
Pak-US Strategic Partnership and Challenge of Internal Radical Symbiosis

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Abstract

Pakistan's efforts against the terrorism has entirely changed the security landscape of Pakistan. Growing waves of extremism, militancy and sectarianism emerged as a fundamental threat to the security of the state as the aftermath of 9/11. Different terrorist groups gathered under the umbrella of al-Qaeda and posed grave security challenges to the state. Although, their doctrinal philosophy and aims were stridently at contrast, but security situation compelled them to jointly chalk out a common strategy. Moreover, militants' splinter groups with new leadership find out new source of funding which denied the upper hand of the security vanguards on them. The current paper at the first stage supplies deep analysis of the birth of various militant groups and on the next stage discusses different Jihadi, sectarian, and criminal groups' closed nexus and their modus operandi. The outcome of the discussion shows that the benefits of marriage of convenience between the security apparatus and radical militants were less, but the impact was generational.

Keywords: Militancy, Terrorism, Taliban, Jihad, Security, Radicalism, Pak-US Relations

1. Introduction

The mind boggling transaction among the inner and outside powers forming Pakistan today requests an inside and outside appraisal of their effect on the nation's future direction – with regards to both respective states Pakistan and US steadiness and Pakistan's capability to crash more extensive security needs. Towards this end, this venture assembled a global group of specialists to give an extensive mapping of the nation's inward security scene and outer geopolitical condition, with the point of evaluating the suggestions for harmony, security and stability in Pakistan's fringe just as for US interests in Asia and the more prominent the Greater Middle East. While fundamentally focusing on the US, they look into rising out of this venture and exhibited to likewise be useful to strategy networks in India and different nations influenced by Pakistan's inward elements. The strategy of US towards Pakistan has verifiably been gone up against by the twin difficulties of managing with the complex – and regularly clashing – elements moulding Pakistan's residential political goals and its international strategy conduct. In any event, when well-educated, these arrangements are frequently figured to address one specific issue yet produce impacts that may well clash with other measurements of Pakistan's story.

These circumstances make such strategies powerless against unintended outcomes that compound as opposed to moderate existing difficulties versus not just the relationship between US and Pakistan yet in addition relations of US with different nations in the region. By applying, to the degree conceivable, a comprehensive way to deal with understanding the complex interior what is more, outer factors forming Pakistan, our expectation is that the last items produced by this task will assist policymakers with bettering react to episodes or abrupt emergencies for the time being and structure better educated systems and strategies toward Pakistan in the long haul. The venture's examinations what is more, briefings expect to open the policymakers to the complexities of Pakistan's inward elements; help dissipate the assumptions of short sighted contentions between good natured democrats in Islamabad, militancy in FATA, and authorities in the security administrations playing the two sides; and draw regard for the connections between those inside elements and Pakistan's outside geopolitical condition. By presenting the policymakers to the significant local, social, monetary, and ideational breaks that bother all through Pakistan, they want to encourage a more nuanced and viable strategy choices.

This study has focused that how Pak-US strategic partnership and proposed challenges of radicalism/terrorism (which is not only affecting Pakistan relations with its neighbouring but also a threat of internal stability) are shaping regional and international dynamics? Terrorism is also challenging the micro-level of geopolitical environment of Pakistan and at the micro-level of institutions, stakeholders, trade, and tourism.

2. Background of the Study

The US invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 and dethroning of Taliban's regime provoked the Islamists Jihadi outfits in Pakistan. Scores of Pakistani based militant groups moved to Afghanistan for Jihad yet killed by the carpet bombing of the US air strikes. Militant organizations such as Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) bore severe human losses as 340 fighters including the important commanders were killed in Afghanistan (Rashid, 2008, p. 60). Under the US pressure, General Pervaiz Musharraf ordered to ban some militant organisations by January 2002. Nevertheless, the terrorist groups intensified their activities against the General Musharraf's regime for support to US as coalition partner. General Pervaiz Musharraf on the other hand wanted to secure the opportunity to resolve Kashmir issue by amicable ways. Therefore, by will and under pressure General Musharraf banned the Kashmiri Jihadi organisations (Naazer, Mahmood, & Ashfaq, 2017). This decision narrowed down the distance between the militant groups of Kashmir and FATA based Taliban. Both the groups warmly build their nexus. They broadened their activities in the areas of erstwhile FATA, Swat, Waziristan, and Dara Adam Khel where they found their sympathisers as well (Waraich, 2009). It is an existential reality that since 2009, the fragmented militant groups re-emerged with a new identity and ideology.

