

Mizanur Rahman Khan

SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT : A THIRD WORLD DILEMMA

*Every gun that is made, every worship launched, every
rocket fired, signifies in a final sense, a theft from those
who hunger and are not fed.* —D.D. Eisenhower

Introduction

Although the former President of the US made this comment almost three decades ago in the global context, in today's reality this is still valid, the more so in the case of the Third World. Security and development, in whatever way they are understood, are two fundamental goals of any society irrespective of its stage of development, social system and value orientation. But few controversies in the political economy of developing countries are as intense and important for immediate policy implementation as between guns and butter or security and development.¹ The debate pertains to whether realization of any one of the goals negatively affects the other or whether they can be made congruent. This is more so because the developing countries in general suffer from severe scarcity of resources and therefore intense conflict over sectoral allocation of these scarce resources among different interest and pressure groups is a common feature in these transitional societies. The history of Latin

1 H. Bienen (ed), *The Military and Modernisation* (Chicago : Aldino-Atherton Inc, 1971 pp. 24-25.

America, Africa and perhaps also Asia is full of instances in which the guns-butter dilemma cost many a regime its position and the country, its domestic stability.² Exploration of the nature and sources of this dilemma therefore may be an useful exercise.

An additional rationale of such an attempt follows from the fact that during the last three decades, the developing countries could not achieve the desired result in their development pursuits. On the other hand, though the Third UN Decade of Development is almost halfway, the goals of NIEO remains as elusive as ever. More than one-fifth of the world population still live in abject poverty. Food dependency is growing alarmingly, with the Third World's grain deficit expected to treble by the year 2000. Literally millions of people face a premature death because national and global inequalities deny them access to the minimum basic needs of life. As a result, the developing countries suffer from endemic political and socio-economic instability often tending to spill over beyond national frontiers.

In dire contrast to this trend, increasing amount of resources are being diverted to areas which are hardly poverty-oriented. Defence is one such sector. Present global expenditure on defence is running an all time high—almost closing the trillion dollar mark. The most striking part of the trend is the rapid increase of defence expenditure in the Third World which rose much faster than the GNP of these countries. One immediate consequence of this growing arms build-up is the increasing militarization of political authority. As of 1981, 54 countries were formally run by military rulers and between 1960 and 1980, 76 coups occurred in these countries.³ At international level,

2 See E. Nordlinger, "Soldiers in Mufti : The Impact of Military Rule Upon Economic and Social Change in Non-Western States", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, December, 1970; H. Hanning, *The Peaceful Uses of Military Force* (New York : Praeger Publishers, 1967) and J.J. Johnson (ed), *The Role of Military in Underdeveloped Countries* (Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1962).

3 R.L. Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures*, 1981 (Virginia : World Priorities Inc), p. 7.

about 125 local wars took place since World War I and 90 percent of them took place in the developing world. Therefore, it is very much questionable to what extent increasing expenditure on defence guided by security considerations can bolster political security. Further, the question is—whether poverty, domestic instability and local armed conflict are isolated events or they are the outcome of the global problem of arms build-up and militarisation.

With such a perspective the present paper focuses on the relationship between security and development. For this purpose, an attempt is first made to analyse the concepts of security and development in the context of the Third World.

Concept of Security

Conventionally security pertains to protection of territorial integrity and political independence from external attack. One scholar defines security as “the protection and preservation of the minimum core values of any nation : political independence and territorial integrity”.⁴ According to Walter Lippman, “A nation is secure to the extent it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values, if it wishes to avoid war and is able if challenged to maintain them by victory in such a war”.⁵ Following this definition, Wolfers says : “Security rises and falls with ability of a nation to deter attack or to defeat it”.⁶ The perennial debate on national security centres around what to defend and how to defend⁷ and there is little consensus on the question. Even if we accept core values as the object to be secured, core values should not necessarily be equated with political independence and territorial integrity alone which are rather outward or

4 T. Maniruzzaman, *Security of Small States in the Third World* (Canberra : Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1982), p. 15.

5 Quoted in *Ibid*, p. 15.

6 A. Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration : On International Politics* (Baltimore : The John Hopkins University Press, 1962), p. 150.

