

## COMBATING MILITANCY: A CASE OF PAKISTAN MILITARY OPERATIONS

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**ABSTRACT:** *The attacks on World Trade Center on 9/11 brought US to the rugged mountains of Afghanistan to take to task the culprits of the horrible attack. Pakistan reluctantly joined the US war on terror as a front line state. By the time the war on terror is no more confined to the ground of Afghanistan rather it has entered to the adjacent areas of Pakistan and considerable spill-over effects were also seen in the settled districts of the state. Since then, Pakistan launched a series of operations against the activities of these unwanted elements; however it has achieved a very limited success in finding an end to the problem of militarization. The peculiar aspect of the operations is that the barbarism is ever increasing which has threatened the peace of the society through a spate of suicide attacks and planted bombs. The huge exodus of locals from the flash-points to secured places has further exacerbated the situation. The internal destabilization has exposed Pakistan to the intrigues of foreign agencies that have their own axe to grind in the ongoing Great Game and play their cards from the soil of Pakistan through the brawn of Pakistanis.*

**KEYWORDS:** Militancy, Military, Operations, Fata.

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### INTRODUCTION

Centuries ago, Thucydides said that ‘power swells in the absenteeism of a countervailing power’. The situation in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) exactly reflects the foregoing saying. FATA is “no go area” or *illaqa-e-ghair* (no man’s land) for political and security forces that’s why it became the constituency for mullah’s (religious leaders) and terrorists.<sup>1</sup> Due to the unavailability of educational institutions and limited resources the people of FATA were compelled to join madrassas run by religious clerics. The space was filled by these clerics which promoted Islamic extremism and radicalism in the region.

With an area of 27,220 sq km, FATA is larger than Wales about equal the size as Albania and Belgium with a 450 kilometers border with Afghanistan. Inhabited by Pashtuns (also Pakhtun) FATA has a long history of resistance against the imperial British and most recently against the USSR. Historically, FATA is un-governed, uncontrolled and unlegislated area within Pakistan which was governed through FCR (Frontier Crimes Regulation) by the British government and also successive government of Pakistan. FCR is seen by many as the draconian law which denying fundamental rights to the inhabitants. FATA is considered by some as a more sensitive area of Pakistan indeed in South Asia.<sup>2</sup> It has been difficult area for Pakistan military to curb militant effectively. FATA - comprised of seven agencies (Khyber, Kurram, Bajaur, Mohmand, Orakzai, North and South Waziristan) and additional Frontier Regions (Peshawar, Kohat, Tank, Bannu, Lakki, and Dera Ismail Khan) comprised of numerous Pashtun tribes that share a common culture and language with fellow Pashtun tribes in Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup> This wild state (FATA) was used by the militants as a safe-haven where they were recruited, trained and equipped to launch cross-border attacks into Afghanistan against NATO and US forces.<sup>4</sup> The land of hospitality i.e. FATA provide the safe-haven to the militants escaping of US led attacks (Operation Enduring Freedom) on

Afghanistan where they entrenched and became able to start new bellicosity in Afghanistan against their enemies.<sup>5</sup>

In this paper, an attempt is being made to study and analyse the Pakistan's military operations inside FATA - and generally Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). Much has been written about militancy and military operations but the purpose of this paper is to highlight the futility and failure of all the operations which have been launched against the militants in FATA and in KPK and the harmful by-products which cropped up in the bandwagon.

### **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF MILITANCY IN FATA:**

There was no militancy until the late 1970s and early 1980s except the sporadic incursions of tribals' in the settled districts and sectarian violence in some specific areas such as Kurram. The Afghan War (1979-88) that was supported by Gen Zia ul-Haq to repulse Soviet Union from Afghanistan was the main event that changed the situation in FATA and Pakistan as different militant groups emerged which challenged the peace of the society in the subsequent decades. Thus the Afghan war provides[d] a space to thousands of young Muslims from all over the world who joined the Afghan War.<sup>6</sup>

During the war hundreds of new *madrassas* were established where not only religious education was given to the students but at the same time these *madrassas* were used as training and recruitment places for the *Jihadis*.<sup>7</sup> As Zahid Hussain stated in his book *Frontline Pakistan*: "The purpose was to ensure a continued supply of recruits for the Afghan resistance. The message was simple: all Muslims must perform the duty of *Jihad* (Holy war) in whatever capacity they could. It was the responsibility of the Pakistani military, particularly the ISI, to provide training to the recruits in camps inside Afghanistan and Pakistan's tribal region. As the Afghan *Jihad* progressed, so did the influence of the *Jihadists* coming out of these madrasas. The USA indirectly – and sometimes directly – promoted militancy, the culture of *Jihad* and supported the clergy in its war against communism".<sup>8</sup>

The strength of madrasas before the Afghan war was approximately 900 but by the end of the war there were 8000 registered and 25,000 unregistered madrasas in Pakistan.<sup>9</sup> The madrasas were further increased with the influence of Afghan refugees and financial and military help of Pakistan, US and Arabs countries. The indirect consequences of Pakistan strategy was the spread of militancy and violent sectarianism which disturbed the peace of the society. After the Afghan war and the disintegration of Soviet Union the same *Jihadist* remained a major source of contention for Pakistani state and society. More than two million Afghan refugees stayed inside Pakistan which further jeopardized Pakistan's economy. After the war different religious group got the opportunity to organize their rank and file. Among the other places FATA was the main centre of their activities and regrouping. The once peaceful FATA has become the hotbed of militancy. Militarily and financially they become enough strong to play a more prominent role in the state affairs.

