

Anatomization of Pakistan's National Security Policy 2022-2026: Strategic Hitches and Way Forward for Peace and Security in Pakistan

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Abstract

This paper analyses Pakistan's National Security Policy 2022-2026. The state of Pakistan has officially presented its first National Security Policy in 2022. The policy crystallizes all multi-dimensional policy domains into a national security framework and it serves as this paper's pivotal analysis point. The paper analyses the policy by asking the following questions: What are the limitations and fault lines in the policy framework, where are the gaps and apertures, and what are the possible way-outs? The paper employs a classical 5-step analytical framework of policy analysis. The analysis suggests conceptual and practical, foreign policy recommendations. National security framework side tracks the guns vs. butter and geopolitics vs. geo-economics by terming it as a stagnant logic leading to a contradictory logic. The paper reveals that such an attempt translates into inconsistencies in the conceptual and practical domains and results in foreign policy stalemates. The findings suggest that shifting focus from economic to politico-economic security, greater distribution to equitable distributary mechanism, putting human security at its core as a peace dividend with traditional and politico-economic securities gearing to it, and adopting an environmental peace-building and inclusive regional approach could mend the policy lacunas.

Keywords: Pakistan, Human Security, Mahbub-ul-Haq, Development Policy Analysis, Peace Dividend.

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Introduction

The government of Pakistan has staged its first National Security Policy (NSP) 2022-2026. This step is a leap in policy initiative and introduces novel and cutting-edge concepts in national security policymaking. In the central security framework, human security is the distinctive addition. Yet, the policy holds numerous strategic hitches contradicting human security's core logic. This article highlights that the reconceptualization of the security framework by putting human security at its core could mend these strategic hitches.

Putting human security in a pivotal position could become a step forward in reclaiming the legacy of human security left by a Pakistani economist, politician, international development theorist, and former Finance Minister, Dr. Mahbub-ul-Haq,¹ who floated this concept for the first time through the platform of United Nations.² Human security is a non-traditional and comprehensive concept that considers individuals the primary referent of security and challenges the anomalies of traditional security theories.³ Given the nature and range of Pakistan's security challenges, human security is an apt analytical and practical framework for Pakistan's national security paradigm.⁴

This text is segmented into three parts. The first part deals with the theoretical basis, presents the methodological toolkit for the policy analysis, and briefly delineates the policy highlights. The second part delves into strategic hitches by discussing policy apertures and provides unconventional insights as a way forward. These strategic gaps discuss the conceptual domains, allied practical steps, and foreign policy stalemates. The third part concludes the debate. The purpose is not only to unravel the challenges and stand-offs at

¹ Mahbub-ul-Haq, "New Imperatives of Human Security," *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues* 4, no. 1 (1995): 68–73, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45064264?seq=1>.

² United Nations Development Programme, "Human Development Report 1994," 1994, https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf.

³ Asma Akbar and Khawaja Alqama, "An Introduction to the Problematic of Security: Theory-Building in International Relations," *Perennial Journal of History* 1, no. 2 (2020): 113–31, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52700/pjh.v1i2.8>.

⁴ Asma Akbar, "Pakistan's National Security Paradigm: A Human Security Analysis" (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 2023), 32-62.

the policy level but also to cherish the initiative and potential of regaining the lost legacy of human security approach.

Policy Analysis: Meanings and Method

Before digging deep into Pakistan's NSP 2022-2026, it is pertinent to discuss what we mean by policy in our research and how we will analyse it. Multiple scholars put their efforts into presenting a framework for analysing policy. Many are the ones who emphasize defining policy analysis in broader terms without going into the nitty gritty, and many are those who define policy analysis by presenting the methodological toolkit for this ambitious task. For instance, while analysing policy concerns, some emphasize identifying the problem in the policy and searching for its probable resolutions. Some, however, even go further and also analyse the effects of these alternative solutions concerning the political context.⁵

Therefore, the terms of policy and analysis need specific attention before defining policy analysis in unison or, simply put, identifying our sphere of analysis in the present study. According to House and Shull, the policy could be best described as making “steering corrections” to the vessel of the state as per the climatic conditions.⁶ The analysis, likewise, sets the pace for the procedure to identify the constituent parts of the policy and the relationship between/amongst them to improve policymaking. As far as the domain of policy analysis is concerned, it has always been part of policymaking. It has been the subset of administration studies. However, it gradually took its turn towards the critical methods to measure against the bias of administrators in almost every field of the policies i.e. economic or military, in the 20th century. This turn helped to delimit this field discursively.⁷

Scholars have defined policy analysis and discussed different principles or steps of analysing policy. Let's suppose we keep the discursive and critical turn in mind. In this case,

⁵ Paul Cairney, *The Politics of Policy Analysis* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 3–9.

