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## EDITOR'S NOTE

This is the fourth biannual issue of *Conflict and Peace Studies*, a flagship publication of Pak Institute for Peace Studies. Until 2012, the journal has regularly been published as a quarterly research journal. Started in the last quarter of 2008, as many as 20 issues of the PIPS research journal have been published so far with their primary focus on conflict, insecurity, militancy and militants' media, religious extremism, radicalization & de-radicalization, terrorism & counterterrorism, human rights and regional strategic issues.

The journal has been well received by academic and research quarters. Besides adding to existing knowledge, it has been contributing to increase understanding among policymakers, and regional and multilateral institutions about situation-specific needs, early warnings, and effective options or strategies to prevent/de-escalate conflict and risk of violence in Pakistan and the region.

PIPS is thankful to Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre (NOREF) for continuing its support for the publication of *Conflict and Peace Studies* for the second year in a row. In 2014, too, PIPS had sought collaboration with and financial assistance from NOREF to publish two biannual issues of the journal. This joint PIPS-NOREF publication is meant to achieve the following objectives:

- To produce and publish context-specific research work on subjects of conflict, religious extremism, violent radicalism, militancy and terrorism, etc., in local and regional perspectives and disseminate to analysts, research institutes, institutions of higher education, policymakers, media and civil society organizations and others;
- To enhance the empirical knowledge-base and scholarship on interstate and intrastate conflicts and viable options of achieving peace, security and stability in the South Asian region, with particular focus on Pakistan;
- To increase understanding among policymakers and regional and multilateral institutions about situation-specific needs, early warnings, and effective options or strategies to prevent/de-escalate conflict and risk of violence; and

*Editor's Note*

- To improve the effectiveness of local, regional and international partners by strengthening the evidence base and conceptual foundation for engaging in conflict prevention and de-escalation interventions in Pakistan.

**Muhammad Amir Rana**

## COMMENT

### Parliamentary watch: Summary of the debates in the joint session on Yemen crisis

*Muhammad Ismail Khan*

This summary is drawn from the debates legislators conducted in the joint session of parliament from April 6th to April 10th 2015. All the quotes and figures are extracted from the proceeding of the session, available online through <http://www.na.gov.pk/en/debates.php>.<sup>1</sup>

A joint parliamentary session was held to deliberate upon Pakistan's response to the war in Yemen was held from April 6th to 10th 2015.

The debate of the session was started by a motion moved by federal minister for defence affairs, who also presented Pakistan's policy statement on Yemen crisis.

Legislators across the board appreciated the government's decision of conveying in the joint session, hoping that a consensus response reflective of the aspiration of the people of Pakistan will come forward. Even Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), which had earlier boycotted parliamentary proceedings on the grounds of alleged rigging in 2013 elections, participated in the debate.

The policy statement touched upon three areas: evacuation of Pakistanis from Yemen, request by Saudi Arabia for Pakistani troops, and Pakistan's response to that request. Elaborating the policy statement, the defence minister said that the Saudis have

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<sup>1</sup> The debates were conducted in the 4th joint sitting of the second parliamentary year of the National Assembly, having tenure from 2013 to 2018. Proceedings of the sitting can be accessed online.

Day 1: [http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1429011384\\_480.pdf](http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1429011384_480.pdf)  
Day 2: [http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1429269794\\_198.pdf](http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1429269794_198.pdf)

Day 3: [http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1429511214\\_379.pdf](http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1429511214_379.pdf)

Day 4: [http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1429511354\\_644.pdf](http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1429511354_644.pdf)

Day 5: [http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1429511677\\_669.pdf](http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1429511677_669.pdf)

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requested aircraft, naval vessels, and ground troops, to fight alongside the coalition forces striking in Yemen.

Sharing the parameters of any Pakistani response, the defence minister said that Pakistan values its ties with Saudi Arabia, any “violation” of its “territorial integrity” will, therefore evoke “strong response” from Pakistan, which (like Saudi Arabia) condemns the “overthrow of the legitimate government of Yemen.”

### Pakistan’s position on Yemen

Pakistan shared Saudi Arabia’s position on Yemen, torn by civil war. To Pakistani government, the overthrow of Hadi government by Houthi rebels in late 2014 is overthrow of a brotherly Muslim country by non-state actors using force. To support Hadi’s government is to stand with a legitimate government.