After the eventual withdrawal of Soviet Union from Afghanistan, since there was no active engagement, therefore the extra militants were brought to Kashmir to settle the old scores with India. So, the *Jihadis* become more influential in running regionals and local movements.<sup>10</sup> Pakistani government was also involved to change their directions towards Kashmir.<sup>11</sup>

**POST 9/11 FATA:**

In September 11, 2001 the terrorist attacked the World Trade Center on US soil. This event created confusion not only in US but around the globe. Whether it was an engineered plan or original one - but al-Qaeda was declared responsible for this attack. The US was provoked by the 9/11 and attacked Afghanistan because they were of the view that Afghanistan is a head quarter of Al-Qaeda and the Taliban government in Afghanistan provided protection and asylum to them. After the displacement of al-Qaeda and Taliban many members sneaked into FATA, bordering Afghanistan.<sup>12</sup> According to Imtiaz Gul:

Most of these people, staunch believers in Islam with strong commitment to the tradition of shelter, and a propensity to side with all those who oppose the Americans, have been unable to reconcile with the new situation in which yesterday's *Mujahideen* and *Taliban* are being chased as terrorists. The hatred of the urban pragmatism (Pakistan's policy changes) and a dislike for America combined with an oppressive system all had combined to fuel anti-government and anti-military sentiment in the tribal areas and also provide ammunition to the militants. For them, al-Qaeda means being staunch Muslims and Pashtoonwali demands these brothers must be protected.<sup>13</sup>

George W. Bush administration pressurized Pakistan (especially President Musharraf) that "either you are with us or against us".<sup>14</sup> The US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage went further by threatening the Pakistani intelligence chief that Pakistan would be bombed to the stone age if it chose to side with the terrorists.<sup>15</sup> President Bush declared in his speech to a Joint Session of Congress: "Every nation, in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime".<sup>16</sup> Though Pakistan had cordial relations with Taliban and the later were considered its protégé but when they committed the odious barbarism against the innocent people in the tower of world trade, the Pakistan had no alternative but to excoriate these inhuman measures. The words of formal criticism were not enough to satisfy the wild wrath of the US; therefore Pakistan was to take pragmatic steps for the elimination of the terrorism and Taliban.<sup>17</sup>

Resultantly, Pakistan offered its support- under extreme duress - to US after 9/11 attacks and joined the US Global War on Terror (GWOT)<sup>18</sup> and become the frontline state. Pakistan joined the war because after the fall of Taliban there was a growing perception of Iran and India involvement in Afghanistan. President Musharraf said, "We [Pakistan] joined the war of terror because of our own national and security interest. He further said, I did not compromise with the US but it was a matter of Pakistan's survival."<sup>19</sup> In Kabul Peace *Jirga*<sup>20</sup> on August 12, 2007 Musharraf admitted that a number of militants groups that created violence in Afghanistan are supported by the tribals of Pakistan. Some politicians also believed that the support for the US in the war on terror was in their national interest. There were also other factors for instance, it joined the US war on terror before India could avail this opportunity. Her aims were to secure the strategic assets, to safeguard the cause of Kashmir and to protect economic infrastructure. It was expected that the US led coalition would also allow it [Pakistan] to seek international help and assistance to successfully cope with the rising threat of extremism.<sup>21</sup> Improving relations with the US to prevent the development of an Indo-US nexus against Pakistan was also an important factor in making Pakistan a front-line state in the war on terror.

Thus Pakistan and US, both took arms against their past allies and friends Taliban and al-Qaeda. The 9/11 attack made it impossible for Pakistan to support the Taliban- overtly. The only boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan is Durand Line<sup>22</sup> and on both sides of the boarder Pashtun tribes are living. There was no strict check and balance on boarder due to which people of both countries are easily moving to each other countries. After the US attack on Afghanistan the terrorists easily switched to Pakistan's areas, bordering Afghanistan. Pakistan could not stop them either due to its administrative or political weakness and soon the tribal areas became the hub of terrorist. Even some of the analysts are of the view that the deep state of Pakistan deliberately turned deaf ears to the *Mujahideens* infiltration into Pakistan. The US tried its best to stop the *Mujahideens* movements to Pakistan and check the physical and financial support to Taliban but in vain. Later these escaped Taliban or *Mujahideens* reorganized their groups and launched attacks on the US-led NATO forces installation in Afghanistan. Pakistan was pressurized to stop the cross border terrorism and dismantle Al-Qaeda network within Pakistan.<sup>23</sup>

Although Pakistan was a staunch US ally or most allied ally at this time supported the GWOT but militarily it refused to join the campaign. Pakistan knew the fact that support to US would further increased militancy in Pakistan because the militants would considered Pakistan also a threat to its survival in FATA. But it was compelled by the US because the former wanted to crush the Taliban both in Afghanistan (by NATO forces) in FATA (by Pakistan forces). According to President Musharraf "9/11 came as a shock and it forced him to change the previous policies of state and align us with US security interest."<sup>24</sup>

