

War on Terror: Repercussions for Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

The US-Taliban peace agreement has rekindled hopes for peace in Afghanistan. After fighting for almost two decades, the US has agreed to enter into a peace deal with its one time worst enemy i.e. Taliban. Pakistan has been a facilitator in bringing a peace deal to Afghanistan. Its role has been well recognised by both US and Taliban. Pakistan has long been associated with this issue; first as US partner in the war against Taliban and now as a facilitator to bring US and Taliban to a peace deal. It seems quite pertinent to re-evaluate Pakistan's role in war against terrorism and its repercussions for Pakistan. The present research has explored the effects that Pakistan has faced after becoming the partner of war on terror initiated by the then American President George Walker Bush in 2001 soon after the incident of 9/11. It has explained how this participation of Pakistan has caused a colossal damage to the social, economic, religious and political domains of Pakistan and how the partnership has tarnished the image of Pakistan in the comity of nations. Additionally, impact of war on terror has been judged through examining the current status of internal and external security threats, soaring poverty, restrained development policies, increased hatred against the Americans and national disintegration. The methods of describing the facts and figures in the existing body of knowledge i.e published books, research articles, newspapers and published theses and then comparing and analysing them on the basis of personal opinion and other data, have been used to conclude the topic.

Key Words: Pakistan, US, South Asia, Security, Economic turmoil.

Brief history of Pak-US coalition

The inception of Pakistan witnessed the early phase of Cold War between Communism (supported by USSR) and Capitalism (sponsored by USA). Pakistan was under a blend of threats regarding its territorial integrity and security in South Asian region. India was the major threat in this context who declared Kashmir as its territory. Kashmir, the bone of contention, led both the states to fight a war in 1948. Later on Pakistan had to join either the USSR or USA. Pakistan tilted towards the Americans and signed the two regional defence pacts Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) first to restrict the communism in the region and second to strengthen its defence line

particularly against the Indians (Kiyani, 2011, p. 04). The alliance of Pakistan and USA proved supportive when Pakistan fought its second war against India in 1965. United States assured its military and economic support for Pakistan in this war. Then came the year 1971 when Pakistan worked like a bridge between China and America to establish their cordial relations. It infuriated the USSR and “Pakistan had to pay dearly in the form of dismemberment of East Pakistan” (Kiyani, 2011). Pakistan and U.S enjoyed the congenial relations during Zia regime. These relations were based on military ties and technological advancement. From 1979 to 1988, US had spent billions of dollars for launching operations with collective involvement of CIA and ISI to restrain the advancement of USSR in the region. For that, USA granted billions of dollars to Pakistan in shape of economic and military assistance. Additionally, “by the year 1981, Pakistan was discussing a \$3.2 billion package with United States and in 1987 Pakistan became the second largest recipient of the American aid after Israel” (Dawn, July 04, 2012).

In 1990s Pakistan and United States experienced the lowest ebb of relations when United States found India as a better strategic partner to secure its interests in the region. Dr. Umbreen argues that “On October 1, 1990, the United States suspended all military assistance and new economic aid to Pakistan under the Pressler Amendment (1985) which required the President to certify annually that Pakistan 'does not possess a nuclear explosive device” (Javaid, 2014, p. 291). Then, in 1998, USA imposed economic sanctions on Pakistan when it tested its first nuclear missile in response to India’s nuclear explosions. Clinton Government suspended all the economic aid, military assistance and loans to Pakistan under Glenn Amendment (1998). Pakistan had to face a third round of economic sanctions in 1999 when Musharraf imposed martial law in the country that restrained the process of flourishing democracy (Javaid, 2014). Pakistan and United States found another opportunity to enjoy the cordial relations when the Americans were searching for allies to fight against the perpetrators of 9/11 attacks. The USA declared the war to eradicate the terrorism and Pakistan joined hands with it.

9/11 and Pakistan’s involvement in the War on terror

Soon after the incident of 9/11 George W. Bush declared that eradication of terrorism from the world in general and the South Asian region in particular would be the first priority of the Americans. The US started making alliances with various nations in the world. The US repeated the history and made a “strong and larger coalition” with Pakistan that it had experienced during Cold War. Pakistan was given two options; either to join US to fight against militancy or it had to face the American wrath and Pakistan picked up the first one (Rabbi, 2012, p. 73). History reveals that whenever United Nations required military support to overcome the international issues, Pakistan offered full support in this regard that is internationally recognized. Pakistan shares borders with the South Asian

nations, Central Asian states and the Middle East. This geo-strategic location was again utilized by the Americans when they decided to initiate “war on terror” in the post-9/11 tragic incident. USA started building alliances with different nations first to punish the culprits and second to uproot the menace of terrorism in South Asian region. Pakistan was the most suitable option for USA in this connection (Khan, 2013, p. 38).

