

Human Security, A Pivot for National Growth and Security

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Honorable Chair, Excellencies, distinguish participants, Assalamu Alaikum and very good morning. I hope I am audible and visible. In these extraordinary times where, human contact is risky I appreciate the initiative of KDU to organize international research conference virtually. It is indeed my privilege to share views on holistic approach to national growth and security. This is the most appropriate subject to discuss during the COVID-19 pandemic. When national growth, economy and security of humankind have come under extreme stress. I recall my visit to Sri Lanka in September last year to participate in the international research conference that discussed 'Challenges to Humankind in the Fate of New Technologies' and had the opportunity to share with you the Pakistan's perspective. I still have the phone memories of my visit there because of the unmatched hospitality given to me and my family. Thank you very much and I would love to be back again.

Today, I shall focus on the Human Security as a pivotal for all programmes and efforts of plans to ensure national growth and security. In other words, comprehensive security is human-centric as compared to traditional security which is state-centric. According to famous philosopher John Stuart Mill nearly all other earthly benefits are needed by one person not needed by another. And many of them can be replaced with something else, but security no human being can possibly do without. Ladies and gentlemen, and I do hope that there are ladies in the audience in such forum where serious discussions take place on vital issues of national security, we must first focus the reality that is around us. The reality in my view is that the world is in post truth world where the death of truth has occurred due to proliferation of information, misinformation and half-truths. The social contract between the state and the people

has become channels. To make the state strong, the need to strengthen the social contract is imperative, hence, my emphasis on human security as a pillar of national growth and security.

National security as a notion conveys our perceptions about a set of essential conditions conducive for national survival as well as continuous process for achieving these conditions and maintaining them despite the challenges. Globalization has brought extraordinary interdependence coupled with technological revolution that has blurred the geographical world order and has impacted the fundamental concept of security. While state security transcends into regional and global security the security construct itself revolves around human activity. Thus overlapping security concerns need synergetic gaps of all elements of national path. We all need to keep in mind that WHO emphasises that human well-being is a precondition for world peace. Here I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Pakistan's imminent Economist Dr. Mahbub ul Haq who was instrumental in getting the concept of 'Human Security' cooperatively with the UNDP Human Development Report in 1993. Since then, there has been created stress on peoples' security, food security, environmental security rather than security through armaments. Respectful human rights and policies to ensure observers of human rights have significate in this indicate. But this has not yet come close to securing all humans. Governments try to prioritize the rights and interests of their own citizens over the fundamental rights of others. Human rights are still routinely treated as secondary to national security issues where the two are perceived to clash. Ladies and gentlemen, the modern world has become more complicated, multipolar, multidimensional and uncertain. In fact, our world today is a world of regional and international

developments that will have a far-reaching impact on human security. Major competition over natural resources and body of land and sea has remained the basic reason for competition and confrontation. What if droughts, famines and natural disasters have had negative impact on human security and national growth in countries or regions that confront such challenges. Moreover, emergence of different narratives and ideologies of past governance being imposed by states on their own population on one hand, and by powerful states on weaker dual pin states on the other have disturbed the global environment. Hybrid warfare tactics are being deployed to weaken the social intellectuals and cultural fabric. Extensive usage of social media and information technology by the digital natives of generations are transforming social behaviors. In this era of hybrid warfare and artificial intelligence, the options of human decision making, and values no longer play the same role as before in strategic thinking.

Thus, the concept of national growth, security and stability has become more complex as it involves not only highly sophisticated and technologically advanced weapon systems but also human security, growth and economic well-being. It is imperative to ensure that ongoing revolution in information and communication technologies focuses equally on the human dimensions of security. As responsible members of the international community and as a part of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation our countries must put much emphasis on measures to mitigate the negative impact on climate change, food security, water security, energy security, etc.

Thus, human dimension needs to be given priority in the quest for national and regional security and stability. Ladies and gentlemen, we must be answerable and watchful about the fact that traditional and non-traditional threats emanate from multiple directions. The target can be military or strategic installation and infrastructures but most importantly their target is people and citizens. These threats predominantly rely on the ability to shift through

multiple domains our phenomena increasingly recognized as the fifth-generation warfare. National growth and security are thus not merely related to defense or the armed forces. It needs the ability of the state to attain vital interest as well as to ensure the well-being of the society and the individuals. This broad sense of national security goes beyond just protection from physical harm. Human security embracing far more than absence of conflict. It means freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to inherent our healthy natural environment. These form the building blocks of a holistic national security as it harmonizes all elements of national path and resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic took the world in surprise. It spread like a wave in the countries in the world. The virus does not recognize countries, race, or religion. It attacks anyone who is vulnerable. The world has been given a wakeup call. Nature has lashed back at humankind for brutally utilizing its resources without any efforts to replenish them. No country is enabled to protect its population from the Corona virus single handedly. Perhaps, this is the time to learn to face such challenges through cooperation not competition.

Pakistan has been appreciated globally for its effort to have successfully fought this menace. We were able to achieve this success through multidimensional approaches. We instituted our National Command Operational Center as well as made the people aware about this menace. The recovery rate in Pakistan has been higher. All this could not have been achieved without the commitment and devotion of our medical and para medical staffs. The pandemic has reinforced the vital importance of responsible utilization of information and communication technology and artificial intelligence for human security and not for human destruction. The emerging new technology like artificial intelligence, internet of things, cloud computing has introduced new challenges for human security. While science and technology have given us the tools to improve, they are also presenting serious problems.

Technology no doubt connects us but it also makes us vulnerable to multiple threat including deception revolution, data theft and lethality in weapons and cyber-attacks. These are common challenges to humankind and must be faced collectively. Ladies and gentlemen, Pakistan has been at the fore front of global efforts to make this world more secure. With our success in defeating terrorism and enormous sacrifices by people and security forces, Pakistan is moving forward with determination to overcome the various challenges and roadblocks to security, stability, economic development and growth. Pakistan has faced various challenges of different magnitude. The strategic balance in South Asia has been upset with the acquisition of a state-of-the-art sophisticated lethal weapon system in our region. Arms race may shake the regional security and stability. Our region is truly at the curse of its historic developments. The landmark agreement between the US and Taliban in February this year and the current ongoing intra-dialog has brought a view of fresh hope and sense of positiveness on people of Pakistan and region. Mega projects like TAPI and CASA 1000 would contribute to human security in terms of energy security, economic development and employment generation. The peace in Afghanistan is extremely important for regional growth and security.

To conclude ladies and gentlemen, the vital linkage between peace and security on the one hand and national growth and human development on the other cannot be over emphasized. No other country knows this battle in Pakistan. In an environmental regional peace, the countries of South Asian region shall find opportunities for cooperation and connectivity

that has the potential to transform our region into an economic angel of Asia. I am deeply convinced that our region can realize its true potential if the countries of the region respect each other as equal partners and cooperate with each other as equal members of the international community.

Thank you.

Author Biography



Major Geneneral Asif Ali was commissioned in 15 (Self Propelled) Medium Regiment Artillery in 1987. He is a graduate of Command and Staff College Quetta, NDU Islamabad and NDU China. The General has held various staff assignments including General Staff Officer-3 and later Brigade Major of an Infantry Brigade and Chief of Staff at Headquarters Army Strategic Force Command. On the instructional side he remained on the Faculty of Command and Staff College Quetta and School of Artillery. He has also served as Military Observer in Iraq, Kuwait. He has commanded 15 (Self Propelled) Medium Regiment Artillery, Mujahid Infantry Battalion along Line of Control, 116 Infantry Brigade in Operation Al-Mizan and Division Artillery in Operation Al-Mizan. He has remained Commandant School of Artillery and has the honour of Commanding a Strategic Division. He is presently serving as Direcor General ISSRA since 1st January 2019 and pursuing his Ph. D. in Peace and Conflict Studies.