Joining the war on terror Pakistan objectives took a new turn as war on terror also provided a threat perception for Pakistan because of the growing activates of India over there. The excessive involvement of India in Afghanistan is a real threat in the real sense because India has always supported the dissidents and separatist movements in Pakistan. This situation is very clearly described by the Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke, "Afghanistan is a classic power vacuum; neighbours see it as point of instability to guarantee their own stability or an opportunity to score points."<sup>25</sup>

In the initial phase of the GWOT, Pakistan wanted to negotiate with the Taliban instead of military operation in FATA but Mullah Omar the Taliban leader declined, even Pakistan persuaded Jalal-U-Din Haqqani to replace Mullah Omer but in vain.<sup>26</sup> Slowly and gradually the Taliban became a great threat to Pakistan security. President Musharraf himself declared in his speech that extremism was a great threat to the country security and he banned eight militant groups that included: Jaish-i-Mohammad, Sipha-i-Sahaba, Lashker-i-Jhangvi, Lashkre-e-Taiba, Tehrik-i-Nifaz-i-Shariat Mohammadi (a movement for the Enforcement of Islamic Laws) , Tehrik-i-Fiqa Jafriya, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Sipha-e-Mohammad, and Harkat-ul-Mujahedin even amid the hostile responses from some political parties of the state. The Musharraf policies to crash down the Islamic militants outraged the already charged militants to launch two unsuccessful assassination attempts over him.<sup>27</sup> As a result some members of these organizations joined Taliban and al-Qaeda even they were busy in providing training to the people in South and North Waziristan to fight against Pakistan military.<sup>28</sup>

The Taliban strength increased astronomically. They became haughty and challenged the writ of the state. Eventually, Pakistan went into action and launched determined operations against these miscreants. Directly, these active and annihilating activities of Pakistan army were in

the greater interests of US. Therefore, US also cultivated Pakistan as a linchpin in its anti-Taliban offensive by coming to the aid of the struggling Pakistani economy through extravagant concessions, counting sanctions waivers, debt rescheduling, credit, and grants. There could not have been a better way to crush the Taliban than to press their creator, Pakistan, in this task as part of the dictum, "Set thieves to catch other thieves."<sup>29</sup> For instance Bush administration removed all nuclear related economic sanctions in September 22, 2001, in addition to the military and economic assistance. Not only this, Pakistan also facilitated the US in her WOT against Taliban by giving assistance in the following areas.

- Airbases
- Military basis
- Protection force for the US troops
- Logistical support
- Deployment of Pak military forces on Western boundary
- Intelligence assistance

### **THE BATTLE FOR PAKISTAN AND US:<sup>30</sup>**

Although many analysts believed that Pakistan had a firm control over the Taliban and the latter were not perceived a threat but the WOT changed rather the convenient situation. Though in the beginning Pakistan was not willing to become a part of the US war on terror but she was forced to participate in this internecine and endless warfare.<sup>31</sup> FATA was considered the breeding ground of militancy and it was perceived that as long as it remains the safe haven for militants the US will lose ground in Afghanistan. The participation of Pakistan in WOT created opportunities to the militants heinous activities to harm it. The religious parties were equal beneficiary of the time and tragedy. Earlier the greatest hurdle for the religious parties was their internal disunity and differences. But this time they acted wisely and came together to avail the time gifted opportunity of utilizing the people sympathies and support in the coming elections. In this way the religious political parties come to common terms and formed MMA (Muttahidda Majlis Amal) contested 2002 elections and secured high mandate and formed their government in KPK. Yet independent observers were of the view that the elections were rigged in favour of MMA. MMA was the combination of six religious parties that united in their opposition to the US war on terror, supported the Taliban and tried to implement Islamic law (*sharia*) throughout the state of Pakistan. The victory of MMA was considered to be inimical for US and Pakistan long term interests in the region<sup>32</sup>. Nevertheless, it also served the interest of Pakistani state by strengthening the pro-Taliban feelings in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa particularly in FATA which was an alarm for the US that Islamism was on the rise in the region and only the strong executive power in Islamabad could exactly check this emerging danger.<sup>33</sup>

These political parties have a historical links with the Taliban. They often turned a deaf ear towards Taliban activities in FATA and in different parts of the province. The MMA victory further showed that religious parties have yielded influences in these areas where the government had little access or control.<sup>34</sup> The state of affairs and Pakistan active participation in WOT resulted in a notion that Islam is in danger, which paved the way for the religious clerics to use their rhetoric for winning the sympathies of the gullible people. The MMA

agenda was to bring the true Islamic system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including the provision of Islamic banking system, prevention of obscene program on television and the conversion of provincial assembly into Islamic *Jirga*.<sup>35</sup> Even in SWAT region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Maulana Fazlulah popularly known as 'Maulana Radio' used his own radio station to propagate hatred and militancy against the government. Though, the Pakistan army has a very little experience of fighting counter insurgency. Nevertheless, Pakistan fought India fueled Bengali rebellion but did not achieved breakthrough. In 1973 the army was also used against the Baluchi during Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto government, although it got limited victory because the insurgent managed to shift Afghanistan and got a safe haven over there.<sup>36</sup>

The army entered FATA first time in 2002 during Musharraf regime and had established many check posts in these areas which were total violation of the Quaid-i-Azam commitment with the tribals. The army entrance in FATA intents firstly, to cover the Pak-Afghan border to stop the militants that were escaped from US Secondly, to provide help to the political administration of FATA and finally, to curb militants those were hiding in FATA.

