

Taking on One Issue in the Context of Class Discourse: On "Resource Starved" Pakistan in the Security of the United States

In the course of the lecture on counterinsurgency and in distinguishing Kilcullen's classical and modern insurgencies, I provided explanation with instances from different countries one of which was Pakistan. I noted the frontline role of Pakistan in the pursuit of western security interests particularly that of the United States.

I observed that Pakistan was strategic to the United States during the Cold War and in the post-Cold War especially in the war on terror phase of the post-Cold War. For this reason the MILE was particularly influential in the Pakistani state – so much influential that the MILE with the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) represented a state within a state.

Central Asia is important to Western interest because of the abundance gas, the need to access this gas and routes for pipeline construction. Central Asia is also important as hotbed of Islamic fundamentalism and extremism. Pakistan, located in South Asia, is a staging post to Central Asia. Pakistan does not necessarily have resources of its own. However, it is a geopolitical and geostrategic asset for the United States because of its location in furthering western interest.

In one of my class interactions, I noted the economic underpinning of security for western interest in different parts of the world; that the emphasis on the MILE as security was to facilitate access to these resources; that the MILE emerged through globalization as security for most countries including Nigeria; however the MILE hides the true objective of security for the West – accessing economic resources. I contrasted this with Nigeria's ungoverned security space where unlike the West where security is invoked in its interstate encounter in order to advance its national interest, Nigeria has no idea of security beyond the work of the MILE inside Nigeria.

Someone posed a question on why America should be interested in "resource starved" Pakistan considering the role Pakistan play in advancing America's security. My take is that this question takes my point of view too literal.

For the United States – the poster country for national security – national interests revolve around economic, political, diplomatic, military and strategic issues. In all these, the centrality of the economy in national interest for America cannot be denied. Issues of political, military, social, cultural and diplomacy are secondary consideration in national

interest. The economy and its performance power every other issue in the pursuit of national interest.

At the point that the NSA was enacted in 1947 to represent the legislation on national security, America had convinced itself, after its spectacular performance in the Second World War, that only by its MILE strength can it advance its interest anywhere and everywhere in the world. America's performance in that War and in subsequent engagements around the world is a product of the strength of its economy. I underscored the strength of the United States in the lecture this morning when I address the issue of the leverage exercised by the United States in every sphere of human endeavours. No other country in the world possesses this leverage!

There is a direct and indirect ways of advancing the United States national interest that may not necessary be because it is in pursuit of resources in particular country. Since national interest also spanned other areas, there are countries of the world that could provide indirect services to the United States as it pursue its interest.

Pakistan is the United States primary ally in South Asia, an area that is a corridor to other interest in Afghanistan and some other countries in Central Asia. The geo-political and geo-strategic location of Pakistan is worth more resource in intangible terms within the extant surface philosophy of security as espoused by the United States. The extant surface philosophy according to the National Security Act is the leading role of the MILE. In that instance, geopolitics and geostrategic are areas of military, intelligence and law enforcement concerns to America. Pakistan provides the logistics to enable the United States attain its national interest in South and Central Asia.

Security is therefore what a country defines as security. There is a superstructure of security and there is the infrastructure of security. The superstructure is the economy. This economic superstructure is universal for all countries. The infrastructure is politics, military, diplomacy, cultural, social, geopolitical, and geostrategic and any other issue the country makes of security. The infrastructure of security is specific to countries.

Pakistan's lack of tangible economic resources is compensated by its possession of intangible resource of geopolitical and geostrategic nature. To this extent, Pakistan assists the United States to achieve one among its many broad objectives of security. This role is not different from the one resource endowed Nigeria is playing for the United States.

Again studying, thinking, observing and comparing (STOC) is a methodology to overcome the challenges of comprehension of security and security studies.

Enjoy your weekend!