



Strategic Significance of Pakistan's Counter Terrorism Efforts Since 2014

Vol. III, No. I (2018) | Page: 138 – 154 | DOI: 10.31703/grr.2018(III-I).10

p- ISSN: 2616-955X | e-ISSN: 2663-7030 | ISSN-L: 2616-955X

Masood Ur Rehman
Khattak*

Tauqeer Hussain
Sargana†

Mujahid Hussain‡

Key Words:

Terrorism, Taliban,
TTP, FATA,
Haqqani Network,
NATO, ISPR

Abstract *Pakistan is successfully fighting against militants in its tribal areas. The threat in tribal areas has complicated security situation. Many terrorist groups allegedly operate in FATA, e.g. Hafiz Gul Buhadur Group, Molvi Nazir Group, the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, and the Haqqani Network/ Afghan Taliban. The operation Zarb-I-Azb was a huge success. Pakistan's army destroyed many IED Factories, dismantled training Centers of the Suicide Bombers run by different terrorist groups and TTP Run Media Centers, exposed detention centers of militants and recovered foreign currency during Operation Zarb-i-Azb. For long term peace and stability in tribal areas, the government must carry out reconstruction and development programs on a large scale. There is a need to rebuild the capacity of the local population. Free education, rehabilitation and de-radicalization programs must be initiated to mainstream FATA youth.*

Introduction

The War against Terror is not over; Pakistan as a frontline state in this war has played a significant role. Pakistan military has launched massive operations to root out Pakistani Taliban and other transnational militant groups from Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). With this backdrop, this study is divided in three parts. Firstly, the study would discuss the threat matrix in tribal areas. Second part would critically analyze Pakistan's counter terror efforts during 2014 and the

* Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and International Relations, International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Pakistan.

† Assistant Professor, Department of Politics and International Relations, International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Pakistan.

‡ Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Bahria University Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: mujahid_hussain70@yahoo.com

last part would suggest some recommendations for Pakistan to stabilize this most volatile and dangerous part of the world.

The War against Al-Qaeda and Taliban regime in Afghanistan pushed militants from Afghanistan to FATA. All brands of militant groups including Al-Qaeda, Afghan Taliban, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan- (IMU), East Turkistani Islamic movement- (ETIM), and Chechens etc. entered Pakistani tribal areas and got shelter under the auspices of the local tribes (Jones and Fair, 2010, p.26). The local tribes were compelled to give shelter because of their traditions under "Pashtunwali Code of Conduct" (Zahid, 2013) and monetary benefits.

The "Pashtunwali code of conduct" consists of certain set of rules and traditions. The Pashtun tribes living in Afghanistan and Pakistan follow it religiously. The concepts of Melmastia- (hospitality) and Nanawatai- (to give shelter to anyone running away from his enemies) are paramount to the said code (Ibid). Under Melmastia, it is obligatory for every Pashtun to offer hospitality to his guest irrespective of his race, ethnic background and religion. Breaking of this custom or not following it in letter and spirit could make the host losing his respect and social status amongst his fellow tribesmen (Rana, 2009). The social norms and values played a significant role in the aftermath of 9/11 military operations in Afghanistan and likewise in FATA.

The Militant Organizations especially Al-Qaeda and Afghan Taliban had huge funds; they offered monetary benefits to the local tribes, married local women, bought/rented land and settled in FATA (Ibid). The local population is generally poor; they happily accepted monetary benefits and allowed these militant groups to establish their safe heavens in FATA.

The influx of Al-Qaeda and other militant groups to FATA compelled Pakistan government to deploy regular army and launch military operations in its tribal belt. Pakistan army was never deployed in FATA since 1947. The deployment of army and subsequent military operations invited backlash from local tribes after 9/11. Pakistan army initially faced huge setbacks, lost hundreds of its soldiers in an attempt to root out militants from its tribal belt. Pakistan army learnt lessons from its military operations with the passage of time and now it has become a specialized counter insurgency force. Resultantly, it has disrupted militant groups in FATA and destroyed their network in all tribal agencies. Currently, Pakistan military is deployed in FATA carrying out military operations in different agencies. Pakistan military has improved the vigilance at border and now it is difficult for the militant groups to roam around Pak-Afghan border with impunity.

Threat Matrix in FATA

The tribal areas of Pakistan housed some of the notorious militant groups. Despite Pakistan army's consistent military operations since 2002, there were certain areas

in FATA where different militant groups were operating before Operation Zarb-i-Azb.