The first military operation code- named as Operation *Al-Mizan* (The Balance) in 2002 was conducted in South Waziristan against Taliban leader Maulana Nek Mohammed<sup>37</sup> and foreign militants. However, during this period militants escaped from South to North Waziristan successfully. Furthermore, the government also held numerous *Jirgas* as a modus-operandi to expel the militants. Interestingly, switching to traditional means contributed highly in bringing the desire results.<sup>38</sup> Although, it was a minor operation in which only Frontier Corps were used and killed six Uzbek fighter however, after several weeks of intense fighting, the Pakistani government was forced to make a peace deal with Nek Muhammad's forces on 24 April 2004. This agreement is also called the *Shakai* agreement which was signed in South Waziristan.<sup>39</sup> MMA played a very important role in arranging the deal between the government and Taliban. Musharraf has justified this agreement saying that it will help to isolate the foreign militants from the locals but it was not happened, because the attacks on Pakistan military are increased.

The president of Awami National Party (ANP) Afrasiab Khattak said "the power of traditional leaders was replaced by Taliban".<sup>40</sup> The deal was criticized by the US who considered it surrendering to Taliban.<sup>41</sup> Under the agreement the militants agreed to lay down their arms and handover foreign militants to government.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, the *Shakai* agreement was also never materialized as foreign terrorists failed to register and surrender. The collective responsibility clause of FCR was also applied to these areas, due to which economic sanctions were imposed upon them. There was a big flow while dealing this agreement because there was no tribal malik (leader) participated they were completely sidelined.<sup>43</sup> However, suddenly the peace agreement was collapsed when Nek Muhammad was killed by the US drone fired missile in June 17, 2004.<sup>44</sup> Once the hostilities were renewed after the killing of Nek Muhammad, Pakistan hot pursuit of the elements resulted in killing the most wanted mastermind of the al-Qaeda in this areas. These slain leaders were, Ahmad Said Khadr alias, Abdur Rehman al-Canadi, Abdur Rehman al-Masri, and Hassan Makhsum were killed in this area by Pakistan forces.<sup>45</sup>

The killing of Nek Muhammad make outraged the Taliban. Henceforth, the Taliban concentrated on agitating their opposition against Pakistan army. Baitullah Mehsud had organized his own anti-Pakistan, anti-Western Taliban movements. This time they were not only attacking the Pakistani forces but would also take part in the cross-border attacks against

NATO forces. March 2004, the Pakistani military launched Operation Kalusha, a clearing operation undertaken by the Frontier Corps and the Pakistani Army to eliminate foreign fighters near WANA. In Kalosha the leader of IMU Toher Yuldashev was hiding but he escaped. Later he was killed by drone on 27 August 2009 in South Waziristan.<sup>46</sup> More than 15 FC persons were killed in this operation. In Waziristan both operations were failed to subdue the local violence and militancy, but resulted in an increase in the cross border attacks on US and NATO forces in Afghanistan.<sup>47</sup> It would have better for Pakistan to stop the militants in the initial phase of the operations.

Afterwards the second operation was launched in 2005 against Baitullah Mehsud in the – Mehsud controlled areas of South Waziristan. This time the army was succeeded and occupied strategic places like Laddah, Makin, Spinkai and Tiarza.<sup>48</sup> However, the army also suffered heavy casualties. Once again the government of Pakistan signed a second peace deal (Sararogha Agreement) with the new leader of militants Baitullah Mehsud on February 7, 2005 (Sararogha South Waziristan). The Taliban leaders and cadres laid down arms at the ceremony and Pakistan army also withdraw from South Waziristan.<sup>49</sup> This agreement remained to paper. The Taliban leaders publically stated that they will keep it *Jihad* against the infidels in Afghanistan. This agreement proved futile and the militants blamed the government that it [government] has violated the agreement by arresting our man.<sup>50</sup> This time TTP<sup>51</sup> started the suicide bombing campaign targeting Pakistani government which is still carried on by militants. The mastermind of suicide bombing was Qari Hussain and Baitullah Mehsud himself. To clear the areas completely from the militants the army once again started military campaign code name *Operation Zalzala* (operation earthquake) in January 2008. This time the campaign lasted for more than one month but it was again ended with the signing of peace deal. The peace agreement was collapsed shortly however, the suicide attack continued. Pakistani analyst Shuja Nawaz has also pointed out that the military campaigns that mostly consist of Frontier Corps is not sufficient against the “aggressively patrolling or fighting the well-armed and well-trained militants” suggesting a change in tactics were needed.<sup>52</sup>

After one month in October 17, 2009 a very large scale three-pronged operation *Rah-e-Nijat* (Path to Salvation) was launched against Baitullah Mehsud and his companion mostly foreigners. This time the militants were also strong to fight armies while the army has an advantage of the local which were against the militants. US also deteriorated the already fragile situation by removing the check posts from the bordering areas of Southern Afghanistan to allow and provide passage to Taliban to thron to FATA for accelerating their sabotages activities against Pakistan army.<sup>53</sup> Internally displaced persons (IDPs) also supported the government blaming the Taliban for this crisis. As compared to others operations Pakistan army faced strife resistance from militants side however, government controlled many towns and cities till November.<sup>54</sup>

The ongoing US Drone attacks also became an ulcer for Taliban that is allowed by Pakistan’s top military leaders.<sup>55</sup> For instance, during 2008 there were 34 drone strike occurred in FATA.<sup>56</sup> Following the death of Baitullah Mehsud by US drone, Hakimullah Mehsud (anti-Pakistan) was nominated new leader of TTP who further exacerbated the security by attacking Pakistan forces, intelligence agencies.

