

PROJECTED SECURITY ENVIRONMENTS OF PAKISTAN IN POST-AFGHANISTAN WAR SCENARIO

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Abstract

The international community is in agreement to bring peace in Afghanistan by creating a “win win” situation for all stakeholders. While Pakistan has already conveyed its possible role in post-Afghanistan war scenario, it is not preparing itself to address the onslaught of extremism likely to re-emerge in the country. While the earlier rulers have not done well in containing extremism, the present regime too does not merit appreciation. Pakistan may win the current phase of the ongoing war being a member of a global team, but the second phase in the post-Afghanistan war scenario sometime after 2015 would be more intense and challenging because of the emerging nexus between Punjab-based terrorist groups Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), criminal gangs including drugs mafia and al Qaeda. If the current trends of governance continue over the next two to three years, the country could face anarchy. Pakistan, therefore, should put its house in order by making and implementing comprehensive domestic and foreign policies. It was time the practice of delayed plans and delayed responses was abandoned. Meanwhile, the international community should also realize that without its long term economic support to cash strapped Pakistan and Afghanistan, the ongoing war on terror would be fruitless.

Key Words: Security, Extremism, al Qaeda, Taliban.

Preface

As of today, the international community seems focused on achieving a peaceful resolution of the Afghanistan problem. There is a general consensus that the United States (US) should not pull out its forces prematurely till the time a peace deal is struck on the terms and conditions acceptable to all. Thus, creation of a “win win” situation in Afghanistan is extremely important for its long term stability which has implications for other regional countries as well.

It is believed that the US has no illusions about its departure from Afghanistan. The sooner it acted, the better it would be. In this backdrop, the US has already hinted about its exit strategy. During the last year’s conference

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in Brussels, Pakistan registered its reservations and offered its services to post-war Afghanistan.¹ From the Pakistani perspective, a just settlement of Afghanistan issue acceptable to all remains central to its foreign policy agenda.

While Pakistan may be fully aware of its security in the context of India's role in post-war Afghanistan, yet it is not preparing itself to address the onslaught of challenges likely to re-emerge in Pakistan as a consequence of the nexus of terrorist groups operating in Punjab, Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and other mega cities including Karachi. The common masses are worried that if the center and provinces continue to be governed in the current manner, Pakistan may become a "failed state" sooner than later.

The terrorism/extremism now plaguing Pakistan is primarily "Home Grown" influenced by foreign hands. The seeds of this virus were planted during the late 1970s as a state policy which continued unabated till 9/11.² Today, Pakistan might be able to manage and control this menace being part of a larger team but in the post-war Afghanistan being projected, it will be bound to face such challenges in isolation, while the projected nature of the crises could be very serious.

The projected scenario suggests that civil society and common people must play an active role and help government in its fight against terrorism while the government on its part brings about positive changes in governance. The author is of the view that in the post-Afghanistan war scenario, terrorist groups would be looking for more appealing targets. The ungoverned spaces in mega cities littered with terrorist groups notwithstanding, there is also a need to seriously think about the emerging nexus of terrorist groups located in Punjab, generally termed as the Punjabi Taliban (PT), TTP and al Qaeda.³ The media also needs to play a constructive role in this campaign.

With the above in view, this paper focuses on the following aspects of the situation: First, a brief discussion of the causes of extremism/terrorism in Pakistan; second, the nexus of terrorist groups; third, weaknesses of governance; fourth, projected security atmosphere in Pakistan in post-Afghanistan war scenario; and, finally, the suggested way forward for Pakistan.

¹ "Afghan Conference Sets Deadlines for NATO Handover," *CNN World*, January 28, 2010. Carsten Volkery, "Afghanistan Conference: War-Weary NATO Members Look for Morale Boost," *Spiegel Online International*, January 29, 2010.

² Ayaz Amir, "Punjab Can No Longer Live in a State of Denial," *News International* (Islamabad), March 19, 2010.

³ "South Punjab and Terrorism," Editorial, *Daily Times*, June 19, 2009. Umar Cheema, "Taliban are in Punjab Now: Officially," *News International* (Islamabad), May 17, 2010.

Causes of Extremism/Terrorism in Pakistan

Much has been written about the causes of extremism in Pakistan but little has been done to remedy the situation at any level. In the succeeding paragraphs the various causes are discussed simply to highlight their importance in the formulation of counter terrorism strategies.

Home Grown Insecurities

Religious extremism took roots in Pakistani soil due to the so-called Islamisation policies of Gen Ziaul Haq and his role in the first Afghan “jihad.” Pakistan’s decision to participate in the “war on terror” (WOT) after 9/11 as state policy further fuelled terrorism which became a serious threat to domestic security that continues unabated.⁴ Thus, the extremism that Pakistan is now battling is a gift whose line of descent can be traced from General Zia to General Musharraf.⁵

Pakistan’s domestic instability is also linked to other causes including the dominance of the military in national politics for a prolonged period which caused a disconnect in the democratic process and growth of democratic institutions and leadership. Dr Maleeha Lodhi, a former ambassador and scholar, says that Pakistan has had leaderless moments in the past but the present vacuum in leadership is especially pronounced in relation to the enormity of the tasks that confront the rulers in an exceedingly daunting environment.⁶

There are other major destabilizing factors as well. The spending on social sectors like health and education has been dismal which has negatively affected nation building. The liberal economic development model followed since the 1980s and diminishing public expenditure on education/health have forced a sizable section of the population to seek the services of Islamic charities.⁷ Living standards have suffered a steep fall and the majority of the population has been put under tremendous economic pressure due to flawed economic policies. Tughral Yamin warns that “A poor, hungry and illiterate

⁴ Muhammad Khurshid Khan, “Analyzing Domestic Terrorism as a Threat to Pakistan’s Security and the Policy Response,” *IPRI Journal* IX, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 49-76.

⁵ Ayaz Amir, “Punjab Can No Longer Live in a State of Denial.” Kamran Asdar Ali, “Post Taliban Pakistan: A Tentative Recipe for Change,” *Social Science Research Council*, essays.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/ali.htm (accessed February 10, 2011).