Hafiz Gul Buhadur and Molvi Nazir Group

The Gul Buhadur group was based in NWA and their main focus was Afghanistan. But this group also attacked Pakistani security forces in 2006 because of the continued US drone strikes and military operations (Szrom, 2009). After a peace deal with Pakistan government this group declared they would not attack Pakistani security forces in the area and banish the foreign fighters including Al-Qaeda. This group was based in Miramshah and despite assurances to expel foreign fighters, they had given shelter to foreign militant groups including Haqqani network, Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda (Ibid).

In 2014 Operation Zara-I-Azb spared no militant group in NWA. Pakistan military declared Gul Buhadur as an enemy and vowed to kill him (Haider, 2014). There had been conflicting reports of his death in a drone strike, but still it is could not be confirmed (TTP commander, 2015). Even if he is killed, his group would have been intact. Pakistan military flushed out this group from NWA and it is expected that this group might have taken refuge in Khowst province of Afghanistan that borders NWA. Another Pakistan based group was Molvi Nazir Group.

The MolviNazir group is a conglomeration of fourteen militant groups based in South Waziristan agency. This group is primarily focused on Afghanistan. In alliance with Afghan Taliban they have carried out many attacks against allied forces in Afghanistan. This group also provided funds and recruits for the Afghan Taliban (Burki, 2010, p.199). The former leader of this group MolviNazir was killed in an American drone strike (Burki and Yusufzai, 2018). But this group is still safe and sound. MolviNazir got prominence when he launched crackdown against foreign fighters especially Uzbek militants in 2007 .He was considered to be ally and pro-Pakistan.

The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan- (TTP)

The Tehrik -I- Taliban Pakistan emerged in 2007 under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud (Giustozzi, 2012, p.279). TTP has been closely aligned with Afghan Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Punjabi Taliban and IMU. Their primary goals are to pressurize state of Pakistan to break its ties with America and become a Sharia state (Butt and Elahi, 2010, p.234). At the time of its emergence the TTP had 40,000-50,000 men under its command spread over in all seven agencies of FATA (Mir, 2009).

The de facto control of TTP over vast territory of FATA allowed different terrorist organizations to regroup and establish their command and control network

in Tribal areas. The TTP at the time of its emergence was based in South Waziristan agency. However, after the 2009 successful military operations by Pakistan army, it was dislodged from its base and moved to NWA. TTP established its command and control Centre in NWA and launched deadly attacks against Pakistan army, strategic installations and civilians.

The US drone strikes killed many top commanders of TTP, Al-Qaeda and others. Most notable targets were former TTP Chief Hakim Ullah Mehsud, Baitullah Mehsud, WaliurRehman (Galpin, 2013), Tahir Yaldashev IMU commander (Pakistani officials, 2017) and Ilyas Kashmiri (US strike kills, 2015) After Hakimullah's death the group unanimously appointed Mullah Fazalullah as their new Emir (commander) (Mullah Fazalullah chosen, 2013). The Operation Zarb-I-Azb resulted in the destruction of the TTP's command and control centre and then TTP's top brass moved to Afghanistan and now they are operating from Kunar and Nuristan Provinces (Yousaf, 2014).

Although TTP's operational capabilities have suffered a huge blow after Operation Zarb-i-Azb but still they have the ability to strike inside Pakistan because of their safe heavens in Afghanistan. The terrorist attack on Army Public School- (APS) Peshawar is vivid example of their capacity to strike against soft targets (Mir, 2014). Pakistan has asked the Afghan and NATO commanders for solid action against TTP in Afghanistan. Resultantly, Afghan and NATO forces conducted operations close to the border with Pakistan against TTP elements. Such cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan would not only improve their bilateral relationship but also help both countries to overcome this menace of terrorism and extremism.

The Haqqani Network/ Afghan Taliban

The Haqqani Network is considered to be the most vicious militant group in Afghanistan fighting the US led alliance. The Haqqani Network is composed of Afghan, Pakistani and Al-Qaeda fighters (Gould and Fitzgerald, 2013, p. 94). This group operates in Khowst, Paktia, Paktika Logar, and Ghazni (Ibid) The Haqqani Network and Afghan Taliban want withdrawal of the foreign forces, imposition of Sharia in Afghanistan and governance of Afghanistan according to their own set rules and regulations (Brown & Rassler, 2013, p.134). The Haqqani network led the Miramshah Shura and played crucial role in the planning; recruiting and execution of the plans in Taliban's central coordinating body also known as Rahbari Shura (Brown & Rassler, 2013, p. 137).