After the military operation in South Waziristan many of the militants and Al-Qaeda members escaped to North Waziristan and operated from there. In North Waziristan the

militants become so strong position that in 2007 more than three hundred Frontier Corps (FC) men were captured without fight. Reciprocally, both the Taliban and government released their captives.<sup>57</sup> In North Waziristan these forces were spear-headed by Hafiz Gul Bahadur. The military operation was started in North areas such as Saidgai Wazir, Dattakhel, Miranshah and Mir Ali in which the army got little success. Nevertheless, some of leading Al-Qaeda commanders were killed such as Haitham al-Rabia, Hamza al-Rabia and Abu Laith al-Libi. In these operations the army witnessed greater casualties and loss of the installation which hurried the establishment to sign an agreement on 5 September 2006. Some analyst and experts criticized the government for understanding the treaty from lower position and this that the peace deal benefited the Taliban not the government. Indeed, the agreements did not bring peroneus peace to the region and viable solution to the burning problem.

The existing deal stated that there will be no attack on the security and state properties from the militants side. The militants were also stopped to support foreign militants while government agreed to release the arrested of previous operations, ban on arms was lifted and also new check posts were removed.<sup>58</sup> Many analysts believed that this agreement was an unconditional surrender of Pakistan government to the Taliban and al-Qaeda. However, government declined this stance and stated that the deal was signed with the tribal leaders not with Taliban. Like the previous agreement this one was also futile and it could not stop the Taliban from attacking the Pakistan army personnel and security parameters.<sup>59</sup> This peace deal was humiliating for the government because it paved a huge amount of money for the damaged property that went indirectly to the militants. This deal was deleterious for NATO and ISAF forces in Afghanistan as it will enable the Taliban to attack them by having leisure from the engagement within Pakistan against its army.

From the very beginning the state role was limited. So it can be considered a tactical mistake from Pakistan's side because it provides an opportunity to local Taliban agents and al-Qaeda affiliated militants to regroup and plan a heightened level of cross-border attacks against coalition forces in Afghanistan. Internally it also become so powerful that in 2007 they formed their own organization composed of 27 militants groups, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) with Baitullah Mehsud its leader in South Waziristan and Hafiz Gul Bahadur in North and Maulana Fazullah in Swat.<sup>60</sup> TTP which was at this time under the strong *amir* (leader) of Baitullah Mehsud started to enforce Islamic law and aimed to conduct a Jihad against NATO and Pakistan army was a real threat to Pakistan's security.<sup>61</sup>

The government's double dealing running with the Taliban and hunting with the Americans become so furious that in 2007 the militancy reached the Capital where the leaders of Lal Masjid (red mosque) tried to Islamise the Capital. The two cleric brothers Maulana Abdul Aziz and Ghazi Abdul Rashid of Lal Masjid Islamabad (Red Mosque) gave an ultimatum to government to impose Islamic law in the country. On April 12, in an FM broadcast from the Lal Masjid's illegal FM station, the clerics issued a threat: "There will be suicide blasts in the nook and cranny of the country. We have weapons, grenades and we are expert in manufacturing bombs. We are not afraid of death".<sup>62</sup> He further stated that if government does not impose we will Islamise the society by any means.<sup>63</sup> While threatening the government – it became necessary for the Pakistan to take action against them. The situation was become critical when Fatwā was issued from Lal Masjid against the military operations in Waziristan and boycotted the *namaz-i-Jinaza* (Muslims funeral prayer) of the soldiers killed fighting Islamic militants. The tension was further increased when the students of Lal Masjid fired on police and paramilitary forces. It also shut down the Chinese massage center near Blue area.



After several months standoff, on July 11, 2007 the army operation (Operation Silence) was launched.<sup>64</sup> Maulana Abdul Aziz was captured while escaping wearing women *Burqa* (veil) and his brother Abdul Rashid Ghazi was killed by Special Services Group Commandoes (SSG). The longest operation of SSG in Pakistan history lasted for eight days in which 70 well armed militants and 10 security personnel were killed.<sup>65</sup> The Lal masjid episode was the failure of government or either the two cleric was well connected with government but soon after the operation militants groups from different parts of the countries vowed to take revenge even al-Qaeda announced the called for *Jihad* against President Musharraf and Pakistani government. TTP of North and South Waziristan stated that “they will avenge the martyred brothers, sisters, and son”.<sup>66</sup> The public, also seen this operation as brutal act against the madrassa’s students. Not only was the peace deal that was concluded earlier in FATA abrogated but immediately after the operation against Red Mosque, there were 15 suicide strikes between July 14 and 31– a dreadful consequence by any calculation. Afterwards the militancy was mushroomed to the extent that on December 27, 2007 the former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was killed in Rawalpindi during elections campaign. Thus Lal Masjid incident carried symbolic weight for Islamic extremists and militants across Pakistan.