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Several legislators supported government’s positing on the overall issue. A government minister wondered if “we will allow rebels to takeover Pakistan.” Another

legislator set aside the notion of Yemen conflict being a government-opposition tussle, terming it “open terrorism” by rebels.

According to the defence minister, it was President Hadi, who later escaped to Saudi Arabia, had requested the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries for military action, under Article 51 of the United Nation’s charter. The request for defence support too meant Pakistan become part of the GCC-led coalition, which has launched air strikes in Yemen.

But, several other legislators questioned this stance, asking the government to stick to legality. First of all, Pakistan should learn whether the air strikes are legally sanctioned by the Security Council. Yemen, some parliamentarians said, is as sovereign a country as KSA is.

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Several legislators questioned the “conflicting claims” on the issue of sending troops to Yemen: has the government already committed troops or is it really asking the parliament for guidance?

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Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf’s Shireen Mazari wondered if the Article 7 is really been invoked, asking which country has come under armed attack. In any case, Oman, Yemen’s neighbor, is not part of the coalition.



Likewise, another legislator from the same party, Shah Mehmood sought clarification on the air strikes in Yemen, asking if it is aggression or not, given that tomorrow, such acts can be questioned.

### *“Conflicting claims”*

Several legislators questioned the “conflicting claims” on the issue of sending troops to Yemen: has the government already committed troops or is it really asking the parliament for guidance?

Some, for instance, made a reference to the news appearing in Saudi media, according to which Pakistan has already made solid commitments to KSA. One legislator pointed that Pakistani flags were already spotted in the coalition countries attacking Yemen. The parameters guiding Pakistan’s response to the Saudi request also appeared supportive of Saudi Arabia. Similarly, the role of the defence minister, one said, should come after the foreign ministry takes a decision of engagement in Yemen crisis; that the policy statement was uttered by defence minister hinted at a decision already been taken.

As if responding to some such concerns, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had clarified in the debate that not all details can be shared in parliament. While some legislators questioned the utility of holding joint session, others asked for conveying

an in-camera meeting to deliberate upon all details.

### **Causes of conflict in Yemen, and Pakistan’s role**

Legislators explained different causes for internal chaos in Yemen, mostly on these lines:

- *Autonomy*

The chaos in Yemen manifests struggle for autonomy within Yemen. The country’s six northern regions, populated by Houthis, are demanding autonomy for long. Because they were denied powers, they overthrew the Hadi government. A way out thus would be a consensus-backed interim government, which represents all regions.

- *Tribal war*

The crisis in Yemen is basically a tribal war or “internal political power struggle” between tribes in Yemen. What is happening in Yemen has occurred there several times in the past five decades, said PML-Q’s Mushahid Hussain. A legislator from Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) said Yemen, like FATA, is a tribal society. To properly deal with the issue, better first properly understand their tribal culture.

- *Inter-state fight*

Yemen-Saudi Arabia conflict is issue between two sovereign countries, which has often at odds for some time. Houthis themselves were once KSA's allies, recalled one legislator.

- *Intra-Arab fight*

One legislator even termed it an "internal fight of Arabs." Already, Arab League has constituted a force of 40,000 troops, saying it is their fight. One member said that while India enjoys observer status in Arab League, Pakistan doesn't.

- *Proxy war*

Yemen has become a battlefield of proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia, several legislators either said directly or hinted indirectly.

One legislator, for instance expressed concern over the kind of support Houthi rebels are getting in the form of weapons and ballistic missiles. Head of Jamiat Ahle-Hadith (JAH) said that many rebels smuggled weapons across the border towards Saudi Arabia, to the point that the KSA has to evict Yemenis once. These rebels, he said, found support from Iran. Still, he said, Saudis didn't intervene in Yemen, until its president asked for help.

- *The Arab Spring*

The evolution of conflict in Yemen cannot be studied in separation to the latest developments in the Middle East, which, in the words of one

legislator, is being "reshaped". Another said, "The status quo in Middle East is unraveling", pointing towards "a revolt against longstanding family dictatorships."

Pakistani officials were therefore suggested to think about plugging itself in the changing environment in the Middle East.

- *Crisis in the Muslim world*

A few, however, hinted towards introspection. Advising not to pin all blame on external elements, a legislator asked, "Who asked Qaddafi [Libyan President] to enforce personal dictatorship for forty years?" One legislators asked religious parties, parliamentarians, and intellectuals to come up with response.

