

General

The Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) organised a talk by Capt (IN) Alok Bansal senior fellow CLAWS on “Pakistan: The Emerging Fault lines” on 01 February 2012 at the CLAWS campus. The talk was chaired by Lt Gen RK Sawhney, PVSM, AVSM (Retd), former DGMI. Dr Rana Banerji, former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat was the discussant. The discussion was attended by officers from the Armed Forces, veterans and members from the strategic community.

Opening Remarks: Brig Gurmeet Kanwal (Retd), Director CLAWS

Pakistan has been internally challenged and it remains a state that is unable and unwilling to come out of its internal turmoil. Pakistan is fighting too many internal conflicts socially, economically and militarily. The challenges that Pakistan faces in its Western Front, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, FATA and Baluchistan are a source of concern. Pakistan’s economy is being sustained to a large extent through foreign aid and remittances. It remains to be seen how Pakistan handles its development and security concerns.

Lt Gen RK Sawhney, PVSM, AVSM (Retd)

The talk is well-timed as Pakistan is evolving into the ‘theatre of the absurd’. It will not be wrong to site Pakistan as a ‘comedy of errors’ or rather a ‘comedy of terror’. It is hard to believe that Pakistan contrives to use its nuclear weapons programme as part of its strategy to fight war when even countries like the United States and Russia do not do so. The emerging pattern of rivalry between the Pakistani judiciary and the Pakistani Military establishment are a matter of concern. Its fragile economy and weak political base makes Pakistan a bed of thorns. We need to understand the causative factors which have led to the current state of affairs in Pakistan and the impact the unfolding situation will have on India.

Capt (IN) Alok Bansal, Senior Fellow, CLAWS

The story of India and Pakistan is that of the proverbial twins, born to the same mother – where the plight of one cannot leave the other unaffected? Today, Pakistan is affected by multiple fault lines, which could broadly be classified as under:

- Sectarianism
- Economic Crisis
- Ethno-nationalism
- Talibanisation.

The current 'Memogate' scandal has rocked Pakistan and has brought to the fore, the rift between the military and the political establishment with the judiciary playing the role of middleman. The role of the judiciary is also not above question. In the case of the petition filed by Azgar Khan, the judiciary accepted the petition which cites linkages between ISI and the Pakistan politics. The judiciary has however been unprecedented and selective when it comes to giving statements and providing rulings.

The genesis of sectarianism in Pakistan rests in its ideology of the two nation theory. The 'Objectives Resolution' which was adopted on March 12, 1949 by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan proclaimed that the future constitution of Pakistan would be modelled on the ideology and democratic faith of Islam. It further proclaimed that 'sovereignty rests with Allah'. Subsequently, hard level of fissures emerged in determining who was a Muslim. The Munir Kayani Commission which was designated to go into the matter could not get any two groups of Ulema on who or what constituted a Muslim. The condition worsened when the state of Pakistan acquired the right, so far held only by the clergy, to declare Muslims as apostate in 1974. Today sectarian as well as intra-sect differences are being resolved through violence. While Pakistan is a Sunni dominated state, its political elite have to a large extent been dominated by the Shia's.

The current status of Sectarianism includes the following:

- Shia Sunni Divide
 - Hazaras
 - Gilgit-Baltistan
 - Karachi
 - Taliban
- Deobandi-Barelvi Divide
- Ismailis

Economic Crisis.

The current fiscal and economic situation in Pakistan is bleak. Some of the current economic indicators for Pakistan are as under:

- FE Reserves though down from a high of \$18.313 Billion on 30 Jul 11 to \$ 16.802 Billion as on 20 Jan 12 (\$12.553 Billion with SBP) are still fairly good, due to the following:
 1. Foreign Aid: \$ 8 Billion from IMF standby loan.
 2. Remittances. \$ 11 Billion in 2010-11 against \$ 8.9 Billion in 2009-10. Figures for the period Jul-Dec 11 are \$ 6.33 Billion.

3. High Export Earnings. \$ 24 Billion in 2010-11 against \$19 Billion in 2009-10).

The figures for the period Jul-Dec 2011 are \$ 11.241 billion. (4% increase YoY)

- Low GDP Growth (2.4 % in 2010-11)
- Industrial Production contracting. Public Sector losing Rs 100 crore per day
- Investment at 40 years low. FDI has come down to a billion from \$ 5.4 billion in 2008.
- High Inflation. (Food Inflation in double digit for 50 months in row), Increased borrowings from State Bank, currency at an all time low.
- High Fiscal (6.3%) & Current Account (5.4 %) Deficit

As per the 2011 Legatum Prosperity Index, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and the Central African Republic are the only three countries worse off than Pakistan. As per their 'Safety & Security Sub-Index', Sudan is the only country worse off than Pakistan. As per their 'Education Sub-Index', the Central African Republic, Mali, Sudan, Ethiopia and Nigeria are the only five countries worse off than Pakistan. In the 2011 Failed State Index, countries like Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia and Burma are now better off than Pakistan.