7 J. Galtung, “Two Concepts of Defence”, *Bulletin for Peace Proposal*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1978, pp. 329-37.

formal shape of core values. Such a distinction is necessary in the prevailing situation of the Third World for identifying the sources of threats to security and for an understanding of how to ensure security against such threats.

Sources of Threats to Security

Sources of threats to security depends on the very concept of security a country or group of countries follow. The commonly held view is that sources of threats to security are external—external to the unit of analysis, that is, the state. Such a view originates from the particular pattern of historical and political developments associated with the Western industrialised sovereign and democratic states. Interaction among sovereign states on the one hand and greater identification of the individuals with their respective states on the other helped the growth of such a concept of security.⁸ In such a concept the security of groups and individuals, that is security of the society, as opposed to the state, came to be totally subsumed within state security indicated by sovereignty and national boundary. Developments since 1945 reinforced such a notion and alliance security or systemic security became an extension of the concept of state security, the externally originated threat being further sharpened.

The situation of the recently emerged or newly emerging Third World countries is, however, totally different. Many of them are yet to solve the basic state problems of sovereignty, state boundaries, legitimacy (of the regime) and national integration. "The sense of insecurity from which these states and more particularly, their regimes—suffer, emanates to a substantial extent from within their boundaries rather than from outside".⁹ Lack of national integration, low level of political development, legitimacy of the state apparatus and regimes and more importantly, poverty and at the same time scramble for whatever

8 M. Ayoob, "Security in the Third World : the Warm About to Turn ?" *International Affairs*, Vol. 60, No. 1, Winter 1983-84, p. 42.

9 *Ibid*, p. 43,

scarce resources are available constitute major threats to security of these states.¹⁰ Of course external sources of threats to security are there and local wars between nations are almost endemic in the Third World. But the peculiar thing about those tensions and conflicts between states is that in most cases internal threats breed and reinforce such inter-state problems. Threats to Pakistan from India during the 1971 Bangladesh crisis were more from the Bangladeshi nationalists than from India. Iran-Iraq war has certainly been fuelled by internal sources. Indonesia still perceives internal sources of threats to security more prominent than external (though the statement has to be partly qualified in view of the Kampuchean crisis).⁷ Basic threats to security of the Third World developing countries, therefore, originate

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from within and they may be broadly divided into two inter-related categories—poverty and social conflicts or power struggle between different interest groups: politicians, civil and military bureaucracy and business community. This is because continued economic stagnation weakens the major conflict-resolving mechanism of social engineering, i.e., the ability of the state to 'buy off' sectional demands by giving everyone bigger slice of a growing economic pie. Therefore, on the one hand, so long there is the minimum level of economic development and at least the minimum economic needs of those who matter in state power are satisfied and there is one dominant interest groups or a coalition of interest groups on the other, there is domestic political stability and major sources of threats to state security may be said to have been neutralised.

10 A. R. Khan, "Strategic Studies in the Third World : A Suggested Approach" *BIISS Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1984, pp. 117-35.

Traditional Security Approaches in the Third World

For all practical purposes, however, the concept of security in the Third World countries are externalised "in order both to portray such threats as 'illegitimate (in the sense that they emanate from abroad and violate the norm of state sovereignty and its corollary of non-intervention by other states) and to portray its repressive actions as 'legitimate'By turning a political (and quite often a social and economic) problem into a military one, and by presenting the military threat as coming from external sources, regimes in the Third World often try to choose an area of confrontation with domestic dissidents that is favourable to themselves, namely, the military arena".¹¹

In such a situation, the traditional approaches to security by the Third World countries as also by the developed ones are confined to :

- a. Arms build-up through increasing allocation of resources to defence sector and through military aid ;
- b. Alliance that reinforces arms build-up ; and
- c. Diplomacy.