⁶ Dr Maleeha Lodhi, “Pakistan’s Leaderless Moment,” *News International* (Islamabad), July, 14, 2009. Muhammad Khurshid Khan, “Analyzing Domestic Terrorism.”

⁷ Khalid Aziz, “Can Peace be Won in NWFP,” *News International* (Islamabad), April 20, 2008. Ikram Sehgal, “The Madressah,” *News International* (Islamabad), May 20, 2010.

nation doesn't need a foreign enemy to attack and sack it. It is likely to suffer a painful and slow death from internal causes rather than external ones..."⁸

While government is well aware that it has serious security problems linked with madaris (religious seminaries) culture, it is still producing an estimated 10,000 potential jihadis a year from these institutions. We have about two million pupils in these madaris compared to only 7,000 some 30 years ago.⁹ The degrees held by these students have no use for the market. This unemployed young lot is vulnerable to exploitation by the extremists.

In an atmosphere of grinding poverty for the majority the absence of any kind of security has alienated the common man who sees no future for himself. The state's security structure is focused on the elite class including parliamentarians, ministers, their advisors, and friends. What a wasteful country where the prime minister's cavalcade comprises 70 vehicles, while the UK prime minister has only three.¹⁰

Alongside the deep rich-poor divide, the country is also marred by regional disparities. The 18th amendment may have theoretically restored the balance of power but it has no bearing on the life of the poor. Thus, as pointed out by Dr Muzaffar Iqbal, "...the restored constitution can do little to correct lack of water, power, gas, education, hospitals, communication networks, medicine, and all other basic necessities of life"¹¹

Pakistan has achieved successes in the ongoing war against terrorism over the past three years. Clearance of Mohmand Agency from the hard core terrorists is the latest achievement. However, in recent years, many new terrorist groups have emerged; several existing groups have reconstituted and links between many of these new and existing groups have strengthened, giving rise to fresh concerns for stability. Dr Muhammad Taqi points out that "Ideological and operational overlap between the al Qaeda, Afghan, TTP, and Punjabi and Kashmiri jihadists is not lost even on a casual observer."¹² The challenges for Pakistan have become harder since the lines have blurred between categories of militant groups.¹³

⁸ Brig Tughral Yamin, "Pakistan's Nuclear Policy and Ten Years Hence-Where Do We Go from Here?," *Pakistan Defence Review* vol. XXII, no. 1 (Summer 2008).

⁹ Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Pakistan's Homegrown Extremists," *Atlantic Council*, May 3, 2010. Ikram Sehgal, "The Madressah."

¹⁰ Masood Hasan, "Over the Top," *News International* (Islamabad), May 16, 2010.

¹¹ Dr Muzaffar Iqbal, "A Grand Political Clean-up," *News International* (Islamabad), May 1, 2010.

¹² Dr Muhammad Taqi, "9/11 Redux: Made in Muridke," *Daily Times*, March 17, 2011.

¹³ Jayshree Bajoria, Staff Writer, "Pakistan's New Generation of Terrorists," *Foreign Affairs*, October 26, 2009.

Insecurities: External Linkages

KPK and adjoining FATA have paid a heavy price as a consequence of the war against the former Soviet Union when Peshawar had become a hotbed of intelligence activities. A massive anti-Russian propaganda campaign was accompanied by efforts to instil the “spirit of jihad” by investing millions of American dollars and Saudi riyals to promote “jihadisation” through Islamic orientation of school curricula on both sides of the Pak-Afghan border.¹⁴

After the Soviet withdrawal Pakistan was left high and dry in the middle of the crisis. Following the rise of the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan, non state actors (NSAs) emerged as a political force and terrorism surfaced as a major challenge. The social, political and economic fallout of this war paved the way for extremism, militancy and terrorism in Pakistan. Further, state authoritarianism, political and social decay in the 1980s and 1990s played their part in the growth of fanatical outfits prone to violence.¹⁵

Pakistan was still struggling when the US attacked Afghanistan in the post-9/11 environment. The theatre of “jihad” again shifted back to Afghanistan. It reignited the fires of holy war and, given the iron dictates of geography, Pakistan once again found itself embroiled deeper in the Afghan strife.¹⁶

Since 9/11, there have been indicators that the Indian RAW has been sponsoring terrorism in KPK region as well as in Balochistan. For the last over three years, secessionist groups like the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) led by Brahmadagh Bugti, the Baloch Liberation United Front (BLUF), more violent than the BLA, and the Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), have been active in Balochistan. It is not going to be easy doing business with these radical separatist groups. Rahimullah Yusufzai, a senior journalist, holds that “...it would be wrong to dismiss the Baloch nationalists and separatists as insignificant. Safe havens provided to them by the countries like United Kingdom and India seem politically motivated with an aim to keep Pakistan destabilized by engaging its Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) in Balochistan and FATA.”¹⁷

¹⁴ *Center for Research & Security Studies (CRSS)*, March 20, 2010.

¹⁵ “War on Terror,” *Pakistan Army*, www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk (accessed December 12, 2011). Dr Eamon Murphy & Dr Ahmad Rashid Malik, “Pakistan Jihad: The Making of Religious Terrorism,” *IPRI Journal IX*, no. 2 (Summer 2009): 17-31. Jayshree Bajoria, “Pakistan’s New Generation of Terrorists.”

¹⁶ Ayaz Amir, “Punjab Can No Longer Live in a State of Denial.”

¹⁷ Paul Leventhal and Brahma Chellaney, “Nuclear Terrorism,” *Centre for Global Research*, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=7746>. Rooh-ul-Amin, “The Game is Old, Players are New,” *Afghan Press*, November 19, 2008. Rahimullah Yusufzai, “The Baloch Insurgency is No Bluff,” *News International* (Islamabad), November 3, 2009.