Ethno-nationalism.

Some of the prominent elements of ethno-nationalism are as follows:

- Pakhtoon Nationalism
- Baloch Nationalism &
- Sindhi and Mohajir Nationalism

The state response to all these nationalism has been violent with large scale collateral damage, use of torture, and brute military force to subjugate key leaders and accentuating tribal differences. The Karachi battle lines have been drawn far and wide. The Sindhi, Baloch and Pakhtoons have united against the Mohajirs. There is struggle between the MQM and MQM (H). Besides sectarian war, there is a battle going on between Sunni Tehrik and MQM. The current situation is very grim, with rising ethnic aspirations post Feb,2008 elections. Movement of IDPs after military ops in Swat and FATA has exacerbated ethnic tensions in Karachi.

Talibanisation.

Radicalisation is inherent in the ideology of Pakistan. Taliban have been promoted by Islamic parties to counter Pakhtoon Nationalism. FATA has been kept outside political

mainstream and absence of political & economic development in FATA created ideal grounds for Talibanisation.

Talibanisation has intruded within the ranks of the Pakistan Army and large number of desertions from police has taken place. There is reluctance in the Armed Forces for taking action against the Taliban on two counts. Firstly, about 26 per cent of the Pakistan army are Pashtuns. Second, the perceived loss of sovereignty following the killing of Osama bin Laden has been viewed as a perceived loss of sovereignty and has led to anger within the armed forces.

Mr Rana Banerji, Former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat

Pakistan has a constitutional history which is based on the Judiciary, the Army and the Islamist fundamentalism, which is acknowledged at polls but not in conjunction with the voice of the street. There is no nascent democratic system in place. Imran Khan is a belief of the educated middle class but is brought in as a democratic facade. There are problems facing Pakistan and they are based on whether the Pakistan Army can maintain a strong unitary state. The political coalition is required to be seen with minimum disturbance from the Army. The problems of water sharing in the states of Punjab, Sind and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will become more serious if Pakistan breaks up.

The most serious problem facing Pakistan is the radicalisation penetrating the army and the sectarian divide within the organisation. There is also Mithridatism of the Sharia. The relationship between the United States and Pakistan is cracking and it remains to be seen how this impasse will impact the relationship in future, especially Pakistan Army's modernisation programmes and its counter insurgency operations.

There are large sums of money flowing into Pakistan from Iran and Saudi Arabia. All Shia clergy are educated in Iran. The macro-economic picture of Pakistan is bleak; the Army looks upon politicians as inferior and has a stranglehold over the democratic process. The emergence of judiciary as the fourth pillar in Pakistan and its impact on the state will have to be keenly watched.

Three factors are integrating Pakistan and that is why the state still stands.

- Islam
- The Pakistan Army – still the most professional institution of the state, with both strength and organisation.
- Perceived animosity against India.

However, with fissures developing in the first two of these factors and an improvement taking place in India–Pakistan relations, the challenges to the present state of Pakistan remain immense.

Discussion

The radicalisation of the Pakistan Army and its society is alarming. This could result over the next decade in the ‘Lebanonisation’ of Pakistan or even to its Balkanisation. Lebanonisation of Pakistan could result if the Taliban assumes power and becomes the Hezbollah of Pakistan, having control over the state.

Fault lines within Pakistan are causing tremors both in its economic and political set-up. The United States is now looking for options other than Pakistan in furtherance of its strategy in Afghanistan. This should be an indication to the Pakistan establishment, that they require an urgent course correction, which is visible and imminent.

Closing Remarks: Maj Gen Dhruv C Katoch, SM, VSM (Retd) Additional Director, CLAWS

Four points were emphasised in the closing remarks. The first of these pertained to the level of violence existing within Pakistan, where the casualties inflicted in a year’s violence exceeds in comparison, the total number of casualties suffered in India over a decade of violence. This points to an ominous trend within Pakistan. Second, the state of the criminal justice system in both countries remains weak. Third, as a positive indicator, the media in Pakistan is remarkably bold and free. Finally, it was stated that another reason for Pakistan’s military not venturing into North Waziristan was because of the real possibility that it would be defeated. While being an excellent conventional force, the ability of the Pakistan Army to defeat the insurgents was highly suspect. In conclusion, the Additional Director thanked the Chairperson, the speaker, the discussant and all the participants for the insight given.