The US, India and Afghanistan allegedly accused Pakistan for the support to Haqqani Network. The US Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mullen said that Haqqani network is "veritable arm" of ISI (Siddique, 2014, p 172). Pakistan dispelled those allegations by its decisive military operations against all militant groups in NWA. The DG ISPR Lieutenant General AsimBajwa said that there will be no

discrimination among TTP affiliated groups or Haqqani network, all militant groups in NWA would be eliminated (Shirazi & Haider, 2017).

Even the senior American officials have also acknowledged that Pakistan has targeted Haqqani Network and detached their base from NWA. The commander of the US and allied forces in Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. Joseph Anderson said that Haqqani Network is now “fractured”, he accredited this to Pakistan army’s operations in FATA. He said that Pakistan’s counter insurgency efforts against militants in NWA disrupted Haqqani Network’s ability to strike in Kabul (Video: Lt. Gen. Joseph Anderson”2014). Pakistan has ensured that FATA will not be used by any terrorist group, but in reality, the operations by Pakistan military will not largely impact on the operational capabilities of the Haqqani Network to strike in Afghanistan, because they have got secured bases inside Afghanistan’s southern belt from where they can launch attacks against the US and Afghan forces.

The Operation Zarb-i-Azb- 2014 and Its Impact

Pakistan military officially announced full-fledged military operation in North Waziristan Agency- (NWA) on June 15, 2014 to stem out militancy from this area (Press Release, 2014). According to former DG ISPR Major Gen Athar Abbas, the military high command had principally agreed to launch military operation in NWA in 2010 but due to General Kayani’s own strategic calculations the operation could not take place (Kayani continued to postpone, 2014). During this period TTP militants consolidated their positions, sanctuaries, and command & control network in NWA, which resulted in many high profile attacks against Pakistan military and civilian installations. Pakistan military achieved huge success in Operation Zarb-i-Azb. Some of the achievements are discussed below.

IED Factories Destroyed

In Miramshah Bazaar sale of light and heavy arms was normal for years, but after 9/11 the Improvised Explosive Devices- (IEDs) surfaced too. The militant groups especially Al-Qaeda and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan had technical expertise in the IEDs. These groups trained local and Afghan Taliban in this field which played havoc with the security of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Pakistan military seized huge number of motorcycle-borne IEDs, vehicle-borne IEDs, and suicide vests from NWA. According to DG ISPR Lt. General Bajwa, Pakistan Army unearthed underground tunnels, might have been used for safety against drone strikes and store for the weapons. It has recovered 225 cylinders filled with explosives, 150 unfinished landmines and 700 pipes filled IEDs along with 2,000 IEDs and 23 ton of explosive (Shah, 2015).

In Miramshah Bazaar, even readymade IEDs were available to customers, irrespective of their identity or use either in Pakistan or Afghanistan i.e. a customer

could buy a suicide jacket of 50kgs to a 2000 pound of car bomb (Khan, 2014). Ironically, the recovered explosive material would have been enough to carry out five IED attacks daily for next 14 years. Pakistani Military and the US led forces faced more losses because of IEDs than direct fighting with militants (IED Fatalities, 2015). The seizure of IED factories in NWA dented operational capacity of the militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan and reduced terrorist attacks in both countries.

Training Centers of the Suicide Bombers Seized

Pakistan army successfully unearthed many suicide training centers, injections for suicide bombers, and modern command and control centers for communication. The militant groups linked with Afghan Taliban, Haqqani Network, Al-Qaeda and TTP used these training centers to train “Fedayeen” or suicide bombers for attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan (Khan, 2014). Pakistan army recovered training manuals, suicide bombers allegiance forms, their details etc. It seemed a well-organized work by the militants to indoctrinate youngsters from Mehsud tribe, Bajaur Agency, Orakzai agency and other parts of FATA. Many guerrilla training centers were also unearthed, where militants used to train their newly inducted recruits. It has also put a strain on militant groups, the supply of suicide bombers faced pause, which resulted in dramatic reduction of suicide attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

TTP Run Media Centers were Dismantled

Statements of militant leaders (Ibid). After the operation Zarb-I-Azb TTP militants established their command and control centers in Afghanistan. Now we these militants record video messages, audio tapes and even make phone calls from Afghanistan to remain active in media. It is imperative for the Afghan government to take concrete steps and dismantle their command and control centers from Afghanistan.