Government has not so far been able to curb extremist forces. While the US presence in Afghanistan itself is a factor, another reason that helps the extremists in promoting their cause is the American leadership's constant harangue against Pakistan, particularly with reference to its nuclear assets falling into the hands of the extremists, and the dubious activities of certain contracted personnel working for the US like Raymond Davis and others belonging to security agencies such as Xe (ex Blackwater), arouse suspicions in the public mind which the extremists exploit to their advantage.¹⁸ The US aggressive behaviour displayed on May 2, 2011 against Pakistan's sovereignty has shaken the confidence of the entire nation. Wild theories are floating about the subsequent terrorist attack of May 22, 2011 on the Naval base at Karachi. The understanding at the top level between the US and Pakistan has also deteriorated especially after the incident of May 2, 2011. Since the US top hierarchy continues to maintain pressure on Pakistan, therefore, the perception in the general masses that the US is not Pakistan's friend continues to grow which promotes the terrorists' cause.¹⁹

The author has elsewhere explained that narco-terrorism strikes at the social and political foundations of a country. Its base is in Afghanistan but its exit route is through Pakistan. A well trained, fully equipped drug mafia, besides promoting other social evils also creates serious security problems for Pakistan. The US has given a free hand to narcotic cartels in Afghanistan with a view to earning their support against the hard core Taliban.²⁰

The WMD related materials which are widely available coupled with the increasingly transcendental agendas of terrorist groups, are at the heart of security concerns. During the Nuclear Security Summit held in Washington last year, Mr Obama has been very categorical about his views on the main source of the nuclear security threat emanating from al Qaeda based in the "border regions between Pakistan and Afghanistan." While Pakistan's WMD related material is under strict state control, worries about the security of its arsenal or fissile material falling into wrong hands continue to figure in

¹⁸ *Center for Research & Security Studies (CRSS)*.

¹⁹ "Pakistan Official Know Osama's Where About: Clinton," *News International* (Islamabad), May 11, 2010. Bruce O. Riedel & Jayshree Bajoria, "US Options Limited in Pakistan," *Council on Foreign Relations*, May 11, 2010, <http://www.cfr.org/publication/22099/us>. Jayshree Bajoria, "Pakistan's New Generation of Terrorists," *News International*, February 11, 2010.

²⁰ Leventhal and Chellaney, "Nuclear Terrorism." Michel Chossudovsky, "Pakistan and the Global War on Terror," *Center for Research Globalization*, www.globalreach.ca (accessed January 8, 2008). Michel Chossudovsky, "Heroin is Good for Youth Health: Occupation Forces Support Afghan Narcotics Trade," *Center for Research Globalization*, www.globalreach.ca (accessed April 29, 2007). Neal A. Pollard, Director, Terrorism Research Centre of the USA, "Counter-terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime: Implications of Convergence."

statements of western leaders. But they are not ready to share responsibility about the radioactive material that had been stolen in the past even from the most advanced countries. Therefore, its use by non-state actors (NSAs) in crude form, like a dirty bomb, cannot be ruled out; even a symbolic attack of this kind may have trans-border implications.²¹

Punjabi-Frontier Terrorists Nexus and its Impact

As pointed out earlier, Pakistan is still producing an estimated 10,000 potential jihadis every year. The presence of hundreds of such madaris in FATA notwithstanding, southern Punjab, which stretches from Jhang to Bahawalpur, is dotted with such madaris duly funded by individuals from various Muslim countries. Despite tall claims made by the government, no concrete steps have been taken to redress the problems attached to madrassa culture.²²

A military analyst, Ayesha Siddiqa, writes that according to some estimates, about 5,000 to 9,000 youth from south Punjab are fighting in Afghanistan and Waziristan.²³ A well known writer and author of a book on Pakistan, Selig Harrison, in his latest article, writes, "The danger of an Islamist takeover of Pakistan is real."²⁴

The journey of PT began in early 1980s with the Saudi funding for the Sipah Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) to counter the Iranian Revolution's expansion to neighboring countries. The Iranian response to SSP was the Tehrik-e-Jafria Pakistan (TJP) and the Sipah Mohammad- the militant arm of the TJP. The SSP response to this emerged in the form of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), which again provided a lot of leadership for Jaishe Mohammad. When these organizations were banned during 2002, most of them shifted their assets to FATA. Most of these Punjabi outfits, had their roots in the anti-Soviet jihad, while maintaining contacts with the Taliban.²⁵ Hassan Abbas, a fellow at the Asia Society, writes that many of these Punjabi militants "directly benefited from state patronage in the 1990s and were professionally trained in

²¹ Asif Ezdi, "Dubious Gains at the Nuclear Security Summit," *News International* (Islamabad), April 19, 2010. Muhammad Khurshid Khan, "Nuclear Technology Proliferation: Challenges and International Response," *IPRI Journal* vol. VIII, no. 1 (Winter 2008). Muhammad Khurshid Khan, "India's Proliferation Record," *Pakistan Defence Review* vol. XXI, no. 2 (Winter 2007). *News International*, September 24, 2008. Huma Yusuf, "Nuclear hazards," *Dawn*, April 18, 2010.

²² Arnaud de Borchgrave, "Pakistan's Homegrown Extremists." Ikram Sehgal, "Pakistan: Counterinsurgency and Counter-Terror." "South Punjab and Terrorism."

²³ Jayshree Bajoria, "Pakistan's New Generation of Terrorists."

²⁴ "Editorial: South Punjab and Terrorism."

²⁵ "Role of Frontline State: Pakistan is Paying a Heavy Price," *Center for Research and Security Studies* (Islamabad), Weekly Pager, October 18, 2009, pager@crss.pk and www.crss.pk.

asymmetrical warfare, guerrilla tactics, and sabotage." They are usually more educated and more technologically savvy, experts say.²⁶

Evidence is growing that the PT are as dangerous as the TTP. They are involved in either masterminding or carrying out violent acts. Aqeel, also known as Dr Usman, an ex medical corps soldier who abandoned the army to join LeJ, organized the attack on the General Headquarters (GHQ) at Rawalpindi. All of the attackers had at some point been trained in South Waziristan Agency (SWA), Major General Athar Abbas of the ISPR told reporters.²⁷ Punjabi militants were also involved in the deadly ambush of the Sri Lankan cricket team in March 2009. These militants in and around Bahawalpur grow undisturbed. The ground reality indicates that Punjabi militants are also present in North Waziristan as their training camps/safe havens in SWA have been compromised after the Operation Rah-e-Nijat. Nonetheless, it is a point of concern that the militants continue to re-emerge in SWA occasionally and conduct operations against the army.