Musharraf’s decision to join Global War on Terror (GWOT) led Pakistan to terminate relations with Taliban Government in Afghanistan, to arrest a large number of leaders of militant groups, to introduce legislation through which religious institutions could be brought under the control of government and to provide intelligence assistance to the American forces. The strategic partnership between Pakistan and the U.S further got strengthened when US declared Pakistan as a non-NATO ally in June, 2004. The year 2006 observed many more official visits between both states. In 2008-2009, the US assured delivery of F-16 fighter jets to Pakistan. Moreover, by the June, 2008, Pakistan and U.S had been indulged into the “strategic dialogue” to focus on the issues of ‘energy, security, strategic stability and non-proliferation of the nuclear weapons’ (Khan, 2013, p. 259). Pakistan responded promptly to fight war against terrorism. Pakistan became the effective part of the Defence Cooperation Group. DCG began to consult the regional powers in 2002 after holding a series of conferences to formulate the strategies to get rid of the terrorism. The decisions were made to launch operations against Al-Qaida and its affiliates or other factions in 2003 and 2004. A number of prominent leaders from Al-Qaida and Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were arrested and executed. In 2009, the coalition decided to conduct 464 search operations in various areas of North-West Frontier Province (NWFP, now KP). Operation *Rah-i-Rast* was conducted in Swat in 2009, Operation *Rah-i-Nijat* in October, 2010 in South Waziristan (Khan, 2013, p. 46-52).

After the episode of Army Public School (APS) Peshawar in December, 2014, the state authorities in Pakistan decided to counter the menace of extremism and initiated more effective steps to avoid the impacts. A comprehensive National Action Plan was conceived by all the civil and military stakeholders. *Zerb-i-Azb* was launched in North Waziristan in 2014. In 2015, it was perceived that *Zarb-i-Azb* would reflect the true implementation of the National Action Plan as it had been assumed as the big achievement of the Pakistani military in terrorism-affected areas of Pakistan (*Dawn*, June, 14, 2015). Repercussions of these operations can be analysed one by one in the following way.

Repercussions for Pakistan

(a) Political chaos

After becoming the American partner in the war against militancy, Pakistan had to experience political chaos. Difference of opinions among political leaders and practice of traditional policies with the Americans created hurdles in strengthening

the state politically. Religio-political parties cashed in the wave of anti-Americanism and won subsequently in the general elections of 2002 more seats in National Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies under the banner of *Muthida Majlis-i-Amal* (MMA). Additionally, Musharraf's extension in service added fuel to the fire as Pakistanis had to face whim of the single man for another long span of time. Musharraf did not make changes in army and intelligence services that restricted the policy-makers in a sense to review their policies towards USA (Javaid & Ali, 2013, p. 52).

The US led war has caused political chaos in Pakistan as it has left significant political aftermaths at local, regional and international levels. Various groups of terrorists have destroyed political set-up particularly in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and generally in Pakistan. Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) governs the tribal areas where disputes are settled through *Jirgas*. These *Jirgas* are supposed to have collaboration with the tribal councils of federal government. Many of the prominent figures of *Jirgas* have fallen victims to the heinous acts of terrorists that have disturbed political balance in the province (Bari, 2010, p. 37). Terrorists even began targeting women politicians and some of these politicians were harassed and murdered during the planned terrorist attacks in different areas of the province. Pakistan's decision to join America for curbing militancy has widened the gulf between the public and military. People, who were supporting the cause of Taliban, argued that Pakistan was fighting a war of US. On the other hand, pro-US section of the public opined that Pakistani military was a major hurdle in the way of containment of terrorism (Irshad, 2011, p. 236).

Recently, India threatened Pakistan by opening more than thirty consulates alongside the Pakistani border. India availed an opportunity to declare Kashmiri fighters as terrorists and braced ties with various countries including US. The purpose behind the Indian intention was to be equipped with nuclear weapons and assured its support to the new government in Afghanistan (Javaid, 2011, p. 125-131). As far as image of Pakistan at international level is concerned, Pakistanis faced troubles in attaining visas for US and those, who got the visas, were facing the aggression in the form of humiliation at the American airports during the process of screening. International media had started naming Pakistan as a failed state, "maps were published showing its balkanization" and the US Congress was holding regular sessions for negating its military and economic assistance to Pakistan and soaring cooperation towards India (Tariq, 2013, p. 75).

(b) Security repercussions

Pakistan's participation in the war on terror brought militancy in the state. Militant groups, including Pakistani Taliban, and their facilitators criticised the Afghan policy of Pakistan. When US decided to launch military and intelligence operations in the tribal belt, it posed a serious threat to the national security of Pakistan. Militants attacked and targeted the government institutions, public property, foreign investors and high profile political leaders including the

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President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali (Rabbi, 2012, p. 80). Though Musharraf tried his best to eliminate all the terrorist factions including Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan and Al-Qaida, yet he could not achieve the particular goals. Since 2012, the Americans had been claiming that they had fulfilled their purpose to cripple the militant factions such as Taliban and Al-Qaida. But, they could not justify it as the facts are something different. A new Al-Qaida has emerged in Pakistan that has founded a number of radicalization centres for recruiting local and foreign terrorists (Dawn, 12 June 2012).

The war on terror has caused a threat to the security of Pakistan as well as to the security of other regional powers particularly the Central Asian states. Daring raid of the followers of Osama Bin Laden on Sargodha Airbase and seizing the short-ranged ballistic missiles witnessed as an irreversible loss to internal and external security. Most of the analysts supposed that those missiles would be taken to Afghanistan to threaten neighbouring Central Asian states as well as Pakistan. The access of militants to the nuclear centres of Pakistan alarmed the bell for further security challenges in Pakistan (Shaikh, 2004, p. 186). The situation got worsened when Obama allowed India to develop six nuclear reactors with the American co-operation and granted it permission to join the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) without examining the aftermaths for the other regional powers particularly Pakistan. Further, bilateral trade between India and US galloped to \$ 107 bn and US sold nuclear equipment to India worth of \$ 14bn in 2015 (Sattar, 2016, p. 285).

(c) Economic turmoil

Pakistan's involvement in the war on terror has pushed it into an economic turmoil. Most of the analysts are of the view that decline in the economy of Pakistan is due to the increased militant activities followed by recession and political chaos. Various assessments reflect the reality about the current position of Pakistan among the comity of nations with respect to economic development. International financial institutions observe that currently Pakistan's economic priorities are addressing the inflation (Kronstadt, 2011, p. 19). 9/11 attacks deteriorated the economic condition of Pakistan. Regional insecurity forced the investors to review their policies of investment in Pakistan. Overall, Pakistan was a feeble economy when it joined the coalition of war on terror in 2001 (Hashmi, 2019, p. 6).

But the fate of Pakistan changed when Musharraf decided to join hands with the alliance to uproot terrorism in South Asian region. United States lifted Glenn, Symington and Pressler amendments to provide legitimacy to the Musharraf government. The Americans rescheduled Pakistan's debt of about 400 million and encouraged economic support for Pakistan through different financial institutions like International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) (Hashmi, 2019). Later, Pakistan had to pay a heavy price for this economic facilitation from the western side. Pakistan deployed its

troops on Afghan border, provided routes to the American forces and conducted military operations to curb militancy. It affected Pakistan's economy to a greater extent. From 2006 to 2010 there was a decline in the ratio of GDP in Pakistan that was decreased from 22.5 per cent to 13.4 per cent. It informs:

“The economy was subjected to enormous direct and indirect costs which continued to rise from \$2.669 billion in 2001-02 to \$13.6 billion by 2009-10, projected to rise to \$17.8 billion in the current financial year and moving forward, the direct and indirect costs to the economy are most likely to rise further” (*Dawn*, June 19, 2011).

Pakistan's economic sphere got decayed since the series of events in 2011 to 2015. The Raymond Davis case caused hurdles in economic policies between Pakistan and US, Operation Neptune Spear worsened the situation and the episode of *Salala* brought the economic assistance of the American for Pakistan to zero level. Following years experienced the lowest ebb of economic relations of the concerned states. On the other hand, Pakistan was spending more and more money for uprooting militancy. At the end of 2015 Pakistan had suffered \$ 67.93bn losses due to operations against militancy (*Dawn*, January 21, 2015). In 2016 the annual report of State Bank of Pakistan provided the facts about the Pakistani expanses on the war on terror clearly. It showed that Pakistan had spent \$ 118.3bn from 2002 to 2016 to curb the menace of terrorism. The report reflected the reality that “Both economic growth and social sector development have been severely hampered by terrorism-related incidents”. In addition to that, in 2017, the ratio of terrorist attacks decreased and Pakistan was ranked at fifth number in the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) that was a signal towards the cut off the expenditures of war against the extremists (*Dawn*, November 19, 2016).

(d) Social deterioration

The beginning of 21st century witnessed the lowest literacy rate in tribal areas of Pakistan. Various militant groups started destroying the educational infrastructure in response of military operations that restrained the educational uplift in these areas. According to the report of Government of Pakistan in 2009, only in Swat 118 girls' and 97 boys' schools were destroyed by the terrorists. In addition to that, women education experienced the worst phase as it was being discouraged by the religious extremists (Ahmed, 2010, p. 109). Further, the Education Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa informed that extremists destroyed a total of 758 schools in different districts of the province and they destroyed the local culture, banned listening to music and recreational activities (Tariq, 2013, p. 73). October 8, 2012 was the day to prove that terrorists were making all their efforts for restraining the educational developments in the province no matter they had to kill the learners.

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Terrorists attacked a 14 year old Malala Yousafzai who was working for the promotion of girls' education. She bore severe injuries under the accusation of "promoting secularism. After she had recovered she became the youngest person ever to receive Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 (*BBC News*, March 4, 2019).

In 2007 military operation against the leaders of *Lal Masjid* and Benazir Bhutto's assassination soared the number of militant attacks in Pakistan. These heinous acts caused an increase in the rate of human displacement in Pakistan in general and in tribal areas in particular. Only in 2009, Swat Valley of NWFP witnessed one million displaced people and were living in tents as IDPs (Akhtar, 2012, p. 210). For further explanation the duration of displacement is divided into three phases that ranges from 2008 to date. First phase begins with August 2008 when conflicts in Bajaur and Mohamand agencies forced 109,654 families to migrate. Later in April 2009, almost 2.8 million people met the same fate when security forces launched operations in Malakand division of NWFP. Only in June 2014 more than 100,000 families suffered in the aftermath of Operation Zarb-e-Azb (Ahmed, 2016, p. 237). Military operations against extremists in tribal areas have caused an irreversible loss to the human lives. Various strategies have been adopted to counter the terrorists. Use of drones was the most important step in this connection. Unmanned, high-flying aircrafts, controlled by a remote, were initiated by USA in 2004. According to an estimate, 522 drone strikes from 2004 to 2015 have killed 3852 people 'which included 22 al-Qaida apex leaders, lower and middle level terrorists' (Sattar, 2016, p. 284-285). Another source gives information that:

"There are fears in Pakistan that American network of espionage has dramatically increased in Pakistan and American drones are killing many innocent citizens on the suspicion of terrorists" (Ameen & Naseer, 2013, p. 161).

Dawn gives the detailed information about the 22,100 civilian deaths, 40992 injuries and 8214 casualties within the security forces from 2001 to 2015. It also informs about the death of almost 31,000 Taliban and other extremists, fifty eight journalists and 92 human rights activists (*Dawn*, January 09, 2018). The heavy loss of 122 innocent lives in Army Public School Peshawar on December 16, 2014 galvanized the whole nation with the government and the security forces. As the massacre infuriated the Pakistani military the most, who, then launched operations against all the terrorists without any distinction until and unless they flee across the border to Afghanistan (*Dawn*, January 09, 2018).

(e) Psychological issues and brain drain

War on terror has created a sense of insecurity among the Pakistanis. Behaviour of people can be observed to the level of inculcation of psychological issues such as anxiety, depression etc. Global organizations and religious elite have failed to

define terrorism correctly, so there are so many difficulties for Pakistanis to avoid terrorists' attacks. By and large, every Pakistani is experiencing direct or indirect impacts of terrorism. TV channels in Pakistan are supposed to be one of the major sources for inflicting a sense of insecurity among the public. Almost 91.5 per cent students of the Pakistani universities have become the victim of this yellow journalism (Ahmed, 2016, p. 245). Terrorism has terrified the Pakistanis to such an extent that most of the talented ones decided to migrate to other countries like US, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and many other European states. According to different reports and newspapers, during the years 2005 to 2014, the number of migrants reached at 4156957 that included 29377 engineers, 9040 doctors and 5795 teachers (Shahab & Zeb, 2014, p. 43).

The migration of these fertile minds has caused an economic turmoil in Pakistan. Heinous acts of extremists have threatened these lives to move even to the South Asian states on one hand and have given birth to the social vice of unemployment on the other hand. Foreign Direct Investment has been restricted that attracts the doctors and engineers to become the part of mega projects initiated by national and international investors. Resultantly, nation is being deprived of the services of its own brains (Shahab & Zeb, 2014, p. 43). Moreover, feeling uncertainty from fear based oppression and insecurity, the scholars of Pakistan are moving and looking for a secure and safe future to nations, for example, Canada, Australia, America, England, United Arab Emirates and South Africa. According to an estimate about six million Pakistanis have migrated to these states in search of livelihood (Afzal, Iqbal & Inaya, 2012, p. 196).

(f) Polarisation of the society

When the American President George W Bush declared war on terror against the terrorists in South Asian region, Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf assured full support and co-operation to US. Resultantly, Bush administration waived the sanctions imposed on Pakistan after the nuclear tests of 1998 and Musharraf's coup in 1999. Changed political scenario of the world reflected that Pakistan and the US were going to restore their cordial relations and Bush considered Pakistan as the most important non-NATO ally in the region to eradicate terrorism (Qureshi, 2011, p. 16). The war on terror created a popular resentment and hatred among the Pashtuns particularly in Pakistan. They started opposing Pakistan's army and the Musharraf regime. According to a survey of 2009, 18% Pakistani Madrassas were supposed to be affiliated with Jihadi and sectarian factions. 78% students of these madrassas objected the role of Pakistan in the war, 81% were against the operations conducted by Pakistani military in tribal areas and 20% of them considered the eruption of insurgencies, within the state, was result of Pakistan's participation in the war on terror (Ahmed, 2010, p. 107).

Killing of two citizens of Lahore by the hands of Raymond Davis, Operation Neptune Spear in Abbottabad and attack on *Salala* Airbase by the NATO forces in 2011 raised the graph of hatred among the Pakistanis against the Americans. The

Raymond Davis case reflected that public was totally insecure as there were no limits mentioned for the CIA agent who mercilessly killed the citizens of Pakistan. Osama's raid provided the chance to analysts to criticise the role of Pakistan army and intelligence services. 24 casualties at *Salala* gave a lesson to the policy-makers in Pakistan who were arguing that was the violation of territorial integrity of their state. All these circumstances affected the governing authorities to a greater extent who then decided to block the NATO supply to the American troops in Afghanistan and vacation of Shamsi Airbase from the American forces was assured (Ejaz, 2016, 273). Since these incidents, the Americans could not be able to restore their lost image in the eyes of the Pakistani government as well as the public. It is a general opinion among the Pakistani public that Pakistan is fighting the war of US against the terrorists. In return, the US forces violated the territorial sovereignty of Pakistan that reflects the realities about the mistrust between two allies.

(g) Tarnished image of Pakistan

War on terror has tarnished the image of Pakistan at regional and international levels. The war has earned insecurity, human displacement and Taliban threat to Pakistan's sovereignty. All these challenges are being demonstrated by the international media that helps in distorting the national image. Almost every nation in the world is ready to accept the fact that Pakistan has made all its efforts to contain militancy but Washington is still demanding Pakistan to 'do more' (Safdar, Adrian A. & Norshi, 2018, p. 57). Controversial statements and reports of the American official reflect the shattered image of Pakistan around the world. Pakistan has been alleged for facilitating North Korea for developing the nuclear reactors. India has accused Pakistan for a number of times for providing ammunitions in the Kashmir valley and US officials have given their consent to succeed in their diplomatic motives. Hundreds of officers from Pakistan's military have been alleged to facilitate Taliban through intelligence services (Hashmi, 2019, p. 11).

Conclusion

The decision of Pakistan to join the global alliance in the war against the extremists in South Asia has brought great difficulties for Pakistan with reference to its political, economic and social concerns. It is hard to say that Pakistan is experiencing the phase of good governance rather it has diverted all its attentions to fight the menace of terrorism. These types of decisions have pushed the country into an economic decline. On one hand, the US double standards in dealing the partners of war on terror in case of providing economic aid has deteriorated the Pakistani economy while the destruction of infrastructure during the war has

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minimised the financial volume in the national treasury on the other hand. The economic crisis has given way to many social vices such as provincialism due to the fact that there is no equal distribution of resources among the public and federating units. As a partner of war against militancy Pakistan has failed to integrate its peoples. There is a widespread division among the public as some of them are opposing the policies of government regarding the fight against the militants and some are blaming their own nationals for promoting terrorism. Currently, xenophobic trends against the Muslims are prevalent in the Western societies. So there is a dire need to restore the lost image of Pakistan. For that purpose, Pakistan has to review its policies towards the Americans and strategies to cope with the terrorists who have built states within the state.

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