- *Great game*

Some legislators, mostly from the religious parties, read the conflict in Yemen as yet another element of the "great game of superpowers", eager to divide Arab countries and exploit resources of the Muslim world. Yemen, they said, was a peaceful country, where tribes were made to fight each other, resulting into today's situation.

- *Sectarianism*

Some legislators also analyzed the conflict's sectarian dimensions, along Shia-Sunni lines.

To be sure, many legislators reject the notion that Yemen crisis is a sectarian

war. JUI-F's chief, Fazlur Rehman, set aside the notion of the conflict as sectarianism, simply because unlike media, Iranian Constitution categorize Houthis, a sect within Shias, as Sunnis. The point was reiterated by another legislator, saying that if studied deeply, Houthis, also known as "Ansarullahs" are "are more towards the Hanafi school of thought with modifications."

JUI-F's chief questioned the sectarian impression of the war, asking if anyone said that the attack on Taliban or on Saddam was an attack on Sunnis.

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PML-Q's Mushahid Hussain Syed, for instance, termed the conflict as tribal power struggle, which has become a proxy war in Middle East.

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Yet, should the conflict drag on, legislators argued, the sectarian inclination could not be denied. One legislator said that the perception is that of Sunni alliance taking on Houthis in Yemen. Another said that should Pakistan go there, militants associated with Al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) can make its way in Pakistan, via Afghanistan, and fan hatred.

- *Beyond single causes*

Some legislators mixed the set of explanations discussed above, offering a more nuanced view. PML-Q's Mushahid Hussain Syed, for instance, termed the conflict as tribal power struggle, which has become a proxy war in Middle East, where KSA and Iran are supporting opposite sides.

One parliamentarian, Hasil Bizenjo from Balochistan National Party, questioned the utility of discussing the internal situation of Yemen; the parliament, he said, is unnecessarily discussing tribes and sub-tribes of Yemen. Warning against such a diagnosis, he reminded how Pakistan blundered in Afghanistan when Pakistan charted its support on the basis of ethnic groups.

## Balancing Iran-Saudi relations

### *Saudi fears*

Besides debating the issue of Yemen, legislators discussed at length the threat to Saudi Arabia.

Parliamentarians largely supported Pakistan's relation with Saudi Arabia, pointing to following incidents:

- Two million Pakistanis work in Saudi Arabia; the remittances they send support Pakistan's economy a lot.

- Saudi Arabia has helped Pakistan in natural disasters, with one legislator claiming that King Abdullah personally asked for money for Pakistan when it was hit by earthquake.
  - The Saudis have even helped Pakistani political leaders, such as by bailing out Nawaz Sharif when he was removed in a coup in 1999.
  - After 1998 nuclear tests, when the international community was imposing sanctions against Pakistan, the KSA gave Pakistan free oil. And last year, in 2014, the KSA gave Pakistan handsome amount.
  - Saudi-Pakistan's military-to-military ties are also cordial: since 1981, Pakistani troops are stationed there; a brigade is lodged in Tabuk, and another at Khamis Mushahid. When, in 1991, Saddam attacked Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Pakistan sent brigade plus a battalion.
  - Some legislators claimed that Saudis has always been ready to support Pakistan in its war with India. One legislator claimed that during 1965 war, Saudi King Faisal not only sent Pakistan planes but also the spare parts. Likewise, another recalled that in 2001, when India stationed troops on the border with Pakistan, he found that Saudis, unlike others, readily supporting Pakistan.
  - Another claimed King Faisal also warned Bangladesh that if it mistreated the Pakistani Prisoner of Wars, Saudi Arabia will treat the Bangladeshi prisoners the same way.
  - Earlier, in the start of the debate, the defence minister said that many Pakistanis were safely evacuated from Yemen, thanks also to Saudi Arabia which provided Pakistan with "safe corridor" and "no-fly zones".
- Legislators underscored that Pakistani Muslims, like others, deem themselves duty-bound to secure the holy sanctuaries against any threat.
- Several, however, asked for delinking the protection of the holy sites from Saudi Arabia's. PPP's Aitzaz said that "Saudi state, Saudi government, and the two holy sites" are three different things. MQM's Farooq Sattar asked for differentiating between "House of Kaaba" and "House of Saud". Another legislator said even when the Saudi dynasty didn't exist, Mecca and Medina still existed.
- JAH's Sajid Mir questioned this distinction, terming it "academic and artificial". Saudi state, he said, is the land of noble sanctuaries; its rulers, "servant of the sanctuaries". He recalled that King Fahd refused to be called as "His Majesty", and instead preferred "Servants of the

Sanctuaries". It is the same state, Mir said, which expanded the sanctuaries, providing more and more space to pilgrims. The Saudis, he said, supported Pakistan, without saying they will be neutral. And therefore, it must be defended.