Since 2007, the militants from southern Punjab have turned on their masters and "Pakistan's security establishment is now trying to figure out how to control them", says Steve Coll.²⁸ Hasan Askari Rizvi says that the government doesn't know how to manage this challenge coming from these militants. Former Director General Pakistan Rangers, Major General Yaqub while giving an interview on the Express News television channel said, "We have confirmed reports that terrorists gather and get training in this region, and they have definite linkage with militants' fighting in FATA."²⁹

A report published by Umar Cheema reinforces the stance taken by other scholars. He says, though the provincial government is in a state of denial, the Punjab Police have officially admitted the movement of Taliban, their network in district Jhang and southern Punjab and their fund-raising and recruitment drive in the province. Several independent columnists and defence analysts have voiced their concern on the growing extremism in Punjab province. The attack by Punjabi terrorists on minority Ahmadiyya mosques in Lahore on May 28, 2010, killing over 80 people and injuring 110 reinforces the growing concerns.³⁰

While there is strong evidence of the militants' presence in southern Punjab and their future intentions, the Punjab government has been behaving differently. As pointed out by Law Minister Rana Sana Ullah Khan, "there aren't any No-go areas of the Taliban in southern Punjab". He says "There

²⁶ Jayshree Bajoria, "Pakistan's New Generation of Terrorists."

²⁷ Omar Waraich, "Why Pakistan Must Widen Hunt for Militant Bases," *Time Magazine*, October 13, 2009.

²⁸ Ibid. Jayshree Bajoria, "Pakistan's New Generation of Terrorists."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Umar Cheema, "Taliban are in Punjab Now." *News International* (Islamabad), May 29, 2010.

was no truth about the activities of Taliban there...however, criminal elements might be behind militancy or terrorist activities.” While the Law Minister might be correct in his approach, Ayaz Amir says: “we can no longer live in a state of denial, if FATA represents the cutting edge of terrorism in the name of Islam, Punjab, unfortunately, is the hinterland of this phenomenon.”³¹

The author has no illusion that militancy in Pakistan has linkages across and beyond Pakistan borders. However, there is a possibility that at this point in time, the government is focusing at the core issue, leaving secondary threats to be tackled later. In addition, taking a strategic decision about opening up another front may not be a preferred option, especially due to resource constraint.

Government’s Constraints vis-a-vis the Issue of Governance

The political and social situation in Pakistan is extremely alarming. The populace is becoming restive and they cannot forever be exploited by their rulers. The general perception is that if the government does not make earnest efforts to solve the lingering problems of the oppressed masses, Pakistan will move closer to rebellion and anarchy with each passing day.³²

The incumbent regime inherited some serious constraints and legacies from the past. Amongst other reasons, Pakistan’s abysmal economic performance is linked with its failure to develop robust political institutions. The WB’s Global Monitoring Report for 2010 says that Pakistan’s economic activity has been disrupted by “political uncertainty and fighting.” However, some other scholars think that specific problems and strategic limitations cannot be accepted as the sole reason for the plight of the Pakistani people, for their “powerlessness.” History bears witness that whenever governments have become the cause of disorder, a drastic change has taken place.³³

In the opinion of another security expert, Pakistan while fighting against terrorism and militancy has also to contend with its decades old conflict with India which has marred the country’s normal development. It would appear that Pakistan’s demography has somehow predetermined its future that is already marred by decades of low levels of spending on human and social development and the constant and increasing burden of debt payments,

³¹ No Taliban in Southern Punjab, Says Snaullah,” *Dawn/News International* (Karachi), October 22, 2009, www.karachipage.com. Ayaz Amir, “Punjab Can No Longer Live in a State of Denial.”

³² Saleha Javaid, “Descent into Anarchy,” *News International* (Islamabad), March 25, 2010. Zafar Hilaly, “America’s Enemy-friend,” *News International* (Islamabad), May 15, 2010.

³³ Ibid. Ghazi Salahuddin, “People Without Power,” *News International* (Islamabad), May 2, 2010.

foreign and domestic.³⁴ The disturbing factor is that Pakistan has lost control over its economy which is being run by the WB and IMF. Thus it has no flexibility in its decision making at the highest level and continues to be dictated by the money lending agencies.

The ongoing war is doing serious damage to the Pakistan economy. In addition, the pledges made by “friends of Pakistan” to repair the ruination caused by the unprecedented floods of 2010 have been honoured only partially. Pakistan has a formidable task of reconstruction and rehabilitation. But right now the donors' response is poor. Moreover in many cases Pakistan has little control over the use of such funds as donor agencies lack faith in Pakistani government. It is also believed that the donors take away seventy per cent of the project money wherever they are involved directly in managing the funds. “There are still 1.3 million people displaced and people who have gone home still need assistance. We're concerned that Pakistan is becoming a forgotten crisis,” said Caitlin Brady, Chairwoman of the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum.³⁵ The displacement of the people from Mohmand Agency lately adds to the existing burden of rehabilitation.

It is almost three years that the people of Malakand have been going through hardships due to resource constraints. Persuading tribal leaders belonging to SWA to return to their respective areas of control is another serious issue. The elders believe that the presence of militants still poses risks. Senator Saleh Shah told Reuters, “How can we go back unless the area is cleared? This is not our land any more. It's a battleground.” Taliban often melt away during army assaults and sometimes return to former strongholds as the army may not be there forever.”³⁶ Despite the army's presence, the militants present in SWA still continue to cause problems for peace loving people.