The Operation Kheyber I-II and Strategic Significance of Tirah Valley

Tirah valley connects plains of Bara which directly connect Peshawar and its adjacent areas (Mir 2015). Tirah valley also borders Afghanistan's Nangahar province. Being remote, inaccessible and surrounded by huge mountains made it is ideal sanctuary for militant groups like Al-Qaeda, TTP and Afghan Taliban. Whenever Pakistan army carried out operation against militants in Kheyber agency, they moved to Tirah valley for shelter (Samdani, 2011). After the operation Zarb-i-Azb in NWA militants linked with TTP and other terrorist organizations got refuge in Tirah Valley. Similarly, the militants linked with

Afghan Taliban also entered Tirah Valley from Nangarhar's districts of Dur Baba and Nazyan (Khan, 2015). Three militant groups Lashkar-e-Islam, TTP and TTP JamaatulAhrar (TTP-AJ) have teamed up against Pakistan in the Tirah valley with occasional help from Afghan side of the border. Tirah valley was considered to be the last stronghold of the militants in FATA.

Critical Analysis of Operation Khyber- I & II

Pakistan army officially announced the culmination of operation Khyber-II with significant gains. Pakistan army is controlling strategic heights in Tirah valley and important crossings that connect it with Afghanistan and other agencies (Khan, 2015). Three main passes Mzatal, Kandao Gharibi and Dramudrad that connect Tirah Valley with Afghanistan are under Pakistan army's control. These areas were the main transit routes of the militants from Afghanistan to Tirah Valley and vice versa. Pakistan army controls 95% of the area. The militants have been cornered in Kachkol and Rajgal areas and Pakistan air force is carrying out targeted strikes to eliminate remaining safe heavens. It is expected that militants would have no chance to enter Tirah valley again (Khattak, 2018).

Pakistan army lost over 50 men in the last phase of operation Khyber-II (Khan, 2017). It was tough operation because of the difficult terrain and heavily mined fields. There were mines every 15 meters. In such difficult conditions Pakistan army not only valiantly cleared the area, controlled important ridges and passes but also killed a significant number of militants. The significance of Kheyber-I and II operation is visible in the shape of reduced terrorist attacks in Peshawar and adjoining areas. The overall security situation has improved. The number of terrorist attacks in Peshawar as compare to last year dropped markedly from 136 in the first quarter of 2014 to 44 in the year 2015 (Sargana,2018). The major source of funding of the militants was disrupted. Pakistan army is now controlling all major transit routes which make it difficult for militants to smuggle Opium from Afghanistan to Pakistan. This disruption of drug trade would financially hurt the militants. The remaining US led coalition in Afghanistan is dependent on this route for their logistic supplies. This operation has not only stabilized these turbulent areas but also ensured safety for the NATO supplies route.

In addition, over 700 fighters of the Lashkar-I-Islam surrendered and now they are undergoing rehabilitation program of Pakistan army. Mangal Bagh and his remaining fighters are now hiding in Afghanistan. It is necessary for the US and Afghan forces to launch operation against these groups in Nangahar province especially in Nazyan districts that borders Tirah valley. It is expected that these militants are taking refuge in this area (Akbar, 2017). Prompt action by the US led coalition and Afghan forces would eliminate this threat, otherwise these militants would team up with Islamic State militants in Afghanistan. They may get funds, recruits, reorganized and then launch cross border attacks against Pakistan.

The Impacts of Pakistan's Counter Terror Efforts

Economic Stability

Pakistan military's counter terrorism efforts brought relative peace and economic stability in the country. The foreign investor's confidence has been revived and Pakistan's economic situation has improved. According to the International Monetary Fund- (IMF) report that Pakistan's economy has shown significant progress and it is expected that this trend would continue in coming years (Pakistan Should Persist with Reforms, 2015). The revival of economy was made possible because of the improved security situation. Pakistan military's two major operations FATA not only improved security situation but also created a peaceful amicable environment for the foreign direct investment. According to the DG ISPR, the positive impact of the Operation Zarb-I-Azb could be analyzed from Chinese high-level visit, which brought huge investment in terms of China Pakistan Economic Corridor- (CPEC) and energy sector. In addition to that the revival of international cricket in Pakistan is also result of the improved security situation in Pakistan (A year on, 2,763 militants killed, 2015).