Renowned security analyst Muhammad Amir Rana depicts that to control the territory, Taliban adopted four-pronged strategy. Their strategy covers political, administrative, social, and economic aspects. In the first step, they charged the criminals and impose taxes on the people to support their operational activities. Second, they started to kill the powerful chieftain who could challenge the authority of Taliban in the area. Third, they established their own system of justice. Through this mechanism they ensured the speedy, simple and corruption free justice system. Forth, they appointed the members as their administrators which were trustworthy to them (Rana, 2008, pp. 7-8). Close observation, however, depicts that the Taliban movement

gave some sort of empowerment to the downtrodden communities of the tribal areas of northern Pakistan. Introduction of speedy legal system with transparency and provision of economic and social justice helped in legitimising the role of Taliban in the local administration thus, undermining the writ of local, provincial and central governments (Aziz, 2008; Khan, Rehman, & Ashfaq, 2016; Rana, 2010).

Furthermore, no flexibility was shown by the militants towards the NGO's and modern education system. Female educational institutions were the fundamental targets of Taliban. It was considered to be a threat to the political and ideological movement of Taliban. Hard stance can be gauged from the fact that in the years of 2007-08. Sixty-one teachers were targeted, and twelve local and twenty-five foreign NGO's were closed in erstwhile FATA. For strengthening the movement Taliban adopted the technique to kidnap the security and government high-ups. For instance, on August 30, 2007 Taliban kidnapped 200 Pakistani army personnel in South Waziristan agency and demanded the release of their Taliban companions who were in prison (Ref. World, 2007). Apart from this, number of Taliban commanders increased their influence and operational activities in various parts of agencies. It is believed that in 2007, militants were loosely unified under the banner of TTP with the support of al-Qaeda. From 2002 to 2007 there was a phase of co-existence and cooperation between al-Qaeda and Afghan militant groups in FATA, FRs and Swat with favourable conditions (Abbas, 2010).

Regional developments, especially in neighbouring Afghanistan, likewise profoundly affects Pakistan. While the US, NATO military presence in Afghanistan has kept up a level of steadiness inside the nation, as those powers are pulled back there are expanding worries over the capacity of a weak Afghan government to merge force and safeguard state security. Pakistan has as of now borne the unintended outcomes of the US-NATO security crucial Afghanistan, with the overflow of al-Qaeda and Afghan activist gatherings into Pakistan – some of which have focused on Pakistan's own military powers and further exacerbated its interior insecurity. The prospect of renewed instability in Afghanistan, as well as “great game” concerns over increased Indian, Russian, and Iranian influence in the country as the US and NATO presence draws down, has fuelled Pakistan's reluctance to give up its own instruments of influence – which include subversive militant groups such as the Haqqani network. The second arrangement of on-screen characters are jihadi gatherings that were considered by the administration of Pakistan up to 2001 as vital instruments to be utilized in Afghanistan and Kashmir, some of whom have now betrayed the legislature and become engaged with fear based oppressor exercises inside the country.

The aggressor jihadi groups were not legitimately associated with psychological oppressor exercises against regular citizen targets inside Pakistan until October 2001. After September 2001, when the Pakistani government's help for the universal response to fear based oppression drove it to switch a significant number of its arrangements that had been manageable to the jihadis, some jihadis too turned to psychological militant savagery inside Pakistan, at first coordinating their assaults against outsiders and the neighbourhood Christian populace. Their utilisation of brutality has had a more articulated political suggestion and focused on deaths appear to be their favoured mode. Their goal is not to scare the number of inhabitants in Pakistan in general or a specific part of it, yet to pressure the country's rulers into tolerating their requests. That is the reason they have concentrated their assaults either on outsiders or on elevated level government authorities; the passing of common Pakistanis has been the consequence of blow-back (Khan, 2005).

3. Methodology

This research is qualitative and descriptive in nature in which the already available facts and information about the contents are critically analysed. The data is collected through secondary sources as it was not possible to collect primary data due to lack of resources and other security limitations. Secondary data includes various books, magazines, experts' discussions, research articles, internet websites and newspapers. Like all security studies this research does not claim to address the issue in completeness but one of the ways forward to understand the fault lines in Pak-US strategic alliance against internal radical symbiosis.

4. Discussion and Findings

4.1. Secrete Compromise of Al-Qaeda, TTP and Punjabi Taliban

When the security forces of Pakistan engaged in hunting down the al-Qaeda members and its affiliated conglomerates small Pashtun group like TTP and Punjabi Taliban were strengthening their linkages and ideological connections (Khan, 2010). Rayan Clarke argues that Pakistani Taliban was a loose group of militant outfits. They could not strengthen their bounds and come under the organisation of Mullah Omer's Taliban movement. Since, there was no central command on Pakistani based militant groups, therefore, most of the militants moved to join al-Qaeda ranks. Pakistani officials repeatedly said on various occasions that TTP was being financed by and closely collaborating with Al-Qaeda. Rehman Malik, the interior Minister (2009-2013), said that TTP is a front face of al-Qaeda. Al-Qaida's ideological, tactical, and strategic assistance to TTP made the later one a proxy. TTP, later, started most lethal activities against the security forces and Pakistani civilians by using Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and suicide bombing (Clark, 2011, p. 141).

4.2. Cooperation of Terrorist Outfits: Strategy and Impacts on Security of Pakistan

The collaboration of militant groups against the Pakistani forces engage them into multiple fronts to pressurize the forces to end their military operations in the erstwhile FATA. Therefore, for the sake of diverting the attention of the forces the militant outfits started their operational activities in other provinces such as the in areas of Punjab, Karachi, Quetta, and Pakistan administered Kashmir other than Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In the operational activities of militants, they focused to target the security forces and their installations. Apart from this, they approached to the soft targets such as banks, CD shops, barber shops, internet cafe etc. They also attacked the areas and institutions which were less prone to security such as hospital, parks, educational institution schools, colleges, universities etc. The aim of soft targets caused severe damage and high casualties was to compel the government to endorse their demands.

In 2007, Pakistani forces redoubled the capacity of the operations in Swat valley and South Waziristan. Resultantly, suicide attacks and bomb blasts were multiplied. From 2007 to 2010 round about 33 suicide attacks took place only in the areas of Punjab. In these suicides bombing 600 people were killed and 112 were targeted in various activities of militants such as bomb blasts and target killing (Abbas, 2010). Notably, security analyst Ikram Sehgal pointed out that due to the successful operations of the military and Para-military forces in Swat and erstwhile FATA the militants will try to invoke their sleeping cells in South Punjab to ensure their survival (Dawn, 2010). This is the reason that war zone, later, was changed from FATA to the areas of Punjab in the year 2009.

The security establishment of Pakistan pointed out that nexus among the different militant outfits was apparent. Attack on Sri Lankan team in March 2009 and suicide attack on Special Investigation Agency in Lahore on March 2010 gave an impression about their joint operational activities. With the passage of time many groups emboldened their activities in June 2009 (Dawn, 2011, September 15). Ghazi Force attacked on the office of Rescue 15 (a police force help line) in Islamabad. Moreover, UN World Food Program office was also attacked in October 2009 by the same force. Punjabi Taliban, TTP and al-Qaeda jointly created havoc in Karachi by attacking police headquarter in Karachi with the close collaboration of Brigade 313 and TTP. Addition to this, in December 2010 Punjabi militant, Badar Mansoor and TTP jointly stroked the University of Karachi in which four students were severely injured. Further, the militant groups extended their operational activities in the areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in 2009. Two suicide attacks were made by the militant group of Lashkar-e-Zil which claimed Al-Qaeda's affiliate (Roul, 2010). Renowned journalist Saleem Shezad stated that the group Lashkar-e-Zil (shadow army) actually consists of the members of brigade 313, TTP the foreign terrorist organizations and also includes the personnel of Iraqi Republican Guards (PIPS, 2011, pp. 72-77; Shezad, 2010).

4.3. Multiplication of Sectarian and Sub-Sectarian Violence in Pakistan

To damage the state legitimacy and weakened its authority specially in Karachi, Lahore and Quetta militant outfits were endeavouring to divide the communities on sectarian and ethnic lines. Therefore, they exploited the sectarian tendencies of the masses (Humayun & Jiwani, 2011, pp. 72-77). Target killings based on sectarianism were high from 2001 to 2013. Estimated, during these years 2,518 people were killed while 6,261 citizens were severely injured, which are considered three times above from the figure of 1989-2000. From 2007 to 2010, the sectarian attacks were recorded high. It was estimated that 90% high than the previous years (Daily Times, 2004). Defence pundits argue that as the Lashkr-e-Jhangvi is much influenced from Al-Qaeda's doctrinal principles therefore, majority of the attacks had been launched by this organisation (PIPS, 2012).

Existential fact is that in the beginning militant organizations were focusing on urban areas of Pakistan, but later they also exploited the sectarian clashes between Shiite and Sunni communities in the erstwhile tribal areas especially in the Kurram Agency. The fundamental aim of this strategy was to build pressure on the security forces of Pakistan (Franco, 2015, pp. 113-120). Despite this, intra-sectarian clashes were also generated. The great Sufi Saint Rehman Baba tomb was blown up by the militants in Peshawar in March 2009. Another renowned Sufi saint, Abdul Hassan Hajveri, community called Hazrat Data Ganj Bukhsh shrine was also targeted by suicide bombers in July 2010 in which 45 people were killed and many more sustained serious injuries (Dawn, 2010)

4.4. Attacks on the Western Interests by the Militants in Pakistan

After the incident of 9/11 militants' prime targets were the westerns and their businesses in Pakistan. They launched ferocious attacks on the consulates and embassies of the western countries. Moreover, they kidnapped the foreigners and recorded their beheadings movies. The US interests were categorically under strike in Pakistan. Similarly, suicide attack was conducted on American consulate in March 2002. In this attack the US diplomat David Fyfe with other four officials of embassy were killed (Dawn, 2006, March). The fundamental purpose of these attacks was to disturb the operational activities of the US and NATO forces. From 2008 to 2012, 360 attacks were launched on the NATO's oil tankers, containers and

terminals of companies which were using the territory of Pakistan and supplying military equipment's and other logistical support to US and NATO forces stationed in Afghanistan against the Taliban (PIPS 2012, p. 26).

These types of attacks within the Pakistani territory have created political rifts between Pakistan and the western countries. For example, in September 2008, Taliban abducted Polish engineer Piotr Stanek from the Attock area of Punjab. This incident created heated tension between the two countries. In February 2009, the Taliban demanded from Pakistan's government the release of Taliban captives, but the government denied due to which Taliban beheaded the Polish engineer (The Sydney Morning Herald, 2009). Moreover, in June 2008, the Danish embassy was attacked by suicide bombers having affiliation with al-Qaeda. In this attack, eight people were killed and 30 were severely injured. This incident caused tensions between Pakistan and Denmark.

4.5. Militants' Approach to Engage the Western Forces in Erstwhile FATA

Different Jihadi organisations have ideological connections with each other under the banner of al-Qaeda to wedge the global jihad against the western forces inside and outside Pakistan. Pak-Afghan border-land area had become a hub of various militants' outfits (Bergen & Tiedemann, 2011). Terror plots of al-Qaeda, TTP and other Jihadi organisations create fear and terror in the hearts and minds of the western people. International community was in deep fear as Pakistan seemed to be helpless in front of militant groups mainly operating under the banner of Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan which was, no doubt, a potential threat to the regional as well as global peace and stability (Finn & Miller, 2010).

4.6. Linkages between Terrorism, Organized Crime and NARCO Trade

For the sake of running the organised activities many militant outfits joined hands with the criminals, smugglers, and timber mafia to get financial support as well as physical safe havens. The UN report (2000) pointed out, round about \$1 billion smuggling of drugs which takes place annually via Nangarhar and Kunar in eastern Afghanistan into erstwhile FATA of Pakistan. This drug trafficking takes place under the tight control of TTP and al-Qaeda affiliates militant groups who provide security to the drug traffickers, but they, in return, give toll-tax to the Taliban. Of this money, they purchase the latest weapons and other war related equipment. New recruits are also facilitated through this money. The report published by Pakistan's military, shows that Taliban collect an estimated amount of \$200 million annually from drug trafficking (Mufti, 2009; Shah, 2010).

Militants had established the sleeper cells in the settled areas of Pakistan. These cells were financing the operational activities of militant groups in general and TTP in particular. Kidnapping, bank heist and extortion were the fundamental sources of finance of the TTP. Commonly, the targeted cities were Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar and other major cities. Taliban reportedly kidnapped seventy people from Karachi and Lahore to enhance their finances. Interior ministry of Pakistan published a report which shows that in 2009, 80% banks were heists. It is also worth mentioning here that only from Karachi, TTP and its conglomerates collected Rs 250 million from November 2008 to April 2009 by adopting the methodology of kidnapping. The group was also involved in extortion especially from the contractors who used to provide fuel to the US led coalition forces in Afghanistan (Clarke, 2011, p. 43). TTP, through these profits, not only conduct its operations successfully but also able for its organizational

management. An intelligence report estimates, criminals collected 1000rs million in Karachi to financially assist TTP from January 2007 to January 2009 (Yousaf, 2009).

5. Conclusion

The watershed event of 9/11 gave chance to the comity of nations to gather under umbrella of the US led war on terrorism on one hand, on the other hand different terrorist groups with different objectives and philosophies joined hands against the foreign forces in Afghanistan and law enforcement agencies of Pakistan. The militant groups in Pakistan assist each other for their operational activities. They not only attacked the high ups but also targeted the western interests. They also attacked the soft targets such as attacking markets, bazaars, cinemas, artists, video shops, barbershops etc in the name of religion. Addition to this, TTP facilitated the al-Qaeda fighter and provided die-hard training to them. These fighters later involved in terrorism related activities in different part of the world. Radical symbiosis which took place along the borderland gave birth to the concept of global terrorism due to which many countries in the world imagined Pakistan through the lens of extremism and terrorism.

Alliance of various sectarians and organized criminal groups not only undermined the ability of the state institutions but their symbiosis deeply radicalized Pakistani society as well. Punjab based militant groups provided deep facilitation to Pakhtun militant groups in the settled areas of Punjab. The security forces which were at daggers drawn in erstwhile FATA turned their focus towards Punjabi Taliban which was no doubt a grave challenge for security forces to identify radical elements in the urban areas. Establishment of sleeper cells by the terrorist outfits helped in recruiting the people from these areas on one hand, and on the other hand provided financial assistance through kidnapping, bank heist and extortion. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that Pak-US partnership was a victim of trust deficit which leads to conflicting approaches adopted by the US and Pakistan to deal with radicalization. Resultantly, on the face Pak-US strategic partnership radical forces symbiosis proved to be strong, long-lasting, and challenging for the security managers of Pakistan.

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