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**SECURITY CHALLENGES OF 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:  
A REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE  
(PAKISTAN)**

1. I consider it a singular honour and a privilege to be invited to 8<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum Meeting **to discuss** 'Enhancing Strategic Studies to Meet the Challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century'. I will be **speaking on** 'Security Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and present Pakistani Perspective in South Asian context'. It is a complex and multi dimensional topic and it would be presumptuous of me to pretend that I can present a comprehensive assessment of the security issues facing the South Asian region. All that I would attempt to do is to outline the contours of the Security Challenges that South Asia faces in general and Pakistan in particular.

3. Pakistan as indeed South Asia face **a host** of security challenges that **include territorial** disputes, **poor** economic performance, **high population** growth, **scarcity of** resources such as water, energy, food, etc, **terrorism**, **poor** governance, **corruption**, etc. I will however, **restrict myself** to the challenges threatening peace in the region, **rise of** fundamentalism leading to terrorism, **low economic** growth and **issues emerging** in Post 9/11 period.

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4. Let me begin by **introducing** my country. **Pakistan is** located in South Asia and is bordered by **Iran** in the West, **Afghanistan** in the West and Northwest, **China** in the North and **India** in the East. A narrow **Wakhan** finger 7-30 miles wide separates it from Tajikistan. **The strategic** Strait of Hormuz lies close to its border in the Southwest. **History** and culture binds it to South Asia **while its Islamic** faith and values tie it with Muslim countries of the Middle East and North Africa. **Its 150 million** population makes it the 6<sup>th</sup> most populous state in the world and it is the second largest Muslim country. It has the 7<sup>th</sup> largest military in the world, which is armed with nuclear and ballistic missiles. **Mr. Paul Wolfowitz** US Deputy Defence Secretary told the House Armed Services Committee recently that Pakistan's Military is the most important instrument of influence<sup>1</sup>.

5. Pakistan serves as a link between **Middle East**, North Africa and Central Asia to the west and north-west and **South Asia** and SE Asia to the east with capacity to affect regional and international stability. Yale University historian Paul Kennedy regards Pakistan a **pivotal state**. A pivotal state is the one that is so important regionally that its collapse would spell trans-boundary mayhem while its steady economic progress and stability would bolster its region's economic vitality and political soundness and benefit regional trade and investment.<sup>2</sup>

6. **Historical**, Pakistan's perspective on security ever since its independence in 1947 has been dominated by its dispute over Kashmir with its eastern neighbour. **The details** of the dispute are well known to this august gathering and needs no further elucidation. There are of course the Pakistani version and the Indian version of the dispute and the two are poles apart. Without entering into a blame game as to which is the guiltier party, **the sad truth** is that the dispute has led to two full fledged military conflicts between them and a major border skirmish in 1999 that had the potential of escalating into a devastating nuclear conflagration in the region. Besides we barely averted war just 2 years ago due to international mediation.

7. The dispute is **primarily responsible** for a debilitating arms race in the sub-continent since 1947. **The arms race** continues unabated and there is **no likelihood** of any let up till the Kashmir dispute is resolved. For the **dispute to be** resolved, both sides need to display patience and forbearance and move away from their maximal positions and only then an acceptable formula can be **worked out**. Statesmanship of the highest order needs to be displayed by the leaders of both India and Pakistan.

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8. The Arms race and instability in the region has stymied the economy and led to abject poverty in the region. **The economic performance**<sup>4</sup> of both India and Pakistan are as displayed:

	INDIA	PAKISTAN
Rate of GD (P) Growth	4.3%	4.5%
Defence Spending as % of GDP	3 %	4.6 %
Illiterate Population	503 Million	82.8 Million
Population Living Below Poverty	25% (262 Million)	36% (52.7 Million)

9. As is amply evident from this table, **high military** expenditure has resulted in low rates of GDP growth and literacy, which has led to a **high percentage** of population living below the poverty line. **This has imposed** severe restrictions on human development and resulted in limited social and economic opportunities and much human suffering in South Asia. According to the latest ILO Report<sup>5</sup>, unemployment rate in South Asia is around 17 million, which is more than 13% of the total population of the region while **another** 30% population lives below the poverty line. The conflict between India and Pakistan is primarily responsible for this. The UNDP Human Development Report 2003<sup>6</sup> has given **world ranking** of 127 and 142 to India and Pakistan respectively in the Human Development Index,. This

indicates the effects of high military expenditure by the two major South Asian countries. **Overall, this** provokes resentment and discontent amongst the people, which leads to anger and violence.