While a modern state is inconceivable without standing armed forces, the fact remains that increased arms build-up does not enhance security. Rather it breeds insecurity in the sense that such arms build-up in the Third World, for all practical purposes, is directed by one neighbour against the other. The case of South Asia may provide a typical example. In the region of South Asia, there is the largest concentration of poverty. And at the same time, the region has been characterized by endemic instability and tensions, often on issues pertaining to internal security. In response to mutual threat perceptions, the countries of the region, specially India and Pakistan, have embarked on massive armaments which not only endanger regional security but also creates a permanent and structural burden on the respective economies. Besides, whatever may be the level of arms build-up and

11 M. Ayoob, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

defence expenditure in relation to the other sectors of the economy, the war-making capability of these developing states remains doubtful.¹²

Further, military aid by the major powers is an effective instrument in the currently active global strategic co-optation system. This naturally exerts a telling influence over the development strategy and value orientation pursued by the aid-recipient governments.

There are certain inherent weaknesses and costs involved when a small state enters into an alliance or *modus vivendi* with a major/super power or bigger neighbour.¹³ Effectiveness of alliance depends usually on the usefulness of the smaller partner to the bigger one, the prevailing international and regional environment and more importantly, on the congruity of perception with respect to specific sources of threat. Very often security of the smaller partners or smaller neighbours becomes a matter of courtesy of the bigger partner. At normative level, Maniruzzaman emphasises on (a) diplomacy and (b) "Thousand Sources of Resistance" strategy.¹⁴ While the relevance and effectiveness of diplomacy in resisting attack or dismantling occupation has empirical validity (the case of Kampuchea under Sihanouk), one has to again cast doubt about the operational validity of the impressive concept of "Thousand Sources of Resistance", as it has been conceived. For all practical purposes, such concepts as national resistance, people's war, partisan fighting, territorial defence etc. are tactical variants of traditional concept of external-oriented defence. Such tactics presupposes a highly motivated populace to be achieved only through a well-architected national integration. And that brings us back to the fundamental issues of internal sources of threats to security that have to be tackled first. Problems of social, political and economic development therefore come to the forefront as what is known as development concept of security.

12 T. Maniruzzaman, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-14.

13 *Ibid*, pp. 51-59.

14 *Ibid*, pp. 59-65.

Development Approaches in the Third World

During the last three decades the developing countries have experimented with a number development models advocated by the western countries and international lending and development assistance agencies. The fifties and sixties were dominated by the 'growth oriented' strategy putting single-minded emphasis on the growth of macro statistics like GNP. Under this, it was assumed that the rapid growth of GNP through expansion of mainly industries would 'trickle down' to other sectors, thus finally the benefits of economic expansion going down to the mass of population. This strategy relied upon the modernising elites on the assumption that they could make the best use of available resources—both domestic and foreign. Other measures included a policy of import substitution by local manufacturing and price regulation and other fiscal measures. This conventional approach to development gave preference to the industrial sector in the allocation of resources. Further, a price structure through currency regulation siphoned off surplus from agriculture to the industry sector. As a result, the sector of agriculture stagnated. A mere emphasis on the expansion of GNP has allowed the distributional aspect of economic growth to be ignored and helped to obscure the contribution of the rural—largely non-monetized—sector to the economy. Then, in the early sixties modern input-based Green Revolution was introduced in agriculture of the developing countries. However, by the end of the 1960s it became evident that the 'trickle down' development strategy, though brought somewhat rapid economic growth in some parts of the developing world, ended up by enriching only the elites, both urban and rural, at the expense of mass deprivation in the Third World.

Then some endeavour was taken to achieve growth with equity mainly through employment expansion of the poor people. But this also did not bring the desired result, for it was found that the root problem of poverty is not unemployment but something else. The question remained whether equality *per se* was of more concern to the

