

AN APPRAISAL OF TERRORISM IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Pakistan is the only country which is greatly affected by terrorism after becoming a front line ally of United States in war against terrorism. Pakistan had to join the war in order to bring an end to the international isolation it was facing after the nuclear tests of 1998 and to overcome the sanctions in order to get economic as well as military assistance. Joining the war against terrorism was the biggest mistake of Pakistan as it produced many short and long term repercussions. The consequences of these policies brought terrorism in Pakistan and in order to counter that terrorism the armed forces had fought many wars inside its territory, which resulted in institutional instability and raised social issues that remained steady to plague the society. The United States is very much concerned about the rise of terrorism and extremism in the country. Now the need of the hour is that Pakistan should keep the national interest in mind and become more careful in understanding the most tough security challenges faced by the country and it should not allow any other country to gain strategic advantage of the ongoing situation.

KEYWORDS: Terrorism, National Security, Economic and Political Stability

INTRODUCTION

Due to the increased incidents of terrorism, Pakistan has become one of the dangerous places of the world (Sandler & Enders, 2008). These terrorist attacks are most serious issue to the stability and national security of Pakistan Terrorism started in the decade of 1980s, as the events that took place at that period had permanent long lasting effects on Pakistan in the long run. The chief happenings were the coup led by Muhammad Daud in Afghanistan in 1973, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan 1979, and Iran Revolution 1979. These actions including the horrific home politics in Pakistan, created such a geo-political atmosphere which gave rise to aggressive disruption in the political affairs of Pakistan. In 1973 when Muhammad Daud came into power in Afghanistan, he again claimed that Pashtun territory of Pakistan is part of Afghanistan (Rashid, 2008). As a result, Islamabad supported the Islamist opposition in Afghanistan against the Government and eventually Afghanistan's internal political chaos lead to communist coup in 1978. The hidden conflict among the communist bloc coupled with growing Islamist Revolution resulted in Soviet Invasion of 1979. Pakistan was greatly affected by this Soviet Invasion. It was a time when the internal political affairs of Pakistan were facing many controversies. The military coup by General Zia ul Haq in 1977 and execution of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in 1979 resulted in isolation of the army (Yousaf & Adkin, 1992). In order to keep leading authority, General Zia pursued Islamization policy which incorporate support for Islamic militias, encouragement of religious education, and passing of laws such as Zakat laws (Yousaf & Adkin, 1992). All these moves helped Zia in winning support of religiously motivated masses. This Islamization Policy provoked religious rigidity in the country (Ahmad, 2008). During this decade, terrorism in Pakistan was seen as a result of the Afghan dispute. It was believed, at that time, the USSR and Afghan Intelligence military were behind these terrorist acts (Wright, 2007). These terrorist attacks became less intense by the end of the 20th century. Shortly after the 9/11 incident when US attacked Afghanistan with the help of Pakistan, a sharp rise in terrorism took place (Saeed, Syed, & Martin, 2014).

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Definition of Terrorism

Terrorism is a compound term with divergent meanings depending on the context. Walter Liqueur defines terrorism as the illegitimate use of power to achieve political aim by targeting innocent people (Liqueur, 2013). According to Brian Jenkins, terrorism is the forceful use of strength in order to bring political change (Jenkins, 2013). It can also be defined as use of violence by the non-state actors against masses in pursuit of political aims. Simply, terrorism is use of force against people or groups for political purpose. So terrorism is the destruction of human and non-human objects (Afridi, Yousufi, & Musa Khan, 2014).

Root causes of Terrorism

In order to search the root cause of terrorism, it is very essential to know the purpose of terrorists. According to one school of thought; religion, illiteracy and poverty are the main causes of terrorism. It is very complicated to exactly know the main cause of terrorism but one can say that it is poverty which produces all kinds of social evils including terrorism. (Tore Bjørge, 2005). In the view of Colin Powell, the root cause of terrorism come from situations where there is poverty, ignorance, where people are so depressed that they see no ray of hope in their lives (Powell, 2002). Whereas, the US Senate Resolution states that when a government ignores the education sector of its country, it results in terrorism. Free distribution of food in schools increases attendance of children and if these are extremist school located in backward areas where the people cannot afford basic education of children because of poverty, then they force the children to take part in terrorist activities (Congressional Record, 2004). According to 2000 Nobel peace prize winner, Kim Dae-Jung President of South Korea, at the bottom of terrorism is poverty (Jai, 2001). But the case of Pakistan is different as poverty is not completely responsible because there is mass recruitment and a large number of terrorists' organizations which are functioning in the outskirts of the country. Nevertheless, the main causes of terrorism include poverty, illiteracy, backwardness, authoritarianism, and fundamentalism. However, when one carefully look at the 9/11 incident, it is revealed that none of the above mentioned reasons were behind the terrorist attacks. None of them were poor or uneducated. Some of them were not even religious. The main reason for those attacks was the existence of helpful infrastructure and partial state patronage (Rath, 2010). So, one can also say that terrorism is about the eternal struggle for authority and people engage in terrorism to obtain supremacy and achieve certain targets. Some of the states use terrorism as an instrument of its policy. So, the root causes of modern terrorism include supportive societal infrastructure, support from the state, and management of terrorist organization (Rath, 2012).

