**Domestic Politics Versus State Security (Part-III)**

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In my last week’s article “Domestic Politics versus State Security (Part-II)” published in Daily Times on June 12, 2023, I put forward certain suggestions to redress the declining state of human security under three broad elements: Personal, Political, and Community. Several suggestions have been received from our readers, however, one suggestion forwarded by Mr Mukhtar Butt certainly deserves mention. Butt is of the opinion that in the recent past, the Constitution has been flouted frequently, and that has been a cause of serious concern for the majority of the population, which is disciplined and patriotic.

In Part III, I will endeavour to put forward certain suggestions related to the remaining domains of human security: Economics, Food, Health, and Environment.

Perhaps, the most important element of national security of which human security is an inseparable part, is economic security. The economy of any state not only determines its political standing among the comity of nations but also affords the government of the day to sort out its spending priorities. Domestic politics, at times, motivates the government to spend more in a particular direction that may not be ideally suited for the people. Moreover, the regional security environment may dictate the government allocate a substantial amount of its earnings towards the sustenance of security infrastructures, and the worst part of an economic downturn is that the country cannot meet its legitimate security needs without compromising on its national development that would directly affect the elements of human security. However, any government that ignores the public sector development spending, and fails to provide relief to the common man, faces the brunt in the next elections.

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All is not lost for the incumbent regime yet. It has tried to give relief to government employees through an increase in salaries and allowances. However, it may not be enough due to ever-increasing and record-breaking inflation. Moreover, the common man remains ignored, unfortunately. The government must decide quickly whether it wants to attract people for votes, or it sincerely wants to put the country’s economy back on track and take some serious majors towards agricultural reforms, industrial productivity, tax rate cuts, construction sector, IT sector liberalization, incentives to the non-resident Pakistanis (NRPs), energy sector development, aviation revolution, railways reconstruction, and perhaps above all the revamping of the education system in coordination with the provinces.

The significance of food security, especially in a developing country, cannot be overemphasized. People’s biggest concern remains how to feed their children adequately without compromising their education and health. Food security does not only reflect the availability of adequate food, but the quality, and affordability as well. In a country like Pakistan, which is the 7th largest wheat producer, 10th largest in rice, 4th largest in milk production, and 8th largest in poultry; Pakistan is ranked “serious” on the Global Hunger Index. “Almost 17% of Pakistan’s population is undernourished. Children are among the most greatly affected. Almost 40% of children under five suffer from “stunting” or have low height for their age due to undernourishment.” In such a situation, food security in Pakistan remains a distant dream, not only for the poorest of the poor but also for the white-collar population as well. It’s time that the incumbent regime and all subsequent governments invest an extra effort to revive the agriculture sector in Pakistan, not only through increased yields but also by adding value to its product so that invaluable foreign exchange can be collected through the exports of our produce.

Health security for the well-being of the people is perhaps as important as the provision of food supplies. Only healthy people can seriously contribute to a nation’s development. At the individual level, I have seen a great effort by Noon Foundation, led by Mr Kahleel Ahmad Noon, who is providing free health care to patients with serious illnesses. However, Pakistan needs to look after its people, especially its children, if it wants to progress among the comity of nations as a responsible state. In my opinion, domestic politics aside, the incumbent regime must continue with Health Cards in the provinces introduced by the previous government, and also introduce the same in the remaining parts of the country, as soon as practicable.

Regarding environmental security, efforts must be made on an emergency basis, to stop further degradation of the soil due to regular floods amid climatic changes in the region. Unexpected and untimely flash rains have started to affect a large part of Pakistan regularly. In the absence of water storage facilities, this extra water gets into the populated areas and remains stagnant for years, causing numerous diseases and soil erosion. Pakistan is fast becoming a water-scarce country that would seriously hurt its food and water security in the coming decades.

This short series of three articles were aimed at not only pointing out the errors that our political elite makes whenever it returns to power but also making them realize the fact that the domestic political agenda at times causes a lot of stress on the state’s security that may become irreparable in the long term. Also, a few suggestions have been put forward to redress the situation and bring back the country from the verge of an economic default, which would again be extremely dangerous for the security architecture of Pakistan.

*The writer of this article has authored two international books: “Nuclear Deterrence and Conflict Between India and Pakistan” and “South Asia Needs Hybrid Peace.”*