Rehabilitation of the displaced people not only in SWA but also in other agencies is a real challenge. Provision of \$297 and two months of rations to each family on their return to SWA, as explained by Army spokesman Major General Athar Abbas, is too meager a relief and insulting to these proud tribes. Reported pilferage at a large scale and general mismanagement further squeeze the available resources in the hands of an administration that must beg from the IMF and WB to run its day to day affairs.

³⁴ Ikram Sehgal, “Pakistan: Counterinsurgency and Counter-Terror,” *Atlantic Council*, April 27, 2010. Ahmad Faruqi, “Scenarios, Disruptive Events, and US Policy Options,” *Defence Journal*, www.defencejournal.com/2001/august/security.htm. *News International* (Islamabad), May 14, 2010.

³⁵ “Roots of Taliban Conflict Fester in Swat,” *Dawn*, April 19, 2010. Zafar Hilaly, “America's Enemy-friend.”

³⁶ *News International* (Islamabad), May 15, 2010. “Army Faces Yet Another Challenge,” *Dawn*, April 23, 2010.

The above mentioned constraints notwithstanding, Pakistan's former Foreign Minister, Mr Qureshi, is optimistic about Pakistan's future beyond the war on terrorism.³⁷ While his views are encouraging, the current trends unfortunately present a dismal picture of Pakistan beyond 2015. The present government might survive for some time with the challenges it is faced with, that others keen to jump into its shoes hesitate to take charge of. But it is not difficult to see how the rot is weakening the state institutions.

Commenting on the euphoria seen in the wake of the passage of the 18th Amendment, Dr Maleeha Lodhi said: "While the achievement has generated a mood of triumphalism in the government, but this needs to be tempered by the recognition that it is governance by which people will judge the ruling coalition, not by how power relations are reordered". She said that forging agreement over power relations within the political system is one thing; its actual operation is quite different. She says that the leadership lacks courage to actually respond to the people's demands who are only asking for a transparent governing system.³⁸

On May 01, 2010, the Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research made the alarming revelation that out of a total of 50 million labour force of the country, more than four million were unemployed. The ongoing power shortage alone has resulted in 400,000 job losses. A country that was planning to earn foreign exchange by exporting electricity to neighboring countries eleven years back is now facing an ever-worse electricity crisis.³⁹ Though the government continues to blame the past regime, its performance over the past three years demonstrates that it has neither the will nor the capacity to introduce revolutionary changes in the energy sector soon.

The biggest challenge that Pakistan's incumbent government is confronted with is corruption. This issue has not been taken seriously in the past and the current regime is no exception. The corruption graph during the past three years has gone up. The media played a major role in revealing corruption in government departments like the Steel Mill, PIA, the Religious ministry and scandals relating to rental power plants, issuance of bogus weapon licenses and allocation of \$20 billion contract to a French company-

³⁷ "Pakistan: Beyond the War on Terror," An Interview Conducted by Judy C. Woodruff, Senior Correspondent, *The Newshour With Jim Lehrer*, with Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Qureshi, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, published in *Council on Foreign Relations*, October 7, 2009, Washington D.C.

³⁸ Dr Maleeha Lodhi, "Pakistan's Leaderless Moment."

³⁹ Ghazi Salahuddin, "People Without Power." Dr Tauseef Aized, "Nuclear Power Generation," *Nation*, July 28, 2009. Humayun Akhtar Khan, "Resolving the Energy Crisis," *News International* (Islamabad), May 13, 2010.

GDF-Suez that did not even participate in the bidding and tendering process of the SSGC.⁴⁰

The charge sheet relating to bad governance goes on and on. As explained by Asif Ezdi, nepotism and cronyism have long been rampant in our society. These vices are now said to be increasingly manifesting at the senior-most levels of our civil service.⁴¹ The Supreme Court has ruled against the Prime Minister's decision to promote 53 officers as federal secretaries and decided to declare as null and void the murky deal with GDF-Suez.⁴²

Projected Security Scenario Beyond 2015

If the current trends continue then we may have to give some allowance to the National Intelligence Council and Central Intelligence Agency for their jointly prepared Global Futures Assessment Report in which they have established that "by year 2015 Pakistan would be a failed state, ripe with civil war, bloodshed, inter-provincial rivalries and a struggle for control of its nuclear weapons and complete Talibanisation". Wajid Shamsul Hassan, former Pakistan High Commissioner to the United Kingdom is also despondent when quoting a report he says: "Pakistan will not recover easily from decades of political and economic mismanagement, divisive policies, lawlessness, corruption and ethnic friction." The opinion expressed in the report has been reinforced by Exum which opines that there is a general fear that Pakistan is not far away from being a failed state, though the time has not come to strengthen this claim.⁴³

Whatever the model the international community may suggest for the settlement of the Afghanistan issue, the Taliban, on both sides of Pakistan-Afghanistan border, would remain a problem. Zafar Ali Khan, a PhD scholar, is of the view that Pakistan would still be struggling after the US departure from Afghanistan because it would continue to be seen as the US ally which its opponents would exploit to the hilt.⁴⁴ Since these people have become trigger happy, so they would look for an alternative target, this time in close

⁴⁰ *News International* (Islamabad), April 22, 2010. Kamran, "Corruption at Its Peak," *News International* (Islamabad), August 4, 2009.

⁴¹ Asif Ezdi, "Depoliticising the Civil Service," *News International* (Islamabad), May 17, 2010.

⁴² Ansar Abbasi, "Landmark SC Judgment for Baboos Today, Either Way," *News International* (Islamabad), April 28, 2010. "A Wrong Righted," Editorial, *News International* (Islamabad), April 29, 2010. *Dawn*, April 29, 2010. Babar Sattar, "Our Spoils System," *News International* (Islamabad), May 1, 2010. Ikram Sehgal, "Subverting the Merit System," *News International* (Islamabad), June 3, 2010.

