



Facets of national security

Pakistan's national security, like any other country, has two facets: a) security against external threats and aggression; b) internal threat to security emanating from an unjust economic system - hunger, unemployment, ever rising prices of essential items, including utilities - leading to intolerance, crimes and terrorism. We are told that to counter external dangers, Pakistan has achieved minimum deterrence. In fact, Pakistan possessed a nuclear deterrent capacity since the 1980s but did not consider it necessary to conduct tests. Were it not the nuclear tests by India, it is improbable the Pakistan would have conducted the tests. And we are told that we have a nuclear deterrent superior to the next-door enemy.

Anyhow, national security remained on the top of the agenda of all the governments in the past, who suppressed freedom of the people in the name of national security; rulers have been flouting the Constitution and the laws on the same pretext. The misuse and abuse of our political and administrative systems have led to a profound

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Pakistan should under no circumstances send troops to Iraq. A terrorist attack on a Shia mosque in Quetta has led to more than 40 deaths, and the number of seriously injured is large. Judging by the number of deaths, the attack can be considered as one of the worst terrorist acts in the country.

This is the third event in less than a month involving the killings of members of a particular sect in Balochistan. Previously, a DIG, who happened to be Shia, and three police-guards were gunned down in Sibi. If the law enforcing personnel, who are supposed to be responsible for protecting the life and property of the citizens are not safe, how can they be expected to protect citizens? Determining precisely who is responsible is not easy, given the performance of the agencies.

Pakistan was originally conceived as a federation, and to keep harmony amongst the federation and the federating units, the principles of federalism should be adhered to. In the

sending him to the gallows. During the 60s and 70s if anybody raised the voice in support of autonomy to the provinces, he was considered as anti-Pakistan. Anybody who talked about mismanagement or wastage in civil and military set-up was dubbed as anti-state. After the over-throw of the Bhutto government, General Zia-ul-Haq ruled the country for 11 years. The provisions granting greater autonomy to the provinces were flouted, and subjects on the concurrent list, which were to be the domain of the provinces after 10 years of adoption of the Constitution, are to-date with the federal government.

Although the quantum of provincial autonomy is still to be resolved, it is the responsibility of the government and the opposition parties to resolve this issue to the satisfaction of all concerned. The government should meanwhile address the problems faced by the peoples of smaller provinces.

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to a profound institutional crisis that threatens our future. The socio-economic inequity has widened the gap between the rich and the poor. Federating units were not given their rights as enshrined in the Constitution, which has resulted in inter provincial disharmony and weakening of the federation. They never thought of taking remedial action to forge unity in the rank and file of the people, which is a must to frustrate the designs of the enemy despite superior arsenal and greater in numbers.

The US was defeated in the Vietnam War despite having stockpiles of atomic warheads and high-tech military hardware. In order to unite the people, some basic changes in the system must be brought about, so as to ensure socio-economic justice. The inept leadership from the ruling elite failed to remove inequities, inertia, factionalism and corruption eating into the vitals of the society. This leadership had no vision to change the society into a progressive, vibrant and dynamic organism, propelling itself towards political and economic activity.

According to official figures, 30 per cent of Pakistan's population lives below the poverty line, whereas independent analysts put the ratio at more than 40 per cent. And needless to say, absolute poverty spawns crimes, ethnic and sectarian extremism and terrorism. Sectarian killings have taken place and groups representing both sects have been involved in internecine conflicts. Recently, the sectarian killings are again on the rise. The killings of a particular sect smack of some deep intrigue to generate discord between different sects in Pakistan. At another level, is it a prelude to any action against Iran, a la Afghanistan and Iraq? If there is an iota of truth in that, then

Last month, the NWFP demanded an increase in the provincial share from the federal pool with a view to providing basic services, like health, education, security and justice to the people. Later, the NWFP Assembly passed a unanimous resolution for a fresh NFC Award. Since bulk of the provincial resources come from taxes collected by the federal government and only a portion of the tax-revenue is shared with the provinces they are justified in asking for adequate financial resources to be able to maintain the social and physical infrastructure.

early 50s, the bureaucracy emphasised the need for a strong Centre and in the 1956 Constitution the provinces of West Pakistan were amalgamated into One Unit. Late Ayub Khan's 1962 Constitution upheld the concept of parity between the former East Pakistan and West Pakistan. This was against the very principle of federalism as it undermined the concept of autonomy and power sharing between the federation and the federating units.

This created a great sense of deprivation in the former East Pakistan. The credit arguably goes to late Z.A. Bhutto who rallied the masses to check the tendencies of over-centralisation. He introduced land reforms to rid the people of the repressive system, but certain mistakes were also made, such as the dismissal of the Balochistan government. However, Bhutto's peaceful nuclear programme was anathema to the US, who threatened to make a 'horrible example' out of him. According to political analysts, this was the basic reason behind his overthrow and later on

eral pool with a view to providing basic services, like health, education, security and justice to the people. Later, the NWFP Assembly passed a unanimous resolution for a fresh NFC Award. Since bulk of the provincial resources come from taxes collected by the federal government and only a portion of the tax-revenue is shared with the provinces they are justified in asking for adequate financial resources to be able to maintain the social and physical infrastructure.

Earlier, the Balochistan Assembly had demanded that the federal allocation be made on the basis of area and backwardness of the provinces rather than population only. The NFC Award process ensures the principle of equity between federating units. Without sufficient financial resources the social and economic disparity would further grow, thus strengthening the centrifugal forces to fan greater disharmony.

The revenue sharing criterion for all financial awards was based on population only. In a federation where the federating units differ widely in terms of per capita income, population density, administrative structure, ability to raise taxes, the revenue-sharing formula on purely population basis is unfair. This resource distribution formula deprives the regions and provinces of their fundamental human rights and condemns them to perpetual grinding poverty and poor quality of life.

With a view to forging unity amongst the people of all provinces, it is imperative to evolve an equitable resource-sharing formula so that all parts of country develop simultaneously. This is the only way to strengthen the internal security of the country. Only unity amongst the people of Pakistan can guarantee the security of Pakistan, as in the past despite sterling guarantees from the US and the West, nobody came to rescue Pakistan.