pakistan. The author urges both countries to cooperate against transnational terrorism instead of engaging in confrontation. On the western front, cross-border terrorism involving Iran and Pakistan is discussed, emphasizing the need to address the root causes to prevent recurring incidents. The resurgence of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) following the Taliban’s takeover in Afghanistan is examined, with a call for Islamabad to engage with Kabul to curb TTP activities. The article also touches upon security concerns related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and calls for an in-depth review of Pakistan’s security and foreign policies, urging the upcoming government to pursue a new agenda focused on peace with neighbors and relevant global powers.

Easy/Short SUMMARY:

The article discusses security challenges on Pakistan’s eastern and western borders, citing India’s aggressive actions, cross-border terrorism with Iran, and the resurgence of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). It emphasizes the need for cooperation against terrorism, a review of security and foreign policies, and a new agenda for peace under the upcoming government.

SOLUTIONS to Addressing Cross-Border

Terrorism:

1. Cooperate with neighbouring states on counterterrorism efforts.
2. Engage in diplomatic dialogue with Iran to address concerns and prevent cross-border incidents.
3. Work closely with Afghanistan to curb the resurgence of the TTP and promote regional stability.

Internal Measures Against Militancy:

1. Politically address internal militant, extremist, sectarian, and sub-nationalist forces.
2. Consider kinetic measures if required to ensure internal security.

Diplomatic Engagement:

1. Engage diplomatically with all neighbours to build mutual stakes in Pakistan's stability.

Review of Security and Foreign Policies:

1. Conduct an in-depth review of existing security and foreign policies.
2. Institute a mechanism to undertake the review, involving consultations with think tanks, academia, and intelligentsia.

Addressing External Threats:

1. Strengthen diplomatic relations with neighboring countries to address concerns regarding cross-border terrorism and state-sponsored actions.
2. Engage in dialogue and cooperation with India to address mutual security concerns and promote regional stability.
3. Enhance intelligence-sharing mechanisms with neighboring countries to counter transnational terrorist activities effectively.

Dealing with Internal Security Challenges:

1. Implement a comprehensive strategy to address militant, extremist, sectarian, and sub-nationalist forces within Pakistan through political means.
2. Strengthen law enforcement agencies and security measures to combat

internal security threats effectively.

3. Promote dialogue and reconciliation with marginalized groups to address their grievances and prevent radicalization.

Safeguarding Critical Infrastructure Projects:

1. Allocate sufficient resources and manpower to ensure the security of critical infrastructure projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
2. Collaborate with international partners, particularly China, to enhance security measures and intelligence-sharing for CPEC projects.
3. Implement stringent security protocols and surveillance systems to deter terrorist attacks on CPEC installations and Chinese nationals.

Diplomatic Engagement and Conflict Resolution:

1. Pursue a proactive diplomatic approach to resolve border disputes and conflicts with neighboring countries peacefully.
2. Foster dialogue and confidence-building measures to reduce tensions and promote regional cooperation on security issues.
3. Advocate for international support and mediation to address security challenges in the region and facilitate conflict resolution efforts.

IMPORTANT Facts and Figures Given in the Article:

- India accused of deploying assassins on foreign lands, including Pakistan.
- Cross-border terrorism involving Iran and Pakistan discussed.
- Resurgence of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) following the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan.
- Security concerns related to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) mentioned.
- Call for an in-depth review of Pakistan's security and foreign policies.
- National conference in Islamabad for preparing a strategy manifesto for the new government.

MCQs from the Article:

1. What is the primary focus of the article?

- A. Economic challenges in Pakistan
- B. Security challenges on Pakistan's borders
- C. Political developments in Afghanistan
- D. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects

2. Which country is accused of deploying assassins on foreign lands, according to the article?

- A. Afghanistan
- B. India
- C. Iran
- D. China

3. What is emphasized as a crucial step for achieving regional peace?

- A. Military confrontation
- B. Economic sanctions
- C. Cooperation against transnational terrorism
- D. Isolation from global powers

4. What is the suggested approach for addressing internal militancy?

- A. Military intervention
- B. Political measures followed by kinetic actions if required
- C. Diplomatic isolation
- D. Economic sanctions

5. What is the author's recommendation for the upcoming government?

- A. Maintain the status quo in policies



- B. Pursue aggressive military strategies
- C. Conduct an in-depth review of security and foreign policies
- D. Focus solely on internal issues

VOCABULARY:

1. *Hubris* (noun) (ہیبرس): Excessive pride or self-confidence.
2. *Prickly* (adjective) (پریکلی): Easily irritated or annoyed.
3. *Assassins* (noun) (اساسینس): People who murder others for political reasons.
4. *Hubris* (noun) (ہیبرس): Excessive pride or self-confidence.
5. *Confrontation* (noun) (کنفرنٹیشن): A hostile or argumentative situation or meeting between opposing parties.
6. *Diplomacy* (noun) (ڈپلومسی): The profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations.
7. *Resurgence* (noun) (ریسرجنس): An increase or revival after a period of little activity or popularity.
8. *Curb* (verb) (کرب): Restrain or keep in check.
9. *Kinetic* (adjective) (کینٹیک): Relating to or resulting from motion.
10. *Stakes* (noun) (سٹیکس): Interests or concerns, especially in financial matters.
11. *Detractors* (noun) (ڈیٹراکٹرس): People who criticize or attack someone or something.
12. *Constituted* (verb) (کنسٹیٹیوٹڈ): Established or formally put into place.
13. *Steadfast* (adjective) (سٹیڈفاسٹ): Resolutely or dutifully firm and unwavering.
14. *Manifesto* (noun) (منیفیسٹو): A public declaration of policy and aims, especially one issued before an election by a political party or candidate.
15. *Quaid* (noun) (کوائڈ): Referring to Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan.

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Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

PAKISTAN'S national security has lately been under threat on its eastern as well as western borders. On the eastern frontier, India's attitude towards Pakistan has unfortunately hit a new low. The Modi regime is constantly innovating prickly ways to assert its growing hubris in the neighbourhood and beyond. Its latest practice is to deploy assassins on foreign lands to kill so-called anti-India elements. The evidence shows that Indian intelligence operatives managed to have not only Mohammad Riaz and Shahid Latif assassinated on Pakistani soil, but many more Pakistani citizens too, for which investigations are underway. This

is in line with what Indian operatives did in Canada and the US when they targeted Sikhs calling for an independent state of Khalistan.

Using assassins to kill on foreign soil is a variant of the earlier policy of sending in Indian operatives, such as Kulbhushan Jadhav, who would enter Pakistan under fake identities to destabilise the country. However, the cause of regional peace will not be served if India continues to commit state terrorism while accusing Pakistan of cross-border terrorism. Both countries would do well to eliminate transnational terrorism through cooperation rather than confrontation.

Pakistan's western frontiers are also in the grip of cross-border terrorism. Last month, Iran attacked a target inside Pakistan, ostensibly to eliminate an alleged hideout of Jaish al-Adl, an anti-Iran Sunni militant group active in Sistan-Baluchestan. Pakistan responded with a strike against Baloch terrorist elements in the border town of Saravan. Both governments swiftly resolved the matter through diplomacy. But soon after, nine Pakistanis were murdered in Saravan. The Iranian foreign minister has since visited Pakistan to calm tensions. Ultimately, the root cause, which is the alleged presence of terrorist elements on both sides of the border, would need to be addressed to avert the recurrence of such incidents.

Ever since the Taliban came to power in Kabul in 2021, the TTP has been reinvigorated. The group had been beaten in operations in Swat, South Waziristan and North Waziristan as well as the countrywide intelligence-based operation Raddul Fasaad. The TTP's resurgence resulted from the Afghan Taliban rulers' release of TTP prisoners in the name of facilitating talks with Pakistan. A tentative ceasefire was agreed to, leading to senior TTP leaders being freed from prisons in Pakistan and the resettlement of hundreds of TTP fighters in the country.

A detailed review is needed of our security and foreign policies.

Instead of appreciating the gesture, the TTP used the opportunity to regroup and resume its attacks against targets in Pakistan, particularly the security forces. Despite this setback, Islamabad has, prudently, maintained its contacts with Kabul at multiple levels to stress that Afghanistan's strategic interests would be better served if Kabul restricted the space given to the TTP for cross-border terrorism, and reoriented its policies to focus on peace and development.

Ever since the launch of CPEC in 2015, Pakistan's detractors have tried to carry out acts of terrorism against Chinese nationals working on CPEC projects here. At the request of China, Pakistan's steadfast friend, the government constituted a strong force to safeguard CPEC projects and Chinese nationals. This has improved the security situation, although occasional terrorist attacks still occur.

All this requires an in-depth review of our security and foreign policies. An opportunity will arise when a new government is elected this month. After holding consultations with think tanks, academia, and intelligentsia, the elected government must institute a mechanism to undertake such a review on a new agenda of peace that should be pursued with not only our neighbours but also other powers of relevance to Pakistan.

Recently, a national conference was convened in Islamabad by the Sanober Institute in collaboration with two partners from academia and the think tank community to prepare a strategy manifesto for the new government with recommendations for Pakistan's security and foreign policies. Similar efforts are currently underway in several universities and think tanks, born of a desire to see our country achieve the glory that Pakistan's founder had envisioned for it.

Based on the Quaid's advice, and the imperative to stabilise its borders, Pakistan must address the internal and external reasons of militancy. Internally, militant, extremist, sectarian and sub-nationalist forces need to be dealt with politically first, and kinetically later if required. Externally, we should engage with all neighbours such that it builds their stakes in Pakistan's stability. In the medium to long term, this approach can ensure border stability and progress.

The writer is a former foreign secretary of Pakistan and chairman Sanober Institute.

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