10. Ladies and Gentlemen, this brings me to the next challenge facing the region. **Rise of Fundamentalism** leading to Terrorism. However, this menace needs a deeper analysis.

11. As you all know, **Afghanistan was** invaded by the erstwhile Soviet Union in 1979. Pakistan bore the main brunt of the chaos that followed. **Over 3 million** Afghan refugees took shelter in Pakistan while the Afghans started resisting the Soviet Forces. The resistance was declared Jihad or holy war. **Muslim youths** were encouraged to come to Pakistan from all over the World for training and then go to Afghanistan to wage **jihad**. **(PAUSE)** **Mujahideen** were supplied liberally with sophisticated weapons, which enabled them to take a heavy toll of the Soviet forces. Unable to withstand these losses, the **Soviet Union** withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989.

12. **Civil war** broke out amongst the heavily armed Afghan Mujahideen soon after the Soviet withdrawal and Afghan refugees refused **to go back**. Use of religion to wage war in Afghanistan had let the religious genie out of the bottle. **Limited economic** opportunities, **high rate** of un-employment and **low rate** of literacy in Pakistan coupled with **Jihadi teachings** prevailing in the region

at that time led to **religious extremism**. Presence of armed and **battle hardened** Afghans and jihadi elements in Pakistan inevitably resulted in violence and terrorism.

13. **In September 2001**, Pakistan joined the War against terrorism and provided **invaluable support** in the fight against terrorism. General Tommy Franks in his book 'The American Soldier' has acknowledged that without Pakistan's active support, US could not have succeeded in launching Operation Enduring Freedom against Taliban. **Pakistani forces** are still battling Al-Qaida militants on Pakistan Afghan border as well as in its cities as I speak. **Today Pakistan** is bearing the main brunt of Al-Qaida terrorism. President Musharraf has survived two attempts on his life, the Prime Minister has barely escaped assassination attempt and its military commanders have been targeted in urban areas. However, I want to reiterate that **majority of Pakistanis** are moderate Muslims and support the Government efforts. It is only a small **misguided minority** which has been driven to extremism on account of poverty, lack of education and economic opportunities. The US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, has recently stated that terrorists are being created faster than the US could kill, which acknowledges the same facts. Thus, **to root out** extremism and terrorism we need to long take long-term view of the problem. We must continue the battle against extremist's elements, but at the same time we have to revive Pakistan's economy, create jobs and

provide justice and hope to the poor so that the breeding ground of the menace of terrorism is rooted out.

14. Now a few words on the issue of **nuclear proliferation**. The very idea that some rogue elements or fringe groups could get hold of a crude nuclear weapon or even a dirty bomb remains a nightmarish scenario. The matter came to a head when one of the leading Pakistani nuclear scientists was exposed as nuclear proliferator during the period 1989-99. Pakistan reacted quickly against the errant scientist and took punitive measures against him and his associates. Though he got a presidential pardon, but the public humiliation of a man of his status, who was revered as a national hero was considered sufficient. I would like to draw a distinction between the period when command and control system did not exist and the period since 2000 to-date when Pakistan has in place fail safe measures including a robust command and control mechanism to ensure that its strategic assets remain secure and chances of nuclear weapons or nuclear technology proliferation is reduced to zero. Pakistan's record since 2000 is impressive and I would like to hold out an assurance that proliferation has not occurred since then and will not take place in future.

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15. I would take this opportunity to talk about the custodial control of our nuclear weapons. In Pakistan, Custodial control has been established on a multi-layered concept at the National Command Authority and a dedicated secretariat responsible for safety and security has been developed in the form of Strategic Plans Division. Its composition is as shown. Amongst other aspects of security, a robust Personnel Reliability Programme, induction of modern surveillance techniques and tight export control measures have ensured strict custodial controls of our nuclear weapons. Handling of these weapons cannot be undertaken by amateurs or novices simply by reading a manual or after rudimentary training of semi-educated zealots in the mountains. Without the essential components and sound technical expertise, these weapons cannot be employed. In Pakistan we have fool-proof systems to ensure that various components remain in safe custody and cannot be taken away by unwanted people. Our scientists are now accounted for and cannot be involved in any unlawful activities in future. I want to assure the house that our weapons are in safe custody the chances of their falling in the wrong hands does not arise.