people than satisfaction of basic needs.¹⁵ The latest in a series of development thinking is a strategy of Basic Needs Approach (BNA) for Third World development advocated by proponents from both developed and developing countries. Robert McNamara, former President of the World Bank took the lead in pursuing such a strategy. It was rightly assumed that the major objective of development strategy should be reducing mass poverty through satisfaction of basic human needs, that is, food, shelter, health, education etc. Paul Streeton, one of the proponents of BNA as a strategy defines it as one which is "designed to improve, first, the income earning opportunities for the poor ; second, the public services that reach the poor; third, the flow of goods and services to meet the needs of all members of the households; and fourth, participation of the poor in the ways in which their needs are met".¹⁶ This strategy was accepted both as an end and a means by itself. As a means, this was to serve the people directly by putting more emphasis on development of sectors like agriculture, agro-based industries, education, health and other service or goods of immediate need. It was assumed that a minimum standard of living of the masses would bring them to the fold of greater national endeavours. It is to be kept in mind that the BNA approach does not preclude emphasis on growth, rather it must ensure sustained growth in order to ensure supply of basic needs to the people. But countries like Burma, Cuba, Sri Lanka and Tanzania have been able to meet certain level of basic needs at the cost of growth rates while Taiwan, South Korea and Singapore attained relatively rapid growth with commendable progress in terms of basic needs.¹⁷

However, together with policy pitfalls in pursuing the development strategies by the regimes of the Third World, existing world economic order has to be blamed in no less degree. The foundations of the

15 A.R. Khan, "Development Strategy of Bangladesh : Basic Needs Approach" *BIISS Journal*, Vol 2, No. 1, pp. 1-30.

16 Quoted in A.R. Khan. *Ibid*, p. 6.

17 N.L. Hicks, "Growth and Basic Needs ; Is there a Trade-Off", *Finance and Development*, Vol. 17, No. 2, . June 1980, p. 17.

existing order were laid during and immediately after World War II by the developed countries presently constituting the North, when most of the Third World countries were still under colonial rule. Naturally their causes and aspirations were not kept in view. In the 1960s when independent nation-states proliferated in the world map, they launched a struggle against an economic order not properly serving their cause. This ensued the North-South dialogue for establishment of a New International Economic Order (NIEO). The demand for a NIEO, among others, included transfer of resources (capital and technology), trade reforms and restructuring of the international monetary order.

But no significant progress was achieved so far in this regard due to unwillingness on the part of the developed North to part away with their well-entrenched dominance over the present order. If the results of the previous Development Decades are any guide, the goals of the Third UN Development Decade would not be met, even partly. The industrialized nations are to raise the development assistance to 0.7 percent of their GNP in 1985 and then to 1.0 percent in 1990. But so far the average aid given by the North did not exceed 0.4 percent level. As a result, especially the oil-importing developing countries are hard hit by the rising prices of oil and consequently, industrial country manufactures on the one hand and diminishing prices of the developing country exports due to decline in world demand, on the other. In dire contrast to this trend, the yearly military aid provided by the developed countries to the Third World governments already exceed the amount given for their socio-economic development.

Security and Development—Relationship between Defence and Development

In this section we zero down to one specific aspect of the problem of security of the Third World countries, that is, the relationship between defence and development in particular, and the role of the military in general, which have been subjected to some empirical studies and the literature on the issue is still growing. But the relationship

remains yet to be conclusively established. The debate was set by Benoit's study on *Defence and Economic Growth in Developing Countries* in which he argues that defence expenditures at least do not have a net adverse impact on economic growth.¹⁸ Such findings, based on gross-national data on 44 countries and case studies on 6 developing countries including India have been contested by many who proved quantitatively, even with the same set of data as Benoit, that defence expenditure adversely affects savings and investment and hence economic growth.¹⁹ The major flaw, perhaps a methodological hurdle,

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is that Benoit did not quantify the possible growth-inducing factors of defence expenditures like the positive demand effects (hardly applicable in the developing countries with structural bottlenecks), favourable and modernised outlook of the defence forces etc. The latter pertains to the allocative functions and organizational role of the armed forces, whether in political control or not.