TNSM was organized in 1994 in Malakand Division. The official name of the movement is Tehreek-i-Nifazi- Shariat-i-Muhammadi (Movement for the Enforcement of Islamic Laws) with Maulana Sufi Muhammad its leader.<sup>67</sup> TNSM aims were to implement Islamic law, to Islamise judiciary and executives, and the eradication of un-Islamic laws.<sup>68</sup> Initially TNSM was overtly supported by all political parties and bureaucracy to achieve political support there. Even president Asif Ali Zardari stated, that weakness of civil and political bureaucracy had resulted in the emergence of militancy.<sup>69</sup> Another important point to be mentioned here is that the weakness of the state’s security measures would also favoured Taliban because people would look towards them for protection. As Ilhan Niaz mentioned in his book *The Culture of Power and Governance in Pakistan 1947-2008* that the governance degenerated to the extent that writ of state was challenged in Islamabad by the militants.<sup>70</sup> After 9/11 the TNSM was so influential to set up radio stations for the campaign but in 2002 Musharraf banned it along with four other organizations while Sufi Muhammad was arrested. TNSM was opposed to democratic system and vote. Women education was forbidden in SWAT and Malakand division.<sup>71</sup> After the detention of Sufi, his son in law Maulana Fazalullah (Radio Mullah) took over the TNSM and in July 2007, he declared jihad against the Pakistan army in revenge for its siege of the Red Mosque in Islamabad. The militants wanted this time state within a state and the violence continued as the military intensified its operation. The situation was to the extent deteriorated that compelled the government to sign peace deal with the Taliban. Deal was signed between the provincial government and TNSM in April 2008, but sooner the leader of TNSM denounced the deal in April 2009 accusing the Government of not fulfilling commitment made under the deal. Both the TNSM and TTP jointly launched the offensive against the army, police and civil bureaucracy. In 2008 from August to December, government has launched three operations in Swat but had no effect. Delawar Jan observes: “The military operation was welcome[d] with a hope that the militants would soon be eliminated. They were garlanded and hugged when Taliban were routed in the major towns in their initial action. But Today...the army’s intention to crush militants is being doubted and instead of winning hearts and minds, the military is alienating people of the valley due to continuing civilian casualties and problems triggered by the military operation. The alienation is caused by the fact that the military could not protect the life and property but instead added to their problems”.<sup>72</sup>

Operation *Rah-e-Haq* (Operation Path of Righteousness) in November 13, 2007 was conducted. Afterwards law and order had restored under army's occupation. In spite of fighting with the militants on 15 February 2009 the Awami National Party (ANP) government passed the infamous Nizam-e-Adl regulation and ceded control of Swat and after two months on April 13, 2009 President signed it. The existing judicial system was replaced with Qazi courts in Swat and Malakand Division; release the prisoners while the Taliban agreed to end attacks. After the deal as her propaganda campaign the US newspaper New York Times published a story titled "Taliban are now just 60 miles away from Islamabad". Temporary peace was established even the TNSM openly negated democracy, co-education, women education and parliament in front of media. The Taliban has always violated the agreement, continued to sabotage peace and also established some check posts in Malakand division.<sup>73</sup> The US which was already upset with the peace deal in Swat started presentiment of Taliban taking Islamabad and snatching the nuclear weapons. MMA was defeated in the February 2008 elections with the optimism that it would replace religious politics but it had adopted its own religious rhetoric. There was no way out the TNSM once again spurred the government into action because they tried to assail Buner and they showed no respect towards the deal- the army lunched operation the so-called *Rah-e-Rast* or *Tor Tandar* (Black Thunderstorm) in May 2009. This operation was also supported by the locals<sup>74</sup> because they were fading off and it lasted for two months with significant success, reportedly 1635 militants (mainly Afghan, Uzbeks, and Arabs) were killed and 254 were injured and Pakistan lost 165 army personnel.<sup>75</sup> Maulana Sufi Muhammad was arrested while Fazalullah escaped. To establish permanent peace and security the President Asif Ali Zardari announced the establishment of military cantonment in Swat on 12 June 2009. More than 50, 0000 people of Swat became IDPs that returned back to home after the operation in 2009.