⁴³ Namrata Panwar, "The Implications of Emerging 'Neo-Talibanism' on Non-Punjab Community in Pakistan," *Working Draft for ISA Annual Conference* (New Orleans), February 17-20, 2010.

⁴⁴ An interview with Zafar Ali Khan was conducted on May 3, 2010.

coordination with terrorist groups, criminal gangs and drugs mafia working inside Punjab and elsewhere. In addition, while the US would leave Afghanistan, al Qaeda would still influence this region in some form. Shafqat Mahmood reinforces the author's arguments and adds, "The open war in tribal areas is not likely to go away soon. Balochistan is beginning to boil into another insurgency. Punjab is emerging as a nursery of terrorists..."⁴⁵

SWA and Swat could be made a test case to judge federal and provincial governments' performance. The author believes that the government has very little time for a hard task like winning the hearts and minds of its own people. Therefore, if we fail in putting our house in order now, we might very soon invite serious trouble from within and without. In the post-Afghanistan war scenario, Pakistan will have to confront the challenge from different perspectives. The US and NATO forces would not be there, the financial aid in the form of Kerry-Lugar bill is likely go away. Despite Pakistan's best efforts, Afghanistan may continue to serve as the operational room for anti-Pakistani activities. Thus, Pakistan may have to tackle the onslaught of fresh terrorist activities single handedly.

With complete backing of the society, the army has already played its role to uproot the militants from Swat and Malakand. However, the political process did not move and the right people for the right job have not been placed. The government officials who worked in close cooperation with the army during the difficult time and managed to restore the writ of the government are being sidelined and replaced by favourites for ulterior motives.

Swat, which was to be rebuilt as a "Model Village" by the provincial government, is proving to be a disappointment for the people. The absence of rule of law, non availability of justice and rampant corruption were the factors that allowed Sufi Muhammad to play with the emotions of the people. A society with poor economic background could survive, but a society without justice can't remain intact for long.

In FATA, military success is on its way. The LEAs have already made landmark achievements in Bajaur, SWA, Orakzai and lately Mohmand Agency. While militants have been rooted out from SWA, there is no policy in place to win the hearts and minds of the people by restoring the normalcy to their lives. Additionally, the country also lacks resources to generate economic activities in the area. The donor agencies are doing piecemeal work without involving the stakeholders.

While Pakistan's LEAs have done the initial job, their ultimate objective is still far off. A steady escalation in attacks on security forces in SWA and Mehsud tribesmen's reluctance to return home has thrown up a formidable challenge to the government to deal with militant leaders in neighboring

⁴⁵ Shafqat Mahmood, "Trapped in Conflicts and State Failure," *News International* (Islamabad), June 4, 2010.

NWA, the real bastion of TTP. “We already have our plate full,” Maj-Gen Athar Abbas, the ISPR chief, said.⁴⁶ In addition, we are still involved in fire fighting in other agencies, including Kurram agency, which can change from bad to worse anytime.

Nevertheless, Pakistan army would win Phase 1 of the war before the US takes a strategic decision to wind up from Afghanistan, but the real test would start when the US forces leave Afghanistan. The terrorism virus would still be there across Pakistan- Afghanistan border that will then be free to engage Pakistan’s LEAs deployed in FATA. The CIA’s active involvement cannot be ruled out. The growing influence of PT working in close collaboration with TTP supported by al Qaeda, as highlighted earlier, will have serious implications for Pakistan’s security. Michael Krepon, a well known Washington-based scholar, has also hinted that increased security will be painfully hard to achieve because the domestic causes of Pakistan’s insecurity have been festering for decades.⁴⁷ In the projected scenario, Pakistan’s LEAs are expected to fight Phase 2 of the ongoing strategic war single handedly without an outside support whether financial or military.

Suggested Way Forward

As pointed out earlier, much has been written about the problems and the possible reforms but the governing trends seem unchanged. Economic depression, political instability and mis-governance are a combination for anarchic order. The projected challenges beyond 2015 need special attention and an approach different from the past both at “home” and on the “external” front.

Home Front

Pakistan’s geographic location has both strategic advantages as well as complex and diverse threats, which demand a wholesome and well coordinated response from all elements of national life. In addition, Pakistan must evolve comprehensive foreign and domestic policies first to fight and eliminate the menace of terrorism.⁴⁸

For a stable Pakistan, the broad objective of the national policy should be to provide an enabling environment for achievement of prosperity: one, by eliminating the threat of terrorism while enhancing religious harmony, bringing

⁴⁶ Ismail Khan, “North Waziristan Poses a Formidable Challenge,” *Dawn*, April 27, 2010.

⁴⁷ Michael Krepon, “Increasing Pakistan’s Sense of Security,” *Stimson Center* (Washington D.C.).

⁴⁸ “CJCS’s address to 37th Staff course at the Pakistan Navy War College,” *News International* (Islamabad), June 12, 2008.

modernization and promoting tolerance; two, by strengthening a politically stable and democratic government while augmenting harmony between the provinces and the federation; three, improving governance; four, socio-economic uplift of under developed provinces/areas; fifth, provision of justice at the doorstep; and, finally, augmenting the security mechanism by upgrading LEAs.⁴⁹

Pakistan is at a difficult crossroads, yet like all crises, this moment needs to be seized to rethink a range of options. The opportunity should be availed to put forward sincere and workable solutions for its political and social problems. The primary task remains that of national integration and social development. While Pakistan would need long term international encouragement, yet it needs a selfless leadership at home to steer the country in the right direction. Though, no country can alter its past, but it can change the future.⁵⁰

Creating national harmony is a gigantic task for the leadership. The first step in the right direction has already been initiated in the form of a consensual National Finance Commission (NFC) award. National harmony can only be ensured by injecting a sense of belonging to the country. All sections of the society be given their fundamental rights and basic needs.

The threat posed by the Punjab-based terrorists is a reality. Therefore, the government must act now as much time has already been wasted in half-hearted tactics and it's time to use the lessons learnt and not repeat the previous mistakes. Rounding up the militants from their safe havens in southern Punjab easier now will become difficult with time and we will have a very heavy price to pay for dilly dallying.⁵¹ Moreover such elements should never be patronized as a vote bank by any political party.