⁶ Stephen Petrina, “Methods of Analysis: Policy Analysis,” *The University of British Columbia*, 2021, 1, <https://blogs.ubc.ca/researchmethods/files/2021/06/Policy-Analysis.pdf>.

⁷ Cairney, *The Politics of Policy Analysis*, 11-30.

the majority of the scholars agree on the following analysis tools or principles that have been presented as a classical 5-step framework by Cairney to evaluate the policy: the identification of the problem, finding out the probable and feasible solutions, establishing the criteria to measure these alternative solutions, estimating the outcomes/effects of these solutions, and presenting recommendations.⁸

Some, being mindful of critical turn, also incorporate the debates on power and politics, for instance, actors or stakeholders involved in the policy process, socio-political and historical context, and the dimensions of socio-economic inequalities that render policy analysis a way to pave for equity and dignity.⁹ However, the alternative solutions should be based on the working mechanisms and acceptable to the influential actors in policymaking field according to the political context. It happens when one treats this domain of analysing policy as the field of art or craft rather than a reified scientific method.¹⁰ In this paper, we will be focusing on the basic 5-step framework provided by Cairney. We will estimate what problem has been presented, what solution has been put forward and on which criteria, what effects the proposed solution will produce, and what can be recommended as an alternative solution with potential effects.

The Roadmap for National Security Policy

Pakistan's NSP 2022-2026 is the first-ever policy document that presents a consolidated approach to the national conception of security, integrating different national security domains. The policy document is divided into eight chapters. It presents the policy formulation, national security framework, national integration, security and territorial sovereignty, economic sector, the internal dimension of security, and Pakistan's policy across borders. The rationale of this policy initiative draws on the need to combine different

⁸ Cairney, 11-30.

⁹ Ibid, 71-90.

¹⁰ Cairney, 3-9.

policies in different domains providing a holistic and overarching direction.

Central to this rationale is the national security framework of ‘Comprehensive National Security’ that incorporates the conventional and non-conventional domains of security and strays from the guns vs. butter debate. The presented framework puts economic security at its core as a peace dividend to reinforce conventional and human security through a greater distribution of the national resource pie into both domains.¹¹ The thematic chapters of NSP dealing with the domains and sub-domains have been presented in the table on the next page.

Mapping Policy in a 5-Step Framework

1. Problem: The policy text identifies economic insecurity as the central problematic area in national and foreign policy domains.
2. Solution: Putting economic security at the core, attached to the traditional and human securities through equal distribution of resources, and has been presented as a solution in the national security framework.
3. Criteria: Refurbishing NSP in traditional and human security domains by moving beyond the stagnant logic of classic trade-offs has been put forward. Economic security has been presented as a peace dividend. Emphasis has been made to the equal redistribution of resources to both domains for the greater benefit of people through cost-benefit analytical criteria.
4. Outcomes/Effects: The potential effects or outcomes would ensure peace and comprehensive security in both traditional and human security domains.
5. Recommendations: Economic security and sovereignty have been strongly recommended.

¹¹ National Security Division, “National Security Policy of Pakistan: 2022-2026,” (Islamabad, 2022).

Table 1: *The Policy Domains in NSP (2022-2026)*

This table presents the six domains of national security in the policy document. These domains have been further elaborated, in each chapter, by highlighting sub-domains and