Overall Security Situation Improved

The security situation in the country has improved after military operations in NWA and Kheyber agency. Pakistan military has not only killed over 2,763 militants but also arrested hundreds of their affiliates from across the country (Ibid). The TTP, Al-Qaeda, Haqqani Network and other affiliated groups, their command and control centers and communication networks were disrupted in these operations (Syed, 2014). Pakistan has witnessed decrease in the terrorist attacks. Before the operations there were at least 150 terrorist attacks per month but now 71 militant attacks took place in a month, which is 50% less than before these operations (Militant attacks drop to six-year low, 2015). After the operation the security forces carried out intelligence-based operations- (IBOs) to wipe out sleeper cells of the militants across Pakistan which has improved the overall security situation.

Before these operations, KPK faced 49 terrorist attacks per month which has now declined to 75% equals to 12 in a month (Ibid). In FATA security situation was gruesome before the military operation, average 31 attacks per month were recorded before the operation but after these operations the number reduced to 16 attacks in a month (Ibid). In settled areas Karachi was the most turbulent part of Pakistan. Due to its large population, many militant organizations moved to this city. On average 25 militant attacks were recorded before the operation Zarb-I-Azb, but now the situation has improved to 9 attacks per months, which is a 64%

diminution (Ibid). This shows that military operations effectively improved by and large security situation in Pakistan.

Global Image Restored

Pakistan's security situation improved Pakistan's global standing. Despite suffering the most in the war against terror there had been allegations on Pakistan that it is playing double game. But Pakistan dispelled this propaganda and launched operations against all militant factions hiding in NWA or Kheyber agency. The US praised Pakistan's counter terror efforts (Syed, 2014). In addition the US ambassador in Pakistan acknowledged sacrifices made by Pakistan military in the Operation Zarb-I-Azb (Ali, 2015). The Operation in FATA has dislocated militants, which is going to improve overall security situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The British Prime Minister praised operation Zarb-I-Azb and revealed that his country has helped and would continue to support Pakistan in the fight against terror in FATA (Dar, 2015). Pakistan's Army Chief visited Russia during this operation. Russian leaders not only appreciated Pakistan's counter terror efforts but also ensured full support (Russia praises Operation Zarb-e-Azb, 2015). This is the trust and respect from a major power like Russia that they announced to supply highly sophisticated gunship helicopters to Pakistan (Russia ready to sell four Mi-35M combat helicopters, 2015). These helicopters would help Pakistan in its counter terror efforts in FATA and improve strategic ties with Russia.

Pakistan also got admiration by General Fan Changlong, Vice Chairman Central Military Commission for its military operation Zarb-I-Azb in FATA. General Fan assured Pakistan for full support in the fight against terrorism (COAS in China, 2015). China has been fighting militancy in its Western province. The East Turkestan Islamic movement- (ETIM) was also targeted by Pakistan military in the recent operations. The ETIM has long threatened peace in China's western province. The operation in Zarb-I-Azb not only improved internal security situation but also improved Pakistan's image abroad as a responsible member of international community.

Strategic Ties with Afghanistan Improved

Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan under Karzai regime were not cordial. Both states were engaged in blame game against each other. Karzai's overwhelming tilt towards India was source of concern for Pakistan. This is the reason that both countries never trusted each other in Karzai era. The Operation Zarb-i-Azb played a great role in improving Pak-Afghan bilateral relationship. Pakistan not only targeted TPP, IMU, ETIM, and Al-Qaeda but it has also targeted Hafiz Gul

Buhadur, Haqqani Network and their affiliates those who posed threat to Afghanistan and US led coalition.

In addition to this, the change of political setup in Afghanistan improved relationship between both states. Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif and Ashraf Ghani's government showed keen interest to mend ties and move forward with an open heart. During his first official visit to Pakistan, the Afghan President was given briefing in GHQ (Afghan President Ghani visits GHQ, 2014). Pakistan PM and Afghan President pledged to start new chapter in their relationship. Pakistan's Army Chief offered to train Afghan National Army, (Syed, 2014) which shows wholehearted efforts by Pakistan to improve bilateral ties. Pakistan and Afghanistan have also signed a joint intelligence sharing pact, (Ramachandran, 2018) which is going to help both states in their fight against terrorism and would also mend trust deficit between them.

Recommendations

Reconstruction and Development in FATA

Pakistan's tribal areas have been devastated after concerted terrorism subsequent military operations and drone strikes. No government in last six decades took serious steps at large scale for the reconstruction and development of FATA. This was one of the major reasons which alienated local population and ultimately groups like TTP established their footholds in FATA. The political administration has started its efforts to compensate those who suffered in the military operations in Khyber agency. A survey is being conducted by the political administration for the repair or compensation of damaged house or property in the military operation.