In Khyber Agency two militant groups emerged in 2006. One was Lashkar-i-Islami (LI) and another was Ansar-ul-Islam both Mufti Munir Shakir and Pir Saif-u-Rehman was the leader respectively. The famous proverb in Pashto *Dwa Tury Pa Yao Teki Ke Na Zaigi* (two swords cannot be put in the same scabbard) is well suited for the situation in Khyber Agency. Both of the groups fought with each other but later tribal leaders forced to oust both from Barra, while Ansar-ul-Islam leader left for Tirrah Valley.<sup>76</sup> Space was created and a bus driver Mangal Bagh emerged on the scene. Previously he was a *Jihadi* and fought against the Soviet Union. Initially he was pro-government and was used by government in proxy battle but later turned against government.<sup>77</sup>

Some sources indicate that he was engineered militants by the government for the purpose to get more and more money from US during Musharraf's period.<sup>78</sup> In 2008 he banned un-Islamic activities forcibly. People were given harsh punishment for leaving prayers. It created the 13<sup>th</sup> century situation where indulgences were sold by the pope workers same was the situation here in Barra.<sup>79</sup> In 2008 elections women were banned to cast the vote. Later he also opened his own radio station to broadcast his message. The radio was used to increase their influence in masses. This radio station has done a lot to create militancy and was used for recruiting and organization.<sup>80</sup> A Qazi court (courts run by Islamist jurists) was also established to dispense quick justice.<sup>81</sup>

In 2008 the militants kidnapped 20 peoples of Christian community from Peshawar city. Before this accident they had also attacked on government personnel in Khyber and Peshawar but this time they were not able to defend themselves against government wrath. Nevertheless, they were not always successful in escaping government wrath. This time they

were not able to defend themselves against government high hands. To restore government writ in June 28, 2008 the operation *Sirat-e-Mustaqqim* (the Right Path) was launched.

This time the operation was different from others because no one militant was killed or captured. Some sources showed that a secret agreement was made between government and Lashkar-i-Islami to show to the world that we are busy - in combating militancy in FATA but it was like a stage drama to indicate that the assistance that Pakistan receive from the US is well spent on real cause. From militants side there was no opposition to army but on media it was propagated that a serious war is going there. Again two operations were launched *Bia Darghalam* (here I come again) and *Khwakh be Desham* (I will see you) in October to November 2009 in Khyber agency but they did not achieve any breakthrough except the genocide of innocent people.

Mohmand shares its western border with Afghanistan's Kunar and Nangarhar provinces. In Mohmand agency the army launched one operation in October 2008 to September 2009 and cleared 80% area from the militants. The military operations that were conducted in different parts of the country compelled the militants to flee to Bajaur the smallest agency adjacent to Kunar valley in Afghanistan. Bajaur was peaceful area as compared to other areas. In Bajaur they become so strong to establish sharia courts where hundreds of tribesmen reportedly visiting daily.<sup>82</sup> In 2007 the Polio vaccination was stopped by the Taliban due to which 24,000 children's were not given vaccine.<sup>83</sup> In the attack on Chingai madrassa more than 80 people were killed which shattered the peace deal between the government and the Taliban. The attack enraged the pro-Taliban civilian and they resolved to avenge the incident by targeting the government personnel through suicide bombers whom they had prepared in advance.<sup>84</sup>

This operation was different from others in many areas. Before the operation the government ordered the inhabitants to migrate from area, resultantly more than 550,000 people migrated to the adjacent areas of Dir, Swat and Timergarha. The condemning aspect of the saga is that there were no rehabilitation arrangements for the displaced persons. Afterwards, Operation Sherdil (Operation Lionheart) was launched in August 2008. In this operation Damadola was highly bombed. The area overall, was cleared to a greater extent but in reaction nation-wide suicide bombing were witnessed which caused great setback to the state institutions. According to government sources more than thousands militants were killed including an Egyptian Abu Saeed Al-Masri.<sup>85</sup> More than 50 army men were also killed in this operation. The most notable was the attack on Marriott hotel in Islamabad in September 20, 2008. The operation dispersed and dismantled in militants network which procured positive results for US forces in Afghanistan as most of the militants were engaged in fighting at home with Pakistan army.

#### **AFTERMATH OF THE MILITARY OPERATIONS:**

Since 2001 Pakistani forces are busy in combating militancy which has been resulted in huge civilian casualties, damage to infrastructure and internal displacement but they have not achieved any major breakthrough in dismantling, disrupting and destroying al-Qaeda and Taliban. Their threat is as vigorous as ever. According to Ilhan Niaz "Terrorist violence, and the military and intelligence operations launched to counter it, have killed thousands and displaced millions without putting a stop to terror attacks".<sup>86</sup> The prestige of military was

also demoralized because of fighting with co-religionist and it was evident when several tribal mullahs issued *fatwa* (religious edicts) against the Pakistan military and waged *jihad* against the state. The military actions in FATA push the militants to other parts of Pakistan which further destabilizing the country.<sup>87</sup> The ongoing suicide attacks against army, police and civilian are the consequences of military operations in FATA.<sup>88</sup> The war on terror did not curb militancy but it has further created other multifarious problems for Pakistan and total of 2,348 soldiers have been killed and another 6710 were injured. The US drone attacks inside Pakistan had exacerbated the situation to a significant degree and paradoxically resulted in creating militancy in the tribal areas. The colossal collateral damages of civilians in random Drone attacks are highly counter-productive which resulted in anti-Americanism and contributed to the recruitments process of adherents to the militants. Rumsfeld said in 2004 “Are we creating more terrorist that we are killing? And probably we are”.<sup>89</sup> The embarrassing episode of the entire saga is that huge spill-over effects were witnessed in the settled districts of the region. Thus today the militancy is not confined to KPK and FATA but the so-called new groups emerged that are the Panjabi Taliban who created severest security challenges in Punjab. South Punjab is considered the breeding ground of militancy where affiliates are prepared for *Jihadi* organization and for proselytizing purposes.<sup>90</sup>