Despite government's positive initiatives, the uncertain security environment in Balochistan still prevails. It may be difficult to integrate the disgruntled young leaders of the militant groups because of their foreign links. However, efforts must continue to isolate them by extending full economic and security support to the common people who have nothing to do with the separatists' agenda.

The people have attached lot of hopes with the judiciary. While the top judiciary is taking up important issues it must also do something to reform the lower courts where the common man goes to seek justice. Provision of timely and inexpensive justice at the grass root level will bring a marked change in society by closing all doors of exploitation of the poor and the weak.

⁴⁹ Muhammad Khurshid Khan, "Analyzing Domestic Terrorism as a Threat to Pakistan's Security and the Policy Response."

⁵⁰ Kamran Asdar Ali, "Post Taliban Pakistan: A Tentative Recipe for Change," *Social Science Research Council*, essays.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/ali.htm. Fared Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom* (New York: W.W Norton & Company, 2003), 69.

⁵¹ Umar Cheema, "Taliban are in Punjab Now."

The post-conflict resolution process and assistance is always a challenging job. The proposals made by Hilde Frafjord Johnson in her presentation on “Afghanistan: The Challenges of Post-Conflict Assistance,” also have relevance for Pakistan. Humanitarian aid is never sufficient to tackle the transition from emergency relief to more long-term sustainable development. We must delve more deeply into the causes of conflicts and disasters, and become better at coping with the dilemmas and limitations.⁵² Let us focus on human development to enlarge people’s choices for long, healthy and creative lives. In this regard, two important points brought out by Tehrik-e-Insaf leader Imran Khan must also get due importance: One, the way to deal with militants’ is through boosting state’s help for the poor. Two, Pakistan will have no problem in dealing with extremists as militants would automatically be marginalized if democracy is in place with a welfare state”.⁵³

The former foreign minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi has expressed the same view during an interview, “Political stability and socioeconomic development in Pakistan are stepping stones for taking us beyond the war on terror (WoT). Our strategy should be to deny physical, political and ideological space to terrorists and extremists.”⁵⁴

Zafar Ali Khan suggests that counterinsurgency strategy both at the strategic/diplomatic and at the national levels has to be different from that of the US which has no stakes in the killing of Pakistanis. Pakistan’s priority should remain on winning the hearts and minds of the affected people through all round social reforms but selective use of force against the miscreants. Isolating local militant organizations and foreign sponsored groups is a must to provide security to the common masses.⁵⁵

While terrorism is a common enemy, sectarianism is one factor that harms national unity. Ideological differences should not be allowed to grow into rigid, extremist positions. Such trends must be watched and mediated through interaction and dialogue. The intelligentsia, political figures and religious scholars can play an important role in minimizing differences. Strict vigilance must be ensured to check anti-state elements from infiltrating into ideological camps. An integrated approach ensuring unity of effort will be of prime importance in monitoring anti-state elements with militant links.

With regard to education policy, it is not only religious institutions which warrant immediate attention but there is a need to evolve a common curricula that inculcates the values of tolerance and social harmony and

⁵² Hilde Frafjord Johnson, “Afghanistan: The Challenges of Post-Conflict Assistance,” *Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs*, February 4, 2002.

⁵³ Ghazi Salahuddin, “People Without Power.” “Imran Khan: Pakistan Army in Tribal Areas Risks ‘Civil War’,” *Dawn*, March 18, 2010.

⁵⁴ “Pakistan: Beyond the War on Terror,” interview conducted by Judy C. Woodruff with Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

⁵⁵ An interview with Zafar Ali Khan.

discourages bigotry. While madaris operating in FATA might take longer to be reformed, other madaris located elsewhere can be subjected to reform without delay.

Since the early 1980s, a kind of gun culture has grown roots in Pakistani society. The government is also required to initiate effective steps to address this issue of arms control. . A special monitoring mechanism must be evolved to clear mega cities from the menace of illegal weapons. Officials in the interior ministry who have helped in spreading prohibited bore weapons in the country in the past need to be disciplined.

The reconstruction effort in the areas where the armed forces have intervened must be seen as part of the larger task of nation-building, helping to create the conditions for peace, stability and social inclusion. We must ensure that there are no gaps between humanitarian relief and support for recovery, rebuilding and long-term development of political, economic and social institutions in terrorism affected areas as part of an integrated holistic strategy. In other words, government must act on several different fronts at the same time. In this regard, Erin Patrick's views carry weight who argues that there is a close relationship between security and development. He says that rather than seeing one as necessarily being "complete" before work on the other can begin, the two can and should occur in tandem.⁵⁶

Children, especially in FATA are the most vulnerable entity. Since 9/11, the tribal generation of teenagers has now grown up and is involved in the ongoing war because of the circumstances through which they have passed. Yet many of them are sitting on the fence and can be prevented from falling on the wrong side.⁵⁷

To create employment opportunities in the affected areas, labour-intensive public works programmes will be very important. A durable, stable peace can only be achieved on the basis of sustainable development in secured environment. The gains that Pakistan's LEAs have achieved must be maintained permanently by keeping a requisite force in selected areas to protect development activities and social works. Reconstruction/rehabilitation work should have an overarching implementing authority including representatives from the concerned field army formations. Coordination is the key if policies are to succeed in giving effective support to the concerned people.

Dr Maleeha Lodhi has suggested that the government should replace its fitful fire fighting mode of governance by a coherent approach that guides its response to pressing issues. Whether managing the economy, addressing the

⁵⁶ Erin Patrick, "Reconstructing Afghanistan: Lessons for Post-War Iraq?," *Migration Policy Institute* (April 2003).