The political agent from the Khyber agency said that totally destroyed house would be compensated with Rs 400,000 whereas partially damaged house would be remunerated with Rs 150,000 (Critical assessment, 2015). In this way the local population would not feel alienated and would support the government in future. It is vital for the Pakistan and allies in the developed world to carry out reconstruction and development in tribal areas. The destroyed infrastructure should be rebuilt; it must be connected with other cities of Pakistan via good roads. Improved infrastructure, development and reconstruction would create employment opportunities for the local population. In this way militants would have no chance to manipulate local population for their notorious objectives.

Education/ Rehabilitation/De-Radicalization Programs

The youth of tribal areas must be given access to free education. Lack of education deviated people from right path. The militants utilized this opportunity and indoctrinated youth from FATA. It has been observed that most of the people who

carried out suicide attacks were youth of age 14 to 20(Lakhani, 2010, p. 11) This is the ripe time for government to establish schools, colleges, and universities in FATA to bring youth from tribal areas in the mainstream. Pakistan military has started de-radicalization programs after military operations in FATA (Khattak, 2011). In these rehabilitation centers the youth of tribal areas are given religious education which helps them to overcome extremists' ideology of TTP.

Training of Local Forces on Modern Grounds

Pakistani tribal areas became safe havens for the militant groups because there was no power to challenge them. The local militias were not well equipped and trained to counter highly trained and armed militants. This is the reason that TTP led militant overran the defenses of local militia and established their own system. Ultimately Pakistan army had to intervene and took almost a decade to flush out militants from tribal areas. It is not the duty of Pakistan army to do local policing; there must be established, trained and well-equipped police force along with good intelligence network to control militancy in FATA.

Pakistan must reform its policing network in tribal areas, they must be given better monetary benefits, merit-based recruitment is mandatory, political influence should be minimized and overall intelligence network should be improved for better counter terrorism operations (Cohen, Nawaz, 2009, p. 2). In this regard Pakistan army has started counter insurgency training for the Frontier Corps and police nationwide. This model must be applied on FATA. Pakistan army must take the initiative, train the local forces in FATA and equip them with modern weapon and equipment necessary for the monitoring of militants in the area. All these steps would help to establish long term peace and stability in FATA.

Increase Vigilance at Pak-Afghan Border

Pak-Afghan border is spread over a long, rugged and mountainous area. There are valleys, huge mountains and caves. This border is very difficult to be monitored. There are many unchecked areas from where militants can carry out their cross-border activities. Pakistan, Afghanistan and America must work together to improve vigilance at border. There are number of steps which could be taken. Pakistan must increase the number of check posts along the border, these check posts must be effectively manned, well equipped with night vision capabilities and close air support of gunship helicopters. Afghanistan with the help of America can improve vigilance on Afghan side of the border to check and counter any terrorist activities.

Constructive Role of the Religious Scholars/ Ullemas

The TTP, Al-Qaeda and other militant groups use Islam to justify their heinous

crimes. There is a need of counter narrative by religious scholars. It is imperative for the Ulema in Pakistan and Afghanistan to come up jointly with a decree to denounce activities of these militant groups. Recently more than 100 religious scholars supported the government's efforts to eradicate terrorism from Pakistan. The Ullema termed the fight against militants in FATA as Jihad-(Holy War) (Over 100 Ullema declare, 2014). Such decrees would diminish support of the militants in society. The true interpretation of Islam would divert young men from militancy to peace and harmony.

Conclusion

Pakistan's efforts against terrorist groups has not only improved overall security situation but has also decimated their network and base to launch any major terrorist attack against Pakistan. But despite all these efforts the war against terror is not over yet. The international community has to play its role and support Pakistan in its endeavor to curb the menace of terrorism. The use of force is not the long-term solution. After the physical control of FATA, it is necessary for the government of Pakistan to establish Institutions in FATA, abolish FCR and replace it with the Pakistan Penal Code, reconstruction and development at large scale, greater role of FATA in politics, rehabilitation of the youth from tribal areas, free education for all and economic uplift of FATA.

The Military Operations in FATA would bring respite for the short period of time, unless there are no coordinated efforts by the Afghan government and the US in Afghan provinces of Nangarhar, Khowst, Nuristan and Kunar. The militants from Pakistan would get shelter in Afghanistan after these operations. They would regroup and reorganize their network and would again disrupt peace in both states. It is necessary that America with Afghan security forces must secure southern parts of Afghanistan and dismantle terrorist safe heavens in those areas.

Pakistan alone cannot win this War against Terror; the International Community must help Pakistan army with required weapon, equipment, gunship helicopters, surveillance through high tech spy satellites and drones. The US must use its diplomatic channels to pressurize India to end anti-Pakistan activities from Afghanistan. The Afghan government must not allow any country to use its soil against Pakistan. Afghanistan and Pakistan must coordinate their efforts, share intelligence and build mutual trust to overcome this menace of terrorism and extremism.

References

- A year on, 2,763 militants killed in Operation Zarb-e-Azb: ISPR. (2015, June 13). Retrieved from <http://tribune.com.pk/story/903004/a-year-on-2763-militants-killed-in-operation-zarb-e-azb-ispr/>
- Afghan President Ghani visits GHQ. (2014, November 14). *The News*.
- COAS in China: General Fan Changlong praises Zarb-I-Azb”. (January 25, 2015). *The Dawn*.
- Critical assessment: Survey of houses damaged in Khyber under way. (2015, June 22). Retrieved from <http://tribune.com.pk/story/907508/critical-assessment-survey-of-houses-damaged-in-khyber-under-way/>
- DG ISPR confident of Mullah Fazlullah's speedy arrest. (2015, February 12). *The Dawn*.
- IED Fatalities. (2018). Retrieved from <http://icasualties.org/oef/>
- Kayani continued to postpone NWA operation: Gen Athar. (2014, July 01). *The News*
- Mullah Fazalullah chosen as new Pakistan Taliban leader. (2013, November 07). *The News*
- Operation Zarb-e-Azb progresses as per plan: ISPR. (2014, July 20). *The News*
- Pakistan Should Persist with Reforms, IMF Says” *International Monetary Fund*. (2015, April 7). Retrieved from <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2015/CAR040715A.htm>
- Pakistani officials: Terror group commander killed.(2009, October 2). Retrieved from <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/10/02/pakistan.uzbek.commander.killed/>
- Russia praises Operation Zarb-e-Azb. (2015, June 18). *The News*.
- Russia ready to sell four Mi-35M combat helicopters to Pakistan. (2015, June 17). Retrieved from <http://tass.ru/en/russia/801226#betternews>.

TTP commander Hafiz Gul Bahadur among 10 killed in drone strike: sources. (2015, January 04). *The News*

US strike kills key Pakistan militant Ilyas Kashmiri. (2011, June 04). Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-13653324>

Video: Lt. Gen. Joseph Anderson". *Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System*. (2014, November, 5). Retrieved from <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/372104/lt-gen-joseph-anderson#.VZjhxhuqqkr>

Ali, Z. (2015, July 05). "Era of proxy wars should end in South Asia: Olson" *The Dawn*.

Brown, V, & Don, R. (2013). *Fountainhead of Jihad: The Haqqani Nexus, 1973-2012*. (Oxford University Press). p 134

Burki, I. & Yusufzai, M. (2013, January 04). Maulvi Nazir among 10 killed in drone strikes, *The News*

Burki, K.Z. (2010). "Rise of Taliban in Waziristan" *The Dialogue*, Volume V Number 3. 188-211. p 199. Retrieved from http://www.qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%20Dialogue/5_3/Dialogue_July_September2010_188-211.pdf

Butt, U. & Elahi, N. (2010). *Pakistan's Quagmire: Security, Strategy, and the Future of the Islamic-nuclear Nation* (New York, A&C Black. p 234

Tim, C. (2015, July 4). "Pakistani military says it achieved major victory in mountain assault". Retrieved from http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/pakistani-military-says-it-achieved-major-victory-in-mountain-assault/2015/07/04/02e46a64-2250-11e5-a135-935065bc30d0_story.html

Dar, A. (2015, April 29). "UK helping in Operation Zarb-e-Azb: Cameron" *The News*.

Galpin, R. (November 02, 2013). "Hakimullah Mehsud killed by drone, Pakistan Taliban say" BBC News. Retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-24776363>

Giustozzi, A. (2012). *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field*, (London, Hurst Publishers.

- Gould, E. & Fitzgerald, P. (2013). *Crossing Zero: The AfPak War at the Turning Point of American Empire*. (City Lights Books).
- Haider, M. (2014, July 10). 80pc of Miramshah cleared, army says. *The Dawn*.
- Khan, I. (2014, July 12). Startling facts about suicide bombers' training den. *The Dawn*
- Jones, S.G. & Christine, F. (2010). "Counterinsurgency in Pakistan". Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG982.pdf. p xvi
- Jones, S.G. & Christine, F. (2017). "Counterinsurgency in Pakistan" Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2010/RAND_MG982.pdf. p 26
- Khan, I. (2015, July 03). Military operation in Khyber ends successfully" *The Dawn*
- Khan, T. (2015, March 25). Why Tirah is important for Taliban, military" Retrieved from <http://tribune.com.pk/story/858585/why-tirah-is-important-for-taliban-military/>
- Khan, W.S. (2014, December 16). "A Rare Glimpse inside Pakistan's Anti-Taliban Operation in North Waziristan". Retrieved from <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/pakistan-school-massacre/rare-glimpse-inside-pakistans-anti-taliban-operation-north-waziristan-n250621>
- Khattak, M.U.R. (2011, August 12). "De-Radicalization in Pakistan: Options and Choices", Retrieved from <http://www.weeklypulse.org/details.aspx?contentID=1097&storylist=2>
- Lakhani, K. (June 2010). "Indoctrinating Children: The Making of Pakistan's Suicide Bombers". *CTC Sentinel*, Vol 3. Issue 6. Retrieved from <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/CTCSentinel-Vol3Iss6-art4.pdf>. p 11
- Mir, A. (2009, March 22,). The swelling force of extremism. *The News*. Retrieved from <http://jang.com.pk/thenews/mar2009-weekly/nos-22-03-2009/enc.htm>.

- Mir, A. (2014, December 19). School attack isolates Fazalullah within Taliban. *The News*
- Mir, A. (2015, January 21). "50 Amr BilMaroof militants join Daish". *The News*. Press Release, No PR124/2014-ISPR, ISPR. (2014). Retrieved from https://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&id=2574#pr_link2574
- Ramachandran, S. (2015, June 25). Afghanistan-Pakistan Intelligence Cooperation and the Prospect of Peace. Retrieved from <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Articles/Detail/?id=191838>.
- Rana, M.A. (2009). "Taliban Insurgency in Pakistan: A Counterinsurgency Perspective". Retrieved from <http://san-pips.com/download.php?f=169.pdf>.
- Samdani, M. (December, 2011). "Governance and militancy in Kheyber Agency". Retrieved from http://csis.org/files/publication/_/111213_Samdani_KyberAgency.pdf
- Shah, S. (2015). Enviaible role of armed forces against". April 10. *The News*
- Sherazi, Z.S. & Mateen, H. (2017, June, 26). "Haqqani network also target of N Waziristan operation: ISPR". *The Dawn*
- Siddique, A. (2016). *The Pashtun Question: The Unresolved Key to the Future of Pakistan and Afghanistan*. (Hurst). p 172
- Syed, B, S. (2014, September 16). Anti-terror operations to continue, says army. *The Dawn*
- Syed, B.S. (2014, November 07). Offer to train Afghan troops renewed. *The Dawn*.
- Syed, W.A. (2014, July 10). Pentagon praises Zarb-e-Azb. *The News*.
- Szrom, C. (2009, August 6). "The Survivalist of North Waziristan: Hafiz Gul Bahadur Biography and Analysis". Retrieved from <http://www.criticalthreats.org/pakistan/survivalist-north-waziristan-hafiz-gul-bahadur-biography-and-analysis>

Szrom, C. (August 6, 2009). "The Survivalist of North Waziristan: Hafiz Gul Bahadur Biography and Analysis". Retrieved from <http://www.criticalthreats.org/pakistan/survivalist-north-waziristan-hafiz-gul-bahadur-biography-and-analysis>

Wajahat, S.K. (2017, November 18). The Ghosts and Gains of North Waziristan. *The News*

Yousaf, K. (2014, June 20). Pakistan seeks extradition of TTP supremo Mullah Fazalullah from Afghanistan. Retrieved from <http://tribune.com.pk/story/724417/pakistan-wants-afghanistan-to-extradite-fazlullah/>

Zahid, F. (2013, November 30). Understanding Taliban Through The Prism Of Pashtunwali Code. *Centre Français de Recherche sur le Renseignement*. Retrieved from <http://www.cf2r.org/fr/tribune-libre/understanding-taliban-through-the-prism-of-pashtunwali-code.php>.