Therefore, the dynamics of the relationship between security efforts and allocation of scarce resources to defence and eventually its impact on development process need further objective and in-depth study. However, the successive UN Reports, Brandt Commission Report and other studies emphatically keep on suggesting that there exists an

18 E. Benoit. *Defense and Economic Growth in Developing Countries* (Lexington : Lexington Books, 1973).

19 N. Ball, "Defence and Development ; A Critique of the Benoit Study", *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Vol. 31, No. 2. Jan 1983 and S. Deger and R. Smith, "Military Expenditure and Growth in Less Developed Countries". *Journal of Conflict Resolution*. Vol, 27, No. 2, June 1983.

intimate inverse relationship between global arms expenditures and mass poverty in the Third World. This is particularly true in case of the developing countries where opportunity costs incurred in defence spending are far greater than in the developed countries. Diversion of scarce resources to defence sector decreases the rate of savings and consequently productive investment. Further, the arms importers are deprived of all the direct employment and multiplier benefits which are said to have accrued to the exporters. As Ruth Sivard suggests, "The large diversion of resources to non-productive use impedes growth, fuels inflation, contributes to unemployment and squanders resources in short supply. The economic burden is exceeded only by the looming threat to world survival".²⁰ Andrew Mack is of the view that even where military expenditure does have positive effects on LDC development, most of these effects could have been achieved at lower costs by transferring the resources to the civilian sector.

Despite all the arguments against defence spending, the developing countries are going for increased defence efforts at a far greater pace than their developed counterparts. This is because there is a close connection between the present pattern of global dependency, nature of bilateral aid flows, threat perceptions of the developing countries and allocative role of the armed forces. Pakistan's development strategy pursued in the 1960s is a glaring example of how surplus in agriculture from the rural peasantry was extracted by the ruling regime to finance imports of sophisticated military technology.²² And this policy could be pursued very much in consistence with the conceptual framework of prevailing growth-based development strategy.

20 R.L. Sivard, *World Military and Social Expenditures 1977* (Virginia ; WMSE Publications 1977), p. 5.

21 Andrew Mack, "Militarism or Development : the Possibility for Survival", in J. Langmore and D. Peetz (eds), *Wealth, Poverty and Survival* (Sydney, London and Boston ; George Allen and Unwin, 1983), p. 60

22 J. Ansary and M. Kaldor, "Military Technology and Conflict Dynamics in Bangladesh Crisis of 1971" in M. Kaldor and Asbjorn Eide (eds), *The World Military Order* (London : The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1978).

More importantly, single-minded emphasis on growth of GNP could be manipulated to facilitate import of capital-intensive technology. In most cases, such technology and weapons are used in suppression and disciplining the restive peasants and industrial workers needed for smooth growth of production and concomittant export promotion. Domestic instability only facilitated the expanded role of the military in civilian life and experience suggests that throughout most of the Third World, the military has allied itself with the powerful vested interests—both local and foreign.

Therefore, the question of relationship between defence and development in the context of the Third World needs to be viewed both from national as well as global perspectives if the new development strategies now being so passionately advocated—the NIEO and the BNA—are to be purposefully pursued. Wulf suggests, "...if the NIEO and basic human needs strategies cannot succeed under existing international and domestic military relations this does not imply a rejection of all security relations compatible with NIEO and basic human needs development strategies and consistent with less armed world."²³ Ball and Leitenberg perhaps rightly argues that structural change in social and economic relations probably require structural changes in military relations, both domestically and internationally.²⁴

Concluding Observations

What appears from the preceding discussion is that the traditional concept of security threats which put the thrust on external sources does not go well with the realities of the Third World countries. But many regimes in the Third World, particularly the unpopular and illegitimate ones, in conjunction with the major powers still

²³ H. Wulf, *Dependent Militarism in the Perspective and Possible Alternative Concepts* (Humburg Group on Armament and Underdevelopment, 1978).

²⁴ N. Ball and M. Leitenberg, "Disarmament and Development ; Their Interrelationship", *Bullentin for Peace Proposals*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1979, pp. 247-56.

view the security problem in the traditional way. This is only to serve their apparent narrow and parochial interests, although shortlived. But looking at objectively, the terms security and threats should be given a broad-based meaning and flexible interpretation to include economic, political and all other development aspects in the context of the Third World.

If security can be perceived to be so by the Third World leaders, then automatically the defence build-up would be assuming less and less importance, thus freeing the acutely scarce resources for development purposes. Such a perception and accordingly efforts for its realization will be likely to ensure lasting peace, harmony and development in the world.