Sr. No.	Theme	Policy Guidelines
1	National Solidarity	Patriotism and unity in religious, linguistic, and ethnic cultural diversity, accord among federating units, and strong state-citizen contract through public service delivery.
2	Securing the Economic Future	Economic security and sovereignty through sustainable growth, inclusive Development, and financial solvency through solving problems of critical economic challenges: external imbalance, Socio-economic inequalities, and disparity among regions, geo-economic connectivity, indigenization of energy resource development along with access to international energy resource centers, and affordable quality education in congruence with global needs of technological innovation.
3	Defense and Territorial Sovereignty	Border security, full-spectrum deterrence with credible minimum nuclear deterrence, modernization and optimization of forces structures, space security, and cyber security.
4	Internal Security	Security of life and property against violence, terrorism, extremism, organized crime, and violent sub-nationalism through an equitable, responsive and citizen-centric justice system.
5	Foreign Policy in Changing World	Broad-based relations with global powers with no camp politics, pursuance of regional peace in the immediate neighbourhood, solution of Kashmir problem, mutual respect and sovereign equality and political and economic diplomacy.
6	Human Security	Population stabilization and management, youth-focused policies, food security, preventive health care system, climate control regime, sustainable water planning and management, and public and decision-making role of women and trans genders.

aspects of policy concern at national level. The highlighted sub-domains reflect not only the priorities and range of conceptualization but also the missing dimensions in terms of contradictions that exist within these priorities and relationship between the two. Looking at these domains and sub-domains with the help of central national security framework

identifies the policy gaps and underscores the potential measures that have been discussed in the next section.

Strategic Hitches and Way Forward

This section presents the analysis against 5-step analytical framework and highlights findings in conceptual, practical (feasibility), and foreign policy domains.

Analysing Policy in 5-Step Framework

The following steps analyse NSP 2022-2026 in detail.

Step-1: Problem Identification

The central gap lies in the presented security framework that positions economic security at its core and places human and traditional securities as means and beneficiaries of economic security. The framework encounters a counter-argument regarding the inevitability of a trade-off between traditional and human security. Specifically, it becomes challenging when it comes to prioritization between the two for the “greater redistribution” from the economic core. Given the threat spectrum mapped in the policy document, the existence of traditional and human security threats has to deal with distributary mechanisms no matter to what extent the national resource pie is more extensive than before.

Ensuring comprehensive security by adopting a complementary approach between state/national security, and human security requires a particular mechanism to transcribe the state's role in ensuring human security. It is a potential way of rationalizing comprehensive security vis-à-vis the guns vs. butter debate. However, there are many reasoning points; for instance, there is no viable alternative for the state as a security provider for a long-term solution to human insecurities.

Step-2: Alternative Solution

The development of a mechanism to ensure comprehensive security is possible by re-conceptualizing security framework and putting human security at its core rather than economic security. The rationale for doing this could be presented in different ways. For instance, a distributary formula/mechanism, mentioned earlier, by establishing an operational scale, is possible only if we support this scale with a central and core logic of human security, ranging from minimalist to maximalist approaches.

Human security is a non-conventional approach that puts security of human being/individual at the core of its framework as an ultimate end. Human security usually comes to clash with the state or traditional security when state infringes upon human freedom, rights and development in order to ensure its traditional security. There are two approaches in human security. The minimalist approach emphasizes the freedom from fear, and the maximalist approach takes into account not only freedom from fear but also from want (deprivation), and indignity. The strategies of protection, empowerment and solidarity amongst people help establish human security in any society.

Although, the phenomena like democratization, decentralization, robust civil society, strong state-citizen, or a directly proportional relationship between human security and the strength of states are viable alternatives.¹² Yet, we all agree that threats and insecurities change over time and space, and state is an inevitable security provider to restrain the state to prioritize traditional insecurities over non-traditional insecurities, specifically in a volatile society, a consensus-based financial distributary mechanism based on gauging scale seems a viable option.

¹² Riccardo Trobbiani, "How Should National Security and Human Security Relate to Each Other?," *E-International Relations*, April 26, 2013, <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/04/26/how-should-national-security-and-human-security-relate-to-each-other/>.

Step-3: Value-Based Criteria

The quid pro quo between traditional and human securities could be avoided by presenting an outline of the financial distributary mechanism. For that matter, a consensus on establishing a scale or a threshold is a need of the hour. It could vary from singular to multiple criteria. It further depends on defining the operational sphere. For instance, it could range from the safety of life and property to human indignation. As per the minimalist criterion, the death and destruction rate from a specific sector of security, traditional and non-traditional, could help devise a distributary formula and check the role of threat perception or misperception more objectively. The pragmatism requires an emphasis on 'equitable redistribution' rather than 'greater redistribution.' However, the formula for equitable redistribution of resources will depend on measuring which domain of security is more challenged, whether traditional or human security that focuses on issues of human development, human rights, and freedom from fear.

Further, most importantly, the framework somehow detaches human, traditional, and economic security. The taxonomy of security studies varies from dividing security into different sectors, e.g., economic, social, political, military, etc., to focusing on actors, levels, and security referents. The inclusive one is the debate between state and human security, as it inevitably considers different sectors. The missing policy link is the economic, traditional and human security relationship. Economic security has created a linkage reinforcing traditional and human (in) security and the other way round. However, the intrinsic core of economic security as pro-human or pro-state has not been highlighted and emphasized. This aspect could be raised with the help of Mahboob-ul-Haq's work on the development strategies of third countries.

Mahbub-ul-Haq criticizes the traditional development strategies emphasizing the ultimate target of high GNP without any development and high per capita income yet with mass poverty. The rationale for criticism is the feudal-oriented economic institutions and arrangements that primarily focus on planning for national economic growth, capital, and

market-based production rather than focusing on equitable redistribution, project investment, and human needs. His foresight illustrated that to think that ensuring high GNP with foresight will take care of poverty is erroneous. However, vice versa is a more pragmatic approach. Likewise, he illuminates that devising a consumption strategy should be the first step with crucial importance. The production should be geared to it.¹³ Replacing the demand and supply rule of the market with the minimum needs of human agency and corresponding supply could lead developing countries out of an economic crisis. The condition is that the economic and development strategies should primarily focus on eradicating poverty and employment generation – the concerns of common people.

Step-4: Effects/Outcomes of Given Solution

More recently, a similar narrative has resurfaced at the policy level. For instance, a special report by UNDP underlines a developmental paradox that refers to a disconnection between a generally lengthier, healthier, and more comfortable life of people and their higher sense of insecurity. According to this report, in the present age of Anthropocene, people, as the hyperactive agents of change, are contributing to the degradation of the earth's biosphere, leading them towards more insecurity because of their disengagement from nature and each other.¹⁴ Therefore, academic circles highlight the negative impact of development projects and emphasize the alternative(s) to development or alternative development(s), depending on their viewpoints for either replacement of this whole idea or a somewhat reformed way of development.¹⁵ In this paper, however, the focus is on discussing Dr. Mahbub-ul-Haq's

¹³ Mahbub-ul-Haq, *The Poverty Curtain: Choices for the Third World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), 41-44.

¹⁴ United Nations Development Program, "New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene: Demanding Greater Solidarity," *2022 Special Report on Human Security* (New Jersey, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.18356/9789210014007c003>.

¹⁵ Siavash Saffari, "Alternative Development(s), or Alternative(s) to Development?: Challenges and Prospects for Genuine Alternative-Building," in *Africa Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow: Exploring the Multi-Dimensional Discourses on Development*, ed. Nathan Andrews et al., vol. 60 (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 40-51.

position on development and contributing to the debate on Pakistan's NSP.

Economic growth cannot ensure low poverty and employment generation.¹⁶ For example, in the 1960s, economic development in Pakistan had a growth rate of almost 6%, yet with a rising level of unemployment, specifically in East Pakistan. Similar is the case of distributary plans of economic development. The economic development of the 1960s led to higher inequality due to unjust production and investment plans, benefitting only the specific regions and sections of society.¹⁷

On the contrary, the Step-4 policy section resonates with the same jargon and concerns about ensuring high numbers in national accounts and income savings rather than distribution. The sub-section on growth and development emphasizes the high growth rate as a surety to employment generation. The emphasis on eradicating vertical and horizontal inequalities neither highlights means towards these ends nor a practical blueprint; rather, it contradicts its essence by emphasizing the same old targets and strategies as highlighted above. By this logic, it appears that economic development is the core for empowering human agency and not vice versa.

These statistics, likewise, do not reveal a positive relation between growth rate and employment generation. For instance, this negative relationship gets clarified by looking at the following statistics, either in the domain of poverty level, inflation, or employment rates. According to Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-2022, inflation maintains double-digit legacy by recording a 13.4% rate in April 2022.¹⁸ In the employment sector, 4.51 million people are out of job, and the unemployment rate stands at 6.3% in FY 2020-2021 compared to 6.9 % in FY 2018-2019 and 5.8 % in 2017-2018.¹⁹ However, economic growth rate in these

¹⁶ Mahbub-ul-Haq, "New Imperatives of Human Security,"

¹⁷ Mahbub-ul-Haq, *The Poverty Curtain: Choices for the Third World*, 15-17.

¹⁸ Finance Division, "Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-2022," Government of Pakistan, 2022, https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey_2022.html.

¹⁹ Finance Division, "Pakistan Economic Survey 2017-2018," Government of Pakistan, 2018, https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_18/Economic_Survey_2017_18.pdf.

years is 5.97% in FY2022, 3.29%²⁰, and 5.78 %, respectively.²¹

The gap in the growth rate between FY 2021-2022 and FY 2018-2019 is more significant than the unemployment rate. Likewise, comparing the statistics of FY2021-2022 and FY2017-2018 reveals comparatively lower economic growth rate in the later FY and also maintains the lower unemployment rate. According to a World Bank report, the poverty rate of Pakistan in 2020-2021 was 37%.²² Despite integrating the education sector to boost the core economic sector, allocating resources to the education sector maintains the old tradition. Only 1.77% of GDP is allocated to education, far less than the policy has proclaimed ambitions and goals. Similar is the case with the health budget, which has just reached mere 1.2%²³ visibly insufficient to tackle with chronic health issues and persistently high death rate.

The partnerships and relationships with the external world present no different scenario. At national level, a similar tendency pre-dominates foreign policy domain and results in foreign policy stalemates. For instance, the national security framework centralizes geo-economics and co-opts it with a geopolitical approach. However, regarding the deadlock between both sectors, the policy does not suggest a way out. The case, for example, is the relationship with India. Given the geopolitical crisis in Kashmir, the geo-economic logic seems to and could be on the back burner.

Besides Kashmir issue, the Indian factor emerges due to geo-economic ties with China. The Indian concerns over the Chinese footprint and increasing influence in the South Asian region through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) or China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) could further escalate geopolitical tensions between the two nuclear states. The policy takes side-tracks in this probable situation and adopts a minus-India regional

²⁰ Finance Division, "Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-2019," Government of Pakistan, 2019, [https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_19/Overview of the Economy.pdf](https://www.finance.gov.pk/survey/chapters_19/Overview%20of%20the%20Economy.pdf).

²¹ Finance Division, "Pakistan Economic Survey 2017-2018."

²² Daily Times, "Pakistan's Poverty Rate to Ease in FY22: World Bank," October 9, 2021, <https://dailytimes.com.pk/827135/pakistans-poverty-rate-to-ease-in-fy22-world-bank/>.

²³ Finance Division, "Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-2022."

approach. For instance, in response to India's unilateral action to amend Kashmir's status through legislation, Pakistan seems to steer towards taking a side-track approach by arranging forums like the Muslim 5 Summit to incorporate Malaysia, Iran, Turkey, Qatar, and Pakistan on the Kashmir agenda.²⁴

Indian national security strategy is no different. The strategic document on Indian national security also paints Pakistan in the light of terrorism and extremism and configures regional alignments by adopting a minus-Pakistan approach. Most pertinently, the strategy deliberates that "India must find an alternative to bypass Pakistan."²⁵ Additionally, to replace SAARC, a regional group such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal (BBIN), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and India's Act East Policy has been emphasized.²⁶ This strategic divergence and distortion of regionalization could sabotage security at the regional level.

Step-5: Evaluating Potential Effects/Outcomes of Alternative Solution

Focus on need-based production and consumption strategy emphasizes an alternative framework with human security at its core and economic and traditional security geared to it. As, Mahbub-ul-Haq points out, building "development around people" is pertinent "rather than people around development."²⁷ The security framework should also emphasize this logic of building traditional and economic security around human security, not as human and traditional security gearing up to economic security. Doing so could help in ensuring people's sources of prosperity i.e., generating employment and reducing poverty and inequalities.

²⁴ Happymon Jacob, "Toward a Kashmir Endgame? How India and Pakistan Could Negotiate a Lasting Solution.," 2020, <https://www.scribd.com/document/479503251/sr-474-toward-a-kashmir-endgame-how-india-and-pakistan-could-negotiate-a-lasting-solution-sr-pdf>.

²⁵ Lt Gen D S Hooda(Retd), "India's National Security Strategy," 2019, 9. https://manifesto.inc.in/pdf/national_security_strategy_gen_hooda.pdf.

²⁶ Hooda(Retd), 14.

²⁷ Mahbub-ul-Haq, *The Poverty Curtain: Choices for the Third World*, 28.

The budgetary plan could assess the redistribution of resources even in the absence of a distributary scheme. Although it does not reveal a benchmark for the need assessment based on which national resources are distributed, it manifests government expenditure priorities and tendencies. The federal budget for 2023-2024 depicts substantial spending on defence, and the military budget is greater than economic affairs that have been referred to as a core concern in national security policy. If we estimate the relative difference among the three primary determinants of national security allocations, it appears as follows:

Table 2: Budgetary Classification of Expenditure according to National Security Framework

Source: Finance Division of Pakistan²⁸

S. No.	National Security Framework	Budgetary classification of expenditure	Rs in million
1	Economic Security	Economic Affairs	210,835
		Defense Affairs and services	1,809,467
2	Traditional Security	Public order and safety affairs	237,215
		General public service	10,444,266
		Health Affairs & Services	24,210
		Environment Protection	1,226
		Education Affairs & Services	97,098
3	Human Security	Housing and community amenities	22,986
		Recreation, culture, and religion	16,782
		Social protection	480,309

Domains of expenditure classification are self-evident because of their names. As far as the domain of General Public Service is concerned, it involves huge sums of money allocated to servicing external, internal, and domestic debts along with allowances and pensions of staff, foreign economic aid, research and development of general public service and transfers, etc. These domains and the relative allocation of resources reflect a huge gap between traditional and human securities, specifically if we consider the traditional and feudalistic models of economy and subsequently assume that benefits of General Public Service do not reach masses.

Additionally, the distribution of national resource pie taps the debate of ‘actorness’

²⁸ Finance Division, “Federal Budget 2023-2024: Budget in Brief,” Government of Pakistan, 2023, https://www.finance.gov.pk/fb_2023_24.html.

in the national security framework and the relationship between different actors. It accentuates the relevancy of the politico-economic domain and strategies. Social scientists refer to it as the knowledge branch of political economy.

Economic Security and Peace Dividend Theory

Theory of peace dividend refers to the cut in defense spending, in a post-war scenario, and redirecting resources to the domestic needs and priorities. NSP recommends economic security as a peace dividend. Apart from the logic presented above about the feudalistic model of economy and the need for developing a financial distributary mechanism, defining the relevant currency as per temporal and spatial exigencies, is important to take into account.

According to US president, Richard Nixon, one of the misconceptions about peace dividend is defining it only in terms of money. He referred to American hopes and values as the real peace dividend while delivering a speech in 1972. Apart from empirical examples of US history that monetary peace dividend failed to produce any tangible results, the peace dividend is difficult to realize into practice successfully because the defense and economy are hard to disentangle. It needs time and careful pre-calculations. Even though it has been presented, it is not deposited or cherished, and the inequality remains intact.²⁹

Recommendations

The policy analysis presents the following findings in Pakistan's context.

- **Politico-Economic Security**

The political economy refers to political decision-making in the economic sector. As far as politics is concerned, it could be generally defined as the study of exercise and

²⁹ James Chen, "Peace Dividend," Investopedia, 2022, <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/peace-dividend.asp>.

struggle for power and authority. Yet, more precisely, it refers to the “study of the mechanism for making collective choices” and subjects it to the “heterogeneity of interests” or conflict of interests.³⁰ Likewise, economics deals with the “study of optimal use of scarce resources.” Thus, the political economy could be referred to as the “mechanism societies use in choosing policies in the face of conflict of interests.”³¹

Thus, the policies considering political economy differ from those focusing solely on the economic sector. The policies considering the politico-economic sector take political constraints into account, along with the ‘optimal’ or informational and technical constraints. So, the politico-economic sector focuses on how societies, in the presence of political constraints, could achieve economic objectives by overcoming political constraints and designing political institutions to attain economic progress.³²

Social scientists have even developed politico-economic prototypes to study the interconnection between political and economic sectors. For instance, politico-economic models and their role in examining the relationship between consumers/voters and the government have been discussed. Politico economic modelling helps examine how voters evaluate the governmental performance based on economic conditions and how the government exploits the economic sector to stay in power through its utility maximization.³³

- **Human Security as Peace Dividend**

The distributary mechanism of dividing resources to the multi-dimensional sectors could risk the potential rift and conflict of interests between relevant sectors, specifically the civilian and military sectors. The probability of escalation of this tension is high if we tap the dimensions of traditional and non-traditional threat spectrum, civil-military

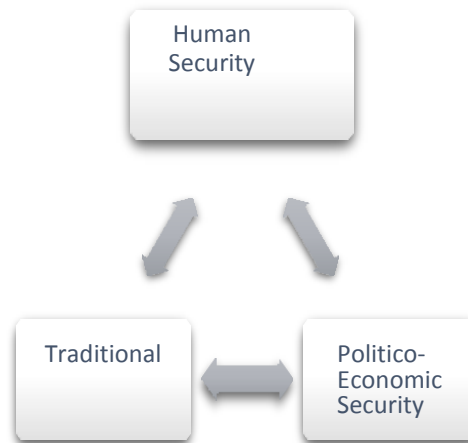
³⁰ Allan Drazen, *Political Economy in Macroeconomics*, *Political Economy in Macroeconomics* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 6, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv346rwp>.

³¹ Drazen, 7.

³² Drazen, *Polit. Econ. Macroecon.*

³³ Bruno S. Frey, “Politico-Economic Models and Cycles,” *Journal of Public Economics* 9, no. 2 (1978): 203–20, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0047-2727\(78\)90043-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0047-2727(78)90043-9).

relations, political instability, and the nose-diving economic conditions of national polity. Therefore, ensuring robust strategies for the politico-economic sector and putting human security at core could manage the conflict of interests and preceding financial distributary mechanism.



However, as mentioned above it is important to define relevant currency accordingly. The presentation of human security perspective as a peace dividend by Dr. Mahbub-ul-Haq refers to establishing the value-based criteria on pro-human economy, benefitting people by prioritizing and redirecting efforts to boost employment sector, and eradication of poverty over the GNP growth. It is because he is of the view that focusing on employment generation and eradication of poverty will precede GNP growth automatically. Therefore, the currency needed in Pakistan's context is human development that could put economic growth on track.

To this end, state needs, apart from setting distributary mechanism, to establish joint spaces between defense and human development sectors where investment in enhancing human skills and human development could become a primary resource for the defense industry. Meaning, it is important to utilize finances smartly and with dual purposes by maintaining the fact that human development should be a primary end and means that could

ensure defense of the state. And further to this end, state has to utilize the gender balancing approach and building bridges between civil and military sectors with the former in ascendancy, according to the constitution of Pakistan.

- **Environmental Peace Building and Inclusive Regionalism**

Likewise, in the foreign policy domain, some matters cannot be side-tracked and cannot be sorted out through exclusive alignment with other states. For instance, South Asia is the riskiest region of the world in terms of environmental insecurity. The environmental challenges to this region are no smaller than nuclear warfare because of animosity between two nuclear states of the region, India and Pakistan.³⁴ Likewise, both states face huge environmental threats. The most recent example in this regard is the cyclone 'Biparjoy' detected by the Indian Meteorological Department on June 6, 2023. Though it did not prove to be as disastrous as expected, it was declared the most dangerous cyclone in the last 25 years and was going to affect 170,000 people evacuated from the coastal areas of both states.³⁵

The environmental dynamic of both countries is geographically and demographically linked. Both states share the water of common rivers, and their fate is connected due to geographical contiguity and water distributary mechanism. Pakistan is a lower riparian state to India, and floods in Indian rivers are bound to make matters worse for Pakistan's landscape and its people. Both countries could suffer unanticipated economic losses because of the environmental challenges. Given the geopolitical and water conflicts between the two countries, the shared environmental threats, their economic consequences, both countries could make joint efforts through environmental peace-building at the political level to save them and boost their economies.

³⁴ Noam Chomsky, "6th Yoshin Lecture: A Conversation with the Noam Chomsky," Habib University, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGsUh3dOF0c>.

³⁵ BBC News, "Cyclone Biparjoy: India, Pakistan Evacuate More than 170,000," June 15, 2023, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-65911739>.

Last but not the least, establishing relationships/partnerships with global powers, regional states, or the immediate neighborhood demands a pragmatic view of the situation. Any relation with an external world whose benefit is not reaching the people might raise challenges. On the contrary, in the foreign policy domain, the policy has stressed the need to “leverage political relations for economic gains...(and) build new economic partnerships to in turn support our political and strategic interests.”³⁶ The policy seems to take the politico-economics into account but without addressing the foreign policy stalemates. It requires much-needed decision-making in the politico-economic sector. The gist of human security also seems out of central focus, whether in a national or international/regional context. It is important to take into account the focus on human agency, either in the form of people living in Pakistan or in countries with whom Pakistan wants to establish a relationship.

For instance, the proclaimed evasion from “camp politics” must be based on human development. Instead of engaging solely in military projects, aid, and trade, the partnership could be built on equitable market opportunities and investment and trade rather than aid in the preferential sector of the global power or as per her strategic interest. Another gauge is whether the development benefits of reaching out to the people in the indigenous communities. Furthermore, apart from reciprocation between geo-economics and geopolitical aspects, a complementary scenario could emerge in the immediate neighbourhood. The peaceful situation in Afghanistan has direct security and geopolitical implications for Pakistan and the region.

Apart from becoming the potential framework for bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan,³⁷ access to energy-rich Central Asian countries via Afghanistan corresponds with Pakistan’s geo-economic approach. Likewise, the involvement of Afghanistan in the CPEC project or as a transit state for access to the Central Asian region

³⁶ National Security Division, “National Security Policy of Pakistan: 2022-2026,” 34.

³⁷ Asmat Naz and Asma Akbar, “Revisiting South Asian Security Saga: A Nexus of Subaltern Realism and Human Security for Peace in the 21st Century,” *Pakistan Journal of Social Sciences* 39, no. 2 (2019), <https://pjss.bzu.edu.pk/index.php/pjss/article/view/691/625>.

could help Afghanistan prosper economically and evade humanitarian crises.

However, having a strong regional base to collaborate with the rest of the world is essential. For instance, an inclusive approach toward India in finding peace and economic prosperity within Afghanistan and the region is important. Minus-one policy from Pakistan or India at the regional level could be avoided by including all South Asian states in CPEC as it could reduce the chances of regional political, strategic, or, as Mahbubul Haq pointed out, 'economic bargaining power' from South Asian states.³⁸ For example, peace in Afghanistan is crucial not only for Chinese investments in the region but also for the energy requirements of India and Afghanistan's place in the big Indian market.

In this context, a comprehensive and inclusive regional economic approach solves regional problems. For instance, it is a region of the world where the majority of people and poor people live and face the highest risk of environmental catastrophe and an equal risk of nuclear holocaust.³⁹ Economic and energy crises have become a severe problem for South Asian states. In the same light, the national policy rightly points out the need for 'issue-based partnerships'; however, the most pressing issue could be the basic human security needs or regional politico-economic policy in South Asia.

Conclusion

National security is a broad domain divided into many sectors and sub-sectors. It could take diverse shapes and shades. Logically, it must be converging on a single unifying point. However, given the exigencies of time, this central focus could shift in terms of tendencies and priorities. Similar has been achieved in the first-ever national security policy of Pakistan. The national security framework attempts to move beyond the gun's vs butter, a stagnant logic, and endeavours to define a comprehensive security framework. Pakistan's national security policy declares economic security as its central focus. The security

³⁸ Mahbub-ul-Haq, *The Poverty Curtain: Choices for the Third World*.

³⁹ Chomsky, "6th Yoshin Lecture: A Conversation with the Noam Chomsky."

framework puts economic security at the core position, acting as a peace dividend by redistributing national resources into traditional and human security sectors. Likewise, geo-economic approach has complemented geopolitical approach in the foreign policy domain.

This paper re-conceptualizes the national security framework by discussing the evading strategies on trade-offs. Employing Mahbub ul Haq's developmental logic, an inevitable link between economic strategies, development, and human needs has been emphasized. Henceforth, human needs/security should be part and parcel of a state's economic and development strategies. It is suggested that human security should be a central focus of national security by considering traditional and politico-economic securities as the sources and means for it. A benchmark to identify measurement scales for 'equitable redistribution' rather than 'greater redistribution of national resources is a need of the hour that is possible by focusing on the politico-economic dimension of security and considering human security as a peace dividend.

The quid pro quo between geo-political and geo-economics exists concerning the Indian question and reflects the long-lasting stalemate. The foreign policy reflects a tendency towards a minus-India approach that is similar to the Indian side and needs to be reconsidered. However, this minus-one exclusive regional approach is neither pro-people nor long-lasting and peaceful. Instead, it is an inclusive and regional economic approach and the environmental peace-building efforts to boost the politico-economic approach between India and Pakistan are a panacea in the South Asian context.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.