

## **Pakistan geo-economic transition can't succeed without shift in its India policy.**

The case for major reform to get Pakistan out of the multiple crises confronting it has been articulated by its Chief of Army Staff, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, in recent years.

The “Bajwa Doctrine” emphasises the importance of restoring peace within by putting down various internal insurgencies, reviving economic growth, reconciling with the neighbours, rebuilding ties with the US without abandoning the strategic partnership with China, and regaining its traditional political goodwill in the Gulf.

General Bajwa tied together many of these ideas in a well-received speech last March. The National Security Policy document issued by Islamabad last week is an effort to codify the Bajwa Doctrine into an actionable statement of purpose and a strategy for its realisation. The document identifies a wide range of unexceptionable goals; what stands out is the ambition to integrate economic development into the traditional military conception of national security.

The external complement to this is the emphasis on “geo-economics” in contrast to the traditional obsession of the Pakistan Army with “geopolitics”. The former focuses on trade and connectivity while the latter is about power and its projection.

No one has a higher stake than India in the success of the Bajwa doctrine that calls for a Pakistan at peace with itself and the region.

Does Pakistan, however, have the will and capability to implement it? One reason development took a back seat to security in Pakistan is the political dominance of the army that cornered most of the economic resources, in the name of protecting the nation from the “Indian threat”.

Even if the army cedes some ground, can it crack the economic stranglehold of the small but entrenched rentier classes?

Pakistan has gone to the IMF more than twenty times but has been unable to forge long overdue structural changes in the economy. If the NSP is about modernising Pakistan, Imran Khan is looking to the past for political survival amidst growing unpopularity of his government whose economic incompetence imposed huge costs on the people.

Barely two days after releasing the National Security Policy, Imran Khan published an op-ed outlining his vision for “Riyasat-e-Madina” in Pakistan based on the order that Prophet Mohammed had created in Madina after leading his followers out of Mecca in the early seventh century.

That Imran Khan may not be in sync with the army is also borne out by India’s recent engagement with Pakistan. Delhi negotiated a ceasefire agreement with the Pakistan Army last February that was to be followed by a series of confidence-building measures, including trade.

The decision to resume limited overland commerce was quickly overturned by Imran Khan, who insisted there can be no engagement with India until Delhi reversed the 2019 constitutional changes in Kashmir. Pakistan’s geoeconomic transition can’t succeed without a fundamental shift in its India policy.

Discarding the many impossible goals that Islamabad has set for itself against Delhi and coming to terms with Pakistan’s relative economic decline in relation to India will be immensely painful. If Pakistan can get its act together on “burying the past” — as Gen Bajwa said last March — India should be ready to extend a hand.

Committed To Excellence

## Expected Question (Prelims Exams)

- Q. Which of the following country has announced its National Security Policy?
- (a) Russia
  - (b) China
  - (c) Pakistan
  - (d) UAE

## Expected Question (Mains Exams)

- Q. What is the new national security policy of Pakistan? Discuss the attitude towards India in this policy. (250 Words)

World

Committed To Excellence

**Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC main examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.**