War against Terrorism

Shortly after the 9/11 incident, US announced to wage war against, Afghanistan and Pakistan had no other option but to stand with US in the war against terrorism. So terrorism. So with the help of Pakistan US attacked Afghanistan. The Pak-US bilateral relations improved a lot in the post 9/11 scenario. As a result of fighting war against terrorism the US lifted nuclear sanctions from Pakistan and extended economic assistance of nearly US\$19 billion as coalition support funds and other security related and economic funds (Epstein & Kronstadt, 2013). Because of these financial inflows, Pakistan economy experienced massive growth but with the outbreak of extremism in country the monetary condition of the nation deteriorated again (Kerry & Hagel, 2009). The war against terrorism and extremism has created a considerable number of security and economic troubles for Pakistan. Some of the political, security, economic and socio-cultural repercussions faced by Pakistan after the 9/11 incident are discussed below.

Political and Security Repercussions:

Pakistan was facing international political isolation before the 9/11 incident. But when it decided to take part in the war against terrorism, the economic and political sanctions were lifted from Pakistan and it was given the status of major Non NATO Ally. But with the increase in US drone strike on Pakistan territory, the anti-US sentiments fueled among the Pakistani public and Pakistan became one of the most anti-American countries in the world (Hathaway, 2008). These drone attacks deteriorated the Pak-US relations. These strikes violated the state sovereignty and were counter-productive to Pakistan's efforts against terrorism and extremism (Wadhams et al., 2008). Pakistan's partnership with the US led war created serious security repercussions for Pakistan. The military conducted several operations in the country to eliminate the terrorism and extremism. As a result of these operations the Government faced serious security challenges within its territory (Bhutto et al., 2007). A sharp rise in suicide attacks and bombings was seen, which resulted in casualties of thousands of civilians. The participation in the war on terror brought militancy in the country. Musharraf's Afghan policy was widely criticized. The incident of terrorism increased within the country and main target of terrorist attacks were Government officials and military. In these attacks hundreds of security men lost their lives.

In short Pakistan has paid a heavy price on military side by joining the US alliance against terrorism 85000 to 120000 armed forces deployed along the border of Afghanistan (Bruno & Bajoria, 2008) and hundreds of soldiers lost their lives and the radical aggression cost the country \$118.3 billion in direct and indirect losses from 2002 to 2016. Moreover, the economic development and social sector expansion have been harshly obstructed by terrorism associated incidents (Report by SBP). Despite all the efforts to curtail terrorism, the Government of Pakistan is facing outside pressure on terrorism issues. The breach of its borders by the military and in the form of drone strikes has posed some grave disputes to the national security and honor of Pakistan.

Economic Repercussions:

Shortly, after the nuclear tests in 1998 by Pakistan, international restrictions were placed on Pakistan. But when Pakistan became supporter of US in war against terrorism the sanctions were removed and Pakistan started getting huge amount of grants, donations and foreign debts, which resulted in strengthening the weak economy of Pakistan. It also succeeded to attract the foreign investors and a record investment had been observed after 9/11 (Hadar, 2002). Moreover, huge amount of economic aid and security assistance aid started flowing into Pakistan from US. US also provided supplementary support to Pakistan in various fields and programmes including earthquake rehabilitation after 2005, renovation programmes in tribal areas and various growth programmes after floods. In short Pakistan became one of the biggest recipient of US foreign relief in return for its support to US anti-terrorism drive in Afghanistan (Hadar, 2002). But this huge aid did not give any benefit to masses as it was given on certain conditions and mostly it was spent on defense due to deteriorating security conditions of the country. Government was unable to spend money on social sector. Inflation, unemployment and power shortage in the country increased in short Pakistan's economic growth deteriorated after joining the war on terror despite of massive aid from US (Hashmi, 2007).

Socio-Cultural Repercussion

Pakistan suffered a lot whenever it joined the US coalition. The first time alliance with US, Pakistan earned the enmity of India and Russia. Second time alliance with US resulted in bringing millions of refugees inside its territory which shattered the feeble economy of Pakistan plus there was extreme rise

in extremism and terrorism in the country. After joining the War on Terrorism (WOT), extremism and violence in the country increased (Abbas, 2004). The penetration of small arms and drugs increased in the society and anti-US sentiments also increased. The internal security condition deteriorated and targeting of high level officials become common. Suicide-bombing increased and killed a lot of innocent civilians and security forces (Tellis, 2008). These suicide attacks and bomb blasts resulted in fear and uncertainty in society.

CONCLUSION

We can conclude that the US war against terrorism has severely affected the policies and future of Pakistan. On one side Pakistan overcome the sanctions and bring an end to its isolation by joining the WOT. Pakistan succeeded in improving its status from a terrorist and failed state to that of Non-NATO Ally and of front line state. Whereas, on the other side terrorism and extremism in the country increased to a massive level in the post 9/11 period. The economy of the country shattered and infrastructure got damaged because of increase incidents of terrorism. The anti-American sentiments increase among the masses. Now the United States is very much concerned about the safety of the nuclear assets of Pakistan. The National Security of Pakistan is facing serious challenges. Therefore, it is now the duty of the Government to keep the national interest in mind. Pakistan needs to be more careful in understanding the most challenging security issues facing the country.

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