May 1, 2011, was deeply embarrassing day for Pakistan when the US Navy SEALs in a special operation killed the most wanted and the top leader Osama bin Laden near Army’s Kakul Military Academy Abbottabad in KPK province which produced further misperceptions among US official that the more wanted enemy was given shelter by Pakistan ISI. The US is also pressurizing Islamabad to pinpoint other Taliban and al-Qaeda leaders, whom are believed to be in Pakistan and such kinds of perceptions would likely to increase US raids deep inside the country. It is also important to mention here that no intelligence was shared with Pakistan on May 1. These developments further increased US doubts about Pakistan role in combating the menace of terrorism which have led to the jeopardizing the US assistance to Pakistan in future assistance.<sup>91</sup>

On the other hand Pakistan’s arch rival India has also increased its long prevailing determinations to persuade US to more pressurize Pakistan. India also press its demands that the alleged criminals of 2008 Mumbai attacks believed to be in Pakistan.<sup>92</sup> Pakistan foreign ministry has showed deep anxieties and reservations about the US unilateral operation without Pakistan authorization.

The government stated that such type of unilateral activities and actions of US within a sovereign state would cause disharmony and dichotomies which would be highly detrimental for bringing international peace and security.<sup>93</sup> Many persons often raise their frequent queries about the Pakistan credibility in tackling the problem of ever increasing Talibanization in the country. Some even object that Pakistan have a secret collusion with the Taliban and Pakistan do not want to work out a permanent and viable solution to the problem which has wrought havoc to the common citizens as the savage did not even spare the shopping centers and children schools.

The problem is that Pakistan lies in a fool paradise. It has sacrificed the greater interests of the state at the sake of some perceived and illusive objectives. Internationally Pakistan has earned a title of a rogue and terrorist sponsored state. Therefore, in the international arena it has been isolated. Even the most allied states like the Muslim world also see Pakistan with doubted eyes.

## CONCLUSION

According to Ayaz Wazir “when we look back at all these long years of military operations in FATA we see nothing but death and destruction. We have neither stopped militants from crossing the border into Pakistan nor stopped the tribal areas from being bombarded and shelled back into the Stone Age. But in the process, the army has become bogged down in a quagmire without having any idea how to get out”.<sup>94</sup>

Bringing the internal peace and reconciliation process with the militants to achieve its short term goals Pakistan has ignored the futuristic vision which has resulted in the demoralization and maligning the image of army in the state.

The US perceives that the random drone attacks are the only solution to the problem of militancy and Talibanization. But the fact is that such drone attacks are extremely counter-productive due to huge collateral damages. Sane use of brazen force alone would not deliver the objectives of bringing peace to the volatile region. Even the US soldier in the ground against the Taliban also confessed the bitter fact that the force short of political and economic measures would not bring an end to the problem which has bogged the super power of the world. Therefore, US resolved to ameliorate the pathetic condition of the people by making the area as reconstruction and opportunity zone through establishing small industries. Many analysts believe that US is now on the right path to eliminate the danger of extremism by working out a permanent solution through providing them a better livelihood and engaging them in constructive activities.

Pakistan participation in the GWOT and military operations inside the country has further increased militancy and intolerance to the extent that it had never been. In these dozens of operations Pakistan has lost thousands of soldiers and civilians but still the problem of terrorism loom large over the head of the citizens. If one compare the death toll of civilian in the saga of counter terrorism it has been greater than the collective deaths of Vietnam War. Pakistan needs a rational and decisive policy towards the elimination of the menace of terrorism. It should devise a clear cut stance about the phenomena of Talibanization. A leading journalist Salab Mahsud once said that the tribals are in complete confusion about the ongoing phenomena of Talibanization and militarization and expressed his desire that the government should clarify their policy over the Taliban that whether they are against the Taliban are in favour of them. Should we support the government against the Taliban or the Taliban against the government? The need of the hour is that Pakistan should bring an end to the problem of Talibanization and militarization as soon as possible because the problem has placed Pakistan at a vulnerable position and exposed its weaknesses for the foreign intriguers to easily manipulate the situation against the interest of Pakistan. The timely solution to the problem would also question the prolonged NATO and US forces stay in Afghanistan.

The more Pakistan blindly follows the dictations from Washington the more it would entangle itself in this gruesome and endless warfare. It is high time for Pakistan to hammer out a workable and an indigenous solution to the flagrant problem. The ten years bitter experience of active engagement against these unscrupulous elements is enough to realize the futility of this bloodshed and chaos which has shaken the state institutions. The masses even in the remote areas are terror stricken. Economy is hard hit. Peace seems elusive. Men in the arms are at verge of collapse and revolt.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ANP	Awami National Party
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Area
FC	Frontier Corps (Pakistan)
FCR	Frontier Crimes Regulation
HeM	Harkat-ul-Mujahideen
ISI	Inter-Services Intelligence
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
JeM	Jaish-e-Mohammad
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhaw
LeT	Lashkar-e-Taiba
MMA	Muttahidda Majlis-e-Amal
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
SSG	Special Services Group
TSNM	Tehreek-i-Nifazi- Shariat-i-Muhammadi
TTP	Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan

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