⁵⁷ Muhammad Khurshid Khan, "Opinion Paper: Integration of Tribal Youth (FATA) in National Mainstream," *Pakistan Army Journal* (Summer 2009).

energy crisis or dealing with security issues, the government needs a systematic and sustained approach that inspires public confidence. She also points out that the prerequisite for effective governance at a minimum involves three things: First, an implementable vision or overarching strategy to guide specific policy actions; second, organizing for this mission by positioning competent people in the right places and, third, a capacity to motivate and mobilize people behind the goals set so that policy measures can be enforced and complied with.⁵⁸

All bureaucratic institutions need to be strengthened. The leadership should be able to digest truth with regard to its demonstrated performance while hypocrisy must end now. The promotion process should be depoliticized. A clear-cut criterion should be laid down for assessing suitability for promotion. The new generation in the bureaucratic circle is well read, more intelligent and enthusiastic that can take initiatives and calculated risks to put Pakistan back on the track. Therefore, to stop the bug of politicization from spreading further, there must be an end to extensions in all forms after the age of retirement.

Pakistan Army being the custodian of maintaining and ensuring external as well as internal security has no option but to continue to prepare and improve its operational worthiness to accept the challenge of the Phase 2 of the ongoing WOT while simultaneously enhancing the capacity of other LEAs. Pakistan Army's training institutions must help them in this regard so as to integrate them in a broad national fighting force. As suggested by Rahimullah Yusufzai, a major overhaul of the second line forces in all aspects is needed to rejuvenate the force.⁵⁹

External Front

Terrorism which has no boundaries cannot be tackled in isolation by a single state, thus warranting international collaboration. Therefore, the stake holders in WOT must be made to realize that force is one element that should be used sparingly without annoying innocent people while the core causes are tackled at other levels. The strategy must be based on political engagement along with socioeconomic development, backed by essential military forces to combat this menace.⁶⁰ This is only possible when the international community sincerely comes forward and contributes necessary financial support to Pakistan and Afghanistan on a long- term basis.

⁵⁸ Dr Maleeha Lodhi, "Pakistan's Leaderless Moment."

⁵⁹ Hasan Abbas, "Pakistan Can Defy the Odds: How to Rescue a Failing State," *Institute for Social Policy and Understanding*, May 11, 2009, <http://ispu.org/files/PDFs/ispu-pakistan> (accessed December 2010). Rahimullah Yusufzai, "Core Issue," *News International*, May 24, 2008.

⁶⁰ "CJCSC's Address."

In the greater interest of the world, we must focus our energies on making the important capitals realize that genuine peace and stability at large hinges on a stable Afghanistan. Its future should therefore be decided entirely by the Afghans themselves through their tested historical and cultural custom of holding “Grand Jirga” as decided by the London conference.⁶¹ Rather than appear as an occupation force, the world ought to rebuild Afghanistan and try to win over the masses. In addition, it is suggested that the US Administration must change its mindset if it wishes to see a change in the attitude of Pakistani society that will help both Pakistan and the US in dealing with the problem in hand.

With a view to countering propaganda against Islam and Muslim community as a whole, there is an immediate need to shed all differences within the Ummah. Promoting and encouraging specific sectarian agendas in other Muslim countries must end now which is in the interest of all of them. Additionally, the charities extended by the wealthy Muslim countries to poor communities should be routed through government for the purpose of better utilization and transparency.

The EU is a tough market to trade with Pakistan. Therefore, Pakistan should try more summits with individual EU countries instead. The last summit with France was not without substance. Pakistan’s missions abroad should continue to pursue their cases for access to the US and EU markets at every level. The Prime Minister’s last visit to Brussels to persuade EU for trade was useful.

While efforts are on to bridge the trust deficit between the regional countries, unresolved issues including Kashmir will keep harming prospects of long term peace and stability. To lower the temperature of the current hostile environment, trade and economic cooperation can be helpful. However, the focus should remain on the resolution of the outstanding issues so that resources wasted on conflict could be diverted to better the life of the common people of the region. Then only terrorism will be confronted effectively.

Finally, with regards to the security and protection of WMD, Pakistan has already taken extensive safeguard measures based on international best practices. However, elsewhere in the world the loose nukes and displaced and unaccounted radioactive material need to be traced at all levels internationally. It is a highly sensitive matter that needs full international cooperation.

To summarize, Pakistan’s stability beyond 2015 is linked with Pakistan’s response to the regional, extra regional and internal factors, quality of governance and political, social and military policy. However, the most important factor that will have a making or breaking impact is economic policy. The ideal set of policies would lead to speedy retirement of existing

⁶¹ “Afghan Jirga Calls for Peace Commission to End War,” *Dawn*, June 5, 2010.

debt, the accumulation of foreign exchange reserves, rapid but sustained economic growth, reduction in income inequalities, and reduction in poverty levels. Economic prosperity would also lead to improvements in the nation's physical and social infrastructure including roads, rail, and air communication; energy services; water services; public health; job opportunities and education.

Conclusion

Presently, there is no coherent, multilateral humanitarian strategy for the provision of protection or assistance to war-affected civilians or displaced persons. Nor is there yet a clear strategy for the critical transition from relief to development assistance. The war on terrorism which we are now fighting is not a provincial subject as it is not confined to any one province. While the provinces would need to extend their wholehearted support, the center will have to play the decisive role in addressing the ongoing challenge by taking strategic decisions and providing resources needed to respond to the problem. The leadership will have to get out of the denial mode as there is no course open to them except to tackle this problem, no matter what it takes and what sacrifices it entails, without ifs and buts and without any misconceived appeals to the militants.

There should be no question of sponsoring any group that works against the national interest in any form by the political leadership. There will be no peace unless the country acted in concert, and no peace can be won without the ownership of the people. The country came to this pass and reached at this level because of flawed policies and bad governance. The country cannot afford to fail again. If the leadership fails in restoring the confidence of the masses, it will be the greatest failure and Pakistan would be unable to give a future to its next generation.

Since a part of the problem is "home grown" the answer should also come from within. However, since the ongoing war is a global phenomenon therefore, international community is expected to come forward and help this region to get rid of this menace that badly affects the security, peace and stability of this region and the world at large. ■