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Senator Aitzaz Ahsan sought elaboration on what entails violation of KSA's sovereignty, as mentioned in the policy statement: will Saudi's sovereignty be threatened by internal infighting or external attack? One legislator wondered if tomorrow, Saudis start revolting against their government, will Pakistan go and shoot them, too? MQM's Tahir Mashadhi wondered if the Kingdom is "foreseeing uprising of their own people", due to which they are "hesitant to use their own forces."

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Some likened Yemen is to Saudi Arabia, what Afghanistan is to Pakistan. Instability in Yemen will affect KSA, they argued, therefore, having legitimate grievances.

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One legislator, however, argued that the troops request has come in the

context of Yemen crisis, not for Saudi Arabia's territorial integrity. The issue, therefore, should be the former, not the latter. In any case, others said, Saudis have not attacked Yemen, not the other way around.

Several legislators wondered if Saudi integrity would even be threatened by the chaos from Yemen. It was reminded that a major city of KSA lies 2000 miles away from Yemen, which, in any case, is militarily inferior to KSA's, having the region's most-sophisticated air power. One legislator said, "Saudis' airpower would not allow the movement of any troops in the deserts, just like the Americans killed Saddam forces evicting Kuwait." Another said, the KSA already is installing barbed wires along Yemen.

However, Saudi's concerns were justified too, in the debates. Some likened Yemen is to Saudi Arabia, what Afghanistan is to Pakistan. Instability in Yemen will affect KSA, they argued, therefore, having legitimate grievances. The debate also referred to securing the Gulf of Eden, a major global trade route. Moreover, KSA faces a major challenge from violent outfits like ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

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KSA, chief of JAH said, fears of being encircled by Iran, which has also been supporting monarchy in Syria and rebels in Bahrian. Thus, to the north and south, KSA faces, on the one hand militant groups and what KSA thinks are Iran-backed regimes or actors, Houthi being one of them.

### *Iran, the next-door neighbour*

Assuming the divergent interests of Iran on the issue, some legislators warned against damaging Pakistan-Iran relations. Iran too has expressed its concerns to Pakistan over its expected involvement in Yemen.

The two countries share 780 km border. Hasil Bizenjo said that “closer neighbor” is different than “distant neighbor”. Iran will be the source of the much-needed gas pipeline in the future. Some legislators from the western provinces, KP and Balochistan, also warned that Pakistan should avoid getting into a situation where its western border with Iran gets conflict prone. The nuclear agreement Iran signed with the west show Iran is opening up in international arena. The regional situation around Pakistan will be different, if sanctions on Iran are lifted.

## **Solutions**

### *The military option*

On the option of sending troops to Yemen, legislators offered mixed

history, and therefore mixed lesson:

- One legislator said that Pakistan has never sent troops to the Arab world. Only once did Bhutto send Pakistani pilots to assist Syrian Air Force in the six-day war in 1973. That assistance was meant to fight Israel, not any other Muslim country, he said. Today’s realities are different.
- Senator Farhatullah Babar said that in 1967, General Ayub sent Brigadier Zia ul Haq to Jordan, where evicted out the leaders of Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The same leaders, he said, later refused to support Pakistan in our Kashmir cause. Another legislator said that the incident is known as “Black September” in which over 15000 Palestinians died. However, Ijaz ul Haq, son of Zia ul Haq, contested that Pakistani troops didn’t go there; instead, four officers were stationed there.
- Legislators reminded how Pakistan continues to suffer for jumping into Afghan war in 1980s. Likewise, since 2001, Pakistan continues to suffer further for participating in American war, some said.

To be sure, legislators reminded that under the existing security agreement with KSA, the troops in Saudi are not mandated to fight in

Yemen. The troops are not there for combat, but to defend the KSