

## PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY (2022) – GENESIS AND ANALYSIS

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### **Abstract**

*With supranational, international, and local bodies accentuating Pakistan's deteriorating security conditions, it becomes worthwhile underscoring the series of events that culminated in the promulgation of the National Security Policy (NSP), to begin with. Whilst doing so, a litany of questions arise: was it internal factors that prompted such a policy or external factors - or a combination of both? More importantly, was the passage of the NSP a monolithic, standardised, straight forward process, which involved little to no backlash or a herculean endeavour on the behest of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan? With such questions looming, this research paper presents critical analysis elucidating the factors - both historic and present - endorsing the NSP, in addition to the theoretical rationale that underpins it. From classic to contemporary paradigms, from realism to constructivism and postmodernism, the holistic, all-encompassing nature of this paper lends weightage to a diverse array of theories, as opposed to swearing by one, in acquiescence with how multifaceted the political realm is and thus, the policy making process that falls within its ambit. Alongside conceptual justifications, this paper cites noteworthy real-life examples - from the Indo-Pak animosity, to the post-cold war tensions, and Pakistan's debilitating economic and political imperatives.*

**Keywords:** Pakistan, Holistic Framework of Analysis, National Security Policy.

### **Introduction**

**S**ecurity is an integral component of politics. Without emphasizing the importance of security, the world order cannot be understood. Every day, someone somewhere in the globe suffers the consequences of security, including death, starvation, torture, rape, poverty, detention, displacement, and denial of education and medical treatment. This implies that to understand global affairs,

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security, and its derivative concepts, the synergy between theory and practice is indispensable. Thus, security is not just an intellectual pursuit because the urge to exercise security is driven by real people in real places. In other words, security is best analyzed by individual case studies of nations; how the nations have ensured security to create a balance of power to preserve the state's interests. While the origins of safeguarding nation-states trace back to the establishment of the nation-state framework, the conceptualization of nation-state security is a more contemporary advancement.

The term "national security" pertains to shielding a nation from external menaces and upholding domestic stability. This intricate and multifaceted concept encompasses diverse concerns like border integrity, cyber protection, law enforcement, and military fortification.<sup>1</sup> Scholarly works suggest that the traditional ideas of sovereignty and security are closely intertwined with the established notion of national security. However, in recent years, the concept of national security has become more comprehensive, reflecting the growing interconnectedness of the world and the increasing number of threats that nations face; the evolved National Security in-folds the issues of human security, economic security, and environmental security.<sup>2</sup> This insight denotes that the scope of this novel concept within the larger paradigm of security is inclusive of the global challenges that have been affecting policy-making on the state level.

The post-Cold War world order has been influenced by globalization. A new set of challenges have emerged, such as innovative technologies, terrorism, and climate change. To cater to this paradigm shift in security concerns, National Security policy-making has also become human-centric, incorporating the nuances of the evolved concepts of security. Therefore, in "National and International Security: Theory Then, Theory Now" insists that the policy development of National Security is a risk-based approach to analyze threats and balance security concerns.<sup>3</sup> This premise suggests that regardless of the dynamics of international relations in the twentieth century, the National Security policy of each state is shaped by the individual set of experiences in terms of culture, shared values, political norms, and history of threat perception. For example, in the US, the extension of the president's power over national security policy has been accompanied by deference to long-standing restraints like Congress and public opinion.<sup>4</sup> Similar to this, India's strategic culture and the state's involvement in internal security have influenced its national security policy.<sup>5</sup> As reflected by the

literature, National Security policy-making is a subjective pursuit, triggered by the interplay of historical precedents and internal political order.

The practical nature of the National Security policy would not deny the significance of theoretical rationales that govern the decisions, even though the application of theory in policy-making has been inconsistent and often flawed.<sup>6</sup> To illustrate, the end of the Cold War necessitated a re-examination and refinement of basic concepts and theoretical perspectives, such as hegemony and multilateral management.<sup>7</sup> The post-September 11 world order has continued to operate, however, on the back of Cold War apprehensions, as is fairly clear from recent history. The national security measures created in reaction to the perceived Soviet threat during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations as a result of presumptions of global danger continued to serve as a model for the political leaders of the twenty-first century.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to that, the development of multi-dimensional methodological constructs within the neoclassical model proposed to overcome the unilateralism of existing realist paradigms in national security studies, and the use of "soft power" theory become an important tool for protecting national security in the context of globalization.<sup>9</sup>

To cater to the changing dynamics of society and the limitations of traditional approaches, the postmodern theories of national security have emerged. These theories challenge dominant understandings and practices of security by emphasizing the importance of identity construction, discourse analysis, and the unmaking of security, arguing that security is not solely focused on the state and military, but also considers the well-being and protection of individuals.<sup>10</sup> This proposition hints that the evolution in the scope of National Security within traditional security is the result of the transposition of the ideas of political philosophy. This shift has urged us to synthesize a new moral code in the face of rapid scientific and technological advancements. For instance, it questions the definitions and meanings of security, and seeks to neutralize and counteract both external and internal factors that may potentially harm a system. However, it is pertinent to mention that despite the robust debate surrounding postmodern theories of national security, they have not yet signified a paradigm shift in the security thinking of the global south.<sup>11</sup>

The theoretical rationale underpinning Pakistan's adoption of a National Security Policy (NSP) is a dynamic fusion of classical and contemporary security paradigms, which have been instrumental in shaping the nation's understanding

of security threats and its strategic response. Rooted in theoretical perspectives such as realism, constructivism, and postmodernism, this rationale forms the intellectual foundation upon which Pakistan has formulated its security policies.

Realism, a prominent theoretical lens, underscores the anarchic nature of the international system, driving states to prioritize military power and strategic interests for survival.<sup>12</sup> In Pakistan's case, historical tensions with neighboring India, particularly over the Kashmir issue, have reinforced the realist perspective by intensifying its focus on maintaining military capabilities and deterrence mechanisms to safeguard its territorial integrity. However, the theoretical framework does not solely rest on realism.<sup>13</sup> Constructivism, a more recent addition to security studies, emphasizes the role of ideas, norms, and identity in shaping state behavior.<sup>14</sup> For Pakistan, its identity as an Islamic state has played a crucial role in influencing its security priorities. Seeking international recognition and countering negative stereotypes, Pakistan has embarked on diplomatic initiatives and efforts against extremism to project a positive global image, reflecting the constructivist emphasis on identity projection.

Postmodern perspectives have introduced a paradigm shift by expanding security beyond traditional military considerations to encompass human well-being, economic stability, and non-traditional threats. This expansion aligns with the evolving security landscape in Pakistan, where non-military challenges like terrorism, economic disparities, and environmental vulnerabilities have gained prominence within the NSP framework. This theoretical synthesis does not exist in isolation but operates within the intricate fabric of Pakistan's historical, social, and political context. The interplay between these theoretical perspectives informs Pakistan's nuanced approach to security policy-making. The nation's recognition of the intricate web of threats, from historical animosities to transnational terrorism, resonates with these theoretical underpinnings. Hence, the theoretical rationale behind Pakistan's NSP showcases a dynamic interplay between realism, constructivism, and postmodernism. This theoretical foundation is embedded within the complex socio-political tapestry of Pakistan, reflecting the nation's understanding of historical conflicts, evolving regional dynamics, and the multifaceted nature of modern security challenges. This nuanced approach allows Pakistan to craft an NSP that balances military preparedness, diplomatic engagement, and socio-economic development in a rapidly changing global environment.

Pakistan's adoption of a National Security Policy (NSP) presents a complex case study shaped by historical conflicts, regional dynamics, and evolving theoretical perspectives on security rooted in its fierce history of conflict with India over issues like Kashmir. Pakistan's NSP is profoundly influenced by various theoretical rationales, while simultaneously grappling with distinct challenges.<sup>15</sup> The historical hostility primarily from the Indian side has driven Pakistan to prioritize military strength and deterrence as fundamental elements of its NSP, aligning with the realist perspective's focus on power and survival. Furthermore, Pakistan's identity as an Islamic state and its aspiration for international recognition have also significantly impacted its security priorities, resonating with the constructivist approach's emphasis on ideas and norms.<sup>16</sup> In this context, Pakistan's efforts to counter negative stereotypes, combat terrorism, and project a favorable international image are evident. Additionally, as postmodern perspectives challenge conventional security notions, Pakistan acknowledges the importance of addressing internal security threats and incorporating socio-economic development within its security framework.<sup>17</sup> However, the translation of these theoretical influences into practical policy is confronted by multifaceted challenges. Institutional imbalances, governance weaknesses, and the complexity of regional relationships have hindered the formulation of a comprehensive and coherent NSP.<sup>18</sup> The delicate balance of civilian authority and historical military interventions has engendered inconsistencies in policy formulation. Furthermore, governance shortcomings and corruption have impeded effective implementation, undermining the realization of human security and socio-economic development objectives.<sup>19</sup> Pakistan's intricate regional relationships, notably with India and Afghanistan, further underscore the complexity of its NSP, necessitating a nuanced understanding informed by an amalgamation of theoretical perspectives. In essence, Pakistan's NSP exemplifies the intricate interplay between historical legacies, geopolitical realities, and theoretical foundations, and underscores the challenges of translating theoretical rationales into actionable security policies in a rapidly evolving global landscape.

### **What Prompted Pakistan's Government to Adopt an NSP - 2022?**

A confluence of variables, including past experiences, changing security concerns, and theoretical security viewpoints, led Pakistan to create a National Security Policy (NSP). These factors taken together compelled the Pakistani government to create a comprehensive framework that holistically handles the country's security issues.

The history of Pakistan's disputes with India, particularly the Kashmir problem, has had a significant role in determining its security objectives.<sup>20</sup> Pakistan is forced to put a premium on its military prowess and deterrence due to historical hostility that has its roots in the partition of British India in 1947.<sup>21</sup> In order to protect Pakistan's territorial integrity, a comprehensive and well-defined NSP is required. This requirement has been highlighted by the ongoing Kashmir conflict and previous wars between the two nations. New security issues emerged in the post-Cold War era that went beyond conventional military threats. Pakistan's security strategy needed to change as a result of the rise of international terrorism, extremism, and internal disputes.<sup>22</sup> These emerging threats required a comprehensive framework that could address not only external military challenges but also internal security vulnerabilities.

The decision by Pakistan to adopt a comprehensive National Security Policy (NSP) was significantly influenced by theoretical shifts that reconceptualized the very essence of security, extending it well beyond conventional military dimensions. This transformation was spurred by the expanded understanding of security that encompassed diverse aspects such as human well-being, economic stability, and non-traditional threats.<sup>23</sup> The broader conception of security, often referred to as the human security approach, sought to address the fundamental needs and rights of individuals, transcending the traditional state-centric focus. Recognizing the implications of this paradigm shift, Pakistan acknowledged the significance of incorporating these multifaceted dimensions into its security framework. Central to this evolution was the constructivist perspective, which emphasized the role of identity, norms, and ideas in shaping state behavior.<sup>24</sup> In the context of Pakistan's security considerations, the constructivist lens highlighted the importance of projecting a positive global image and countering negative stereotypes. As Pakistan navigated its security landscape, it recognized that addressing security challenges required not only military prowess but also diplomatic efforts to shape international perceptions. The constructivist insight underscored the potency of diplomatic engagement in countering negative narratives and enhancing the nation's global reputation. Consequently, Pakistan's decision to expand the horizons of its NSP was rooted in a twofold understanding. Firstly, the theoretical redefinition of security encompassed aspects that resonated with the evolving global security landscape. The recognition of non-traditional threats such as environmental degradation, economic instability, and public health concerns signaled a departure from the conventional state-centric approach. Secondly, the constructivist perspective prompted Pakistan to acknowledge the pivotal role of

diplomacy and image projection in an interconnected world. By recognizing that security transcends military might and includes the fostering of positive norms and identity, Pakistan's NSP encapsulated a multidimensional approach.

The increasing interconnectedness of the world due to globalization underscored the need for a more comprehensive NSP. Global challenges such as climate change, cyber threats, and pandemics transcended national borders, demanding a holistic approach to security.<sup>25</sup> Pakistan's recognition of these challenges pushed it to integrate economic security and environmental considerations into its security framework. The presence of historical civil-military role in realizing Pakistan's security goalposts also played a role in the decision to adopt an NSP. An overarching aim of the NSP was to remove policy inconsistencies and gaps in security planning.<sup>26</sup> The government's aim to chart a comprehensive pathway ensuring a due role to all the stakeholders vis-à-vis a proactive security posture. In short, Pakistan's decision to adopt a National Security Policy (NSP) was prompted by a combination of historical experiences, evolving security challenges, and changing theoretical perspectives. The need to address both traditional military threats and emerging non-traditional challenges, along with the desire to establish a coherent and inclusive security framework, led the government to formulate an NSP that reflects the complexities of the modern security landscape.

### **Challenges Faced by the Government to Implement the National Security Policy (NSP) 2022**

A confluence of variables, including past experiences, changing security concerns, and theoretical security viewpoints, led Pakistan to create a National Security Policy (NSP). These factors taken together compelled the Pakistani government to create a comprehensive framework that holistically handles the country's security issues. The historical underpinnings, predominantly shaped by the conflict with India over Kashmir, have etched a sense of vulnerability in Pakistan's strategic psyche.<sup>27</sup> This history of animosity, rooted in the partition of British India in 1947, has imprinted an existential threat, thereby compelling Pakistan to accord paramount importance to military capabilities and deterrence.<sup>28</sup> The ongoing dispute over Kashmir and the historical conflicts have vividly underscored the indispensability of a coherent and well-defined NSP to safeguard Pakistan's territorial integrity.

The post-Cold War era marked a transformative phase in global security dynamics, presenting Pakistan with a constellation of challenges that extended beyond conventional military threats. The surge of transnational terrorism, extremism, and internal conflicts ushered in an imperative for Pakistan to recalibrate its security approach.<sup>29</sup> These emergent and multifaceted threats necessitated a fundamental reevaluation of Pakistan's security paradigm. It prompted a shift towards an all-encompassing security framework that not only addressed traditional external military challenges but also encompassed vulnerabilities within the nation's domestic landscape. The recognition of this shifting threat landscape spurred Pakistan to devise a comprehensive National Security Policy (NSP) capable of proactively addressing an array of security challenges, both internal and external. This recalibration was underscored by theoretical shifts in security perspectives, which further accentuated the need for a more expansive NSP that transcended conventional military dimensions.

The concept of security underwent a profound transformation, expanding to encompass dimensions such as human security, economic stability, and non-traditional hazards.<sup>30</sup> Pakistan's response was influenced by this broader conception of security, prompting the nation to integrate these multidimensional aspects into its security paradigm. The theoretical embrace of these dimensions within the NSP framework reflects Pakistan's recognition of the interconnected and interdependent nature of contemporary security challenges. Moreover, the constructivist lens played a pivotal role in shaping Pakistan's security orientation. This perspective, which highlights the influence of identity and norms on state behavior, impelled Pakistan to adopt diplomatic initiatives aimed at challenging negative stereotypes and enhancing its global image.<sup>31</sup>

Acknowledging the significance of normative engagement and identity projection, Pakistan embarked on endeavors that not only enhanced its reputation but also positioned it as an active participant in shaping international norms. The post-Cold War era ushered in a paradigm shift in global security challenges, propelling Pakistan to adapt its security approach to address a spectrum of non-traditional threats. The theoretical shifts in security understanding, particularly the expansion of security dimensions and the constructivist emphasis on identity projection, influenced Pakistan's NSP formulation. This comprehensive security framework reflects Pakistan's acknowledgment of the multifaceted nature of contemporary security challenges, underscoring the nation's commitment to safeguarding its interests in a rapidly evolving global landscape.



Amidst the inexorable forces of globalization that brought increased interconnectedness, Pakistan's recognition of global challenges like climate change, cyber threats, and pandemics necessitated a more inclusive NSP.<sup>32</sup> The acknowledgment of these challenges propelled Pakistan to integrate economic security and environmental considerations into its security architecture. Concurrently, Pakistan's historical transitions in the civil-military governance patterns have added an additional layer of complexity to its security calculus.<sup>33</sup> Pakistan's NSP results from a synergy of historical experiences, evolving security concerns, and theoretical frameworks, aiming to tackle conventional and new challenges. This underscores Pakistan's dedication to navigating a swiftly evolving global scenario. Within this intricate context, Pakistan strives to preserve its sovereignty, elevate its international standing, and effectively address a spectrum of security issues.

### **Reception of the NSP 2022 and Its Impact on Pakistan's International Image**

The National Security Policy (NSP) of 2022 marked a significant milestone in Pakistan's journey to redefine its security priorities and shape its global image. This section delves into the reception of the NSP within political and international circles and examines how it contributed positively to Pakistan's nation branding on the international stage.

The NSP 2022 garnered attention and scrutiny from various political circles and stakeholders within Pakistan. Political parties and leaders across the spectrum had a keen interest in the policy's implications, given its potential to influence the country's security landscape. The NSP received bipartisan support within Pakistan's political landscape. Despite ideological differences, political leaders recognized the need for a comprehensive security framework that transcended party lines. This consensus demonstrated a commitment to national security that transcended political divisions. The NSP also played a role in shaping civil-military relations. The policy's emphasis on civilian supremacy in security matters led to discussions and negotiations between civilian and military leadership. While tensions persisted, the NSP provided a common reference point for these discussions. Political circles closely monitored the implementation of the NSP. Transparency and accountability in policy execution were subjects of continuous debate. The effectiveness of governance mechanisms in translating policy objectives into practical measures was a recurring theme.

Beyond its domestic reception, the NSP 2022 had a notable impact on Pakistan's international image. Nation branding, the practice of shaping a country's image and reputation on the global stage, is a multifaceted process influenced by various factors. The NSP's dedication to battling terrorism and extremism found favor with the world community. Pakistan's involvement in the worldwide fight on terror has drawn attention in the years after September 11, 2001. The NSP offered a framework for Pakistan's strategic partnership with other nations in the fight against terrorism. The NSP's constructivist perspective, emphasizing diplomatic initiatives and identity projection, contributed to Pakistan's enhanced diplomatic engagement. The nation actively participated in regional and international forums, fostering positive norms and projecting a favorable image. Economic stability and development are integral components of a nation's brand. The NSP recognized economic security as a dimension of national security. Efforts to address economic disparities and promote stability contributed to a more favorable international perception of Pakistan as a stable and potentially prosperous nation.

Pakistan's efforts to balance external security priorities with regional stability imperatives, as outlined in the NSP, were viewed positively by neighboring countries and the international community. The policy's focus on conflict resolution and regional cooperation added to Pakistan's image as a responsible regional actor. International organizations and partners took note of Pakistan's commitment to transparency and accountability in policy implementation. This commitment, as emphasized in the NSP, helped build trust and credibility. Hence, the reception of the NSP 2022 within political and international circles was generally positive. Domestically, it fostered bipartisan consensus on national security and influenced civil-military relations. Internationally, the policy contributed to Pakistan's nation branding in several ways, including its counterterrorism efforts, diplomatic engagement, economic stability initiatives, and commitment to transparency. While challenges remained, the NSP played a pivotal role in shaping Pakistan's image on the global stage, presenting the nation as a responsible actor committed to regional stability and international security.

## Conclusion

The adoption of a National Security Policy (NSP) by the government of Pakistan highlights the challenging process of transforming theoretical foundations into workable policy frameworks by illustrating the complex

interaction of historical factors, shifting theoretical paradigms, and difficult real-world issues. The factors motivating Pakistan's government to embrace an NSP encapsulate the intricate security landscape the nation navigates, compelling the need for a comprehensive approach that addresses a spectrum of emergent threats and challenges.

Pakistan's historical experiences, notably its prolonged conflict with India over the Kashmir issue, profoundly influenced its security calculus. The scars of past wars and ongoing tensions have etched a sense of vulnerability, driving Pakistan to prioritize military capabilities and deterrence mechanisms within its NSP. This historical perspective aligns with the realist conception of security, while Pakistan's Islamic identity and quest for international recognition have propelled efforts to counter negative perceptions and cultivate a constructive global image. The constructivist perspective underscores the significance of identity and norms, Pakistan's diplomatic endeavors and initiatives against extremism resonating with this emphasis. The emergence of postmodern viewpoints has also influenced Pakistan's security outlook, extending security to encompass diverse dimensions. Acknowledging internal security challenges necessitates a comprehensive framework addressing both conventional and unconventional threats.

However, despite these theoretical underpinnings, practical challenges complicate NSP formulation and execution. Governance gaps, regional intricacies, and financial constraints pose hurdles. Corruption and inefficiencies hinder policy implementation, undermining socio-economic goals. Persistent complex regional interactions, particularly with India and Afghanistan, further clouds the national security prism. Balancing external security and internal stability requires proactive and solution-based deliberations across the board in the country. In sum, Pakistan's NSP journey showcases the fusion of its indigenous vision anchored in historical narratives. Envisioning and instituting a holistic National Security Policy based on in-depth understanding, innovation, and commitment to national interests is a step in the right direction – not devoid of challenges!

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