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16. In the post 9/11 Period, **the Doctrines** of Pre-emption and Regime Change had set alarm bells ringing in **South Asia**. Citing these doctrines, India declared that it had the right to launch preemptive strikes against Pakistan to defend itself. These statements were rightly rejected by US leaders since India faces none of the threats to its security that US had faced, which compelled it to resort to these doctrines

**So What is the way** ahead?

18. In my opinion, the **peace process** currently underway between India and Pakistan must continue and both countries need to show greater understanding of each other's position on Kashmir - which is the core issue between the two countries. President Musharraf has stated that if India took one step towards peace in Kashmir, Pakistan will takes two steps. That is the approach which is required for a just solution of Kashmir dispute. **This process** requires flexibility and mutual trust, however, the process cannot continue forever.

19. To develop trust and avoid mishaps, we must undertake Confidence Building Measures, which would develop tolerance and **better understanding**. Some measures are in place such as the **Exchange of Information** about military forces, facilities and activities, **Communications** Measures for use during crises i.e. hotlines at the GHQ levels, **Notification** Measures including

advance notification of troop movements and exercises, etc. **Some other measures** may be initiated to improve the atmosphere of trust and promote better understanding such as **Track II** Diplomacy, **Preferential** Trade Agreements, **Trade** Fairs, **Individual** Contacts, **Intra-regional** Transportation Agreement, **Cultural** Exchanges, **bilateral** tourism, etc. At the same time it would be prudent to make regional forums such **as SAARC** more effective for mutual consultations and benefit of the entire region.

20. **Pakistan's economy** must be revived to reduce poverty and unemployment which will eliminate the breeding grounds of extremism and terrorism. For this, Pakistan requires the help of other countries, which can be provided in the shape of **foreign investment**. Being a pivotal state, revival of economy in Pakistan will benefit the entire South Asia region. **Only the** revival of our economy will eradicate the breeding grounds of terrorism. Bombing and killing of terrorists alone will not eliminate the scourge of terrorism. It will at best provide a temporary reprieve and the menace will come back stronger than ever before.

21. In order to reform the misguided Muslim youth, President Musharraf has given his vision for '**Enlightened Moderation**'. He has urged the Muslims to undertake **self-introspection** to determine who we are, what do we stand for and what do we want? We must face **stark realities** and avoid the path of confrontation, which only lead to blood-shed. Pakistan is taking

this path to achieve progress and development. For this, **we are** concentrating on human resource development through **poverty** alleviation, **providing** health and education and providing hope and justice to the people. We are also working to rejuvenate Organization for Islamic Countries (OIC) to look after the Muslims collectively. This will pacify everyone and help achieve the goal of peace world-wide and lead to progress and development.

22. Peace between India and Pakistan would reap tremendous benefit for **the entire region**. Oil and gas pipelines between Iran and energy rich Central Asian Republics in the west and energy starved India east of Pakistan would provide energy at the lowest rate. **Transit trade** through Pakistan would provide the shortest land route for trade between India and West and Central Asia. **All this would** become possible only after peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute.

23. **Misgivings** about the Doctrine of Preemption and **Regime** Change must be removed in South Asia. Everyone in the region as indeed in the world is entitled to have guarantees to live in peace.

24. As I have argued in my paper, terror groups proliferate in extreme poverty where injustice prevails. **National security** can be compromised either through naked external aggression or a break-down of law and order due to internal issues from within. Of the two factors, internal issues have become more prominent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which undermines the security of a state. **Alleviation of poverty** therefore is the key to enhancement of security in South Asia in general and Pakistan in particular.

25. Since Second World War, many nations have generally resorted to military means to settle their disputes which in almost all cases has provided no solution and in the bargain bankrupted and impoverished the adversaries. A realization appears to have dawned that **conflict resolution** of the bitterest disputes is best achieved through discussions and dialogues rather than through armed conflicts. This is the silver lining I discern in the otherwise very dark clouds of insecurity around us. And this is my final message to all of us and on this optimistic note I would like to end.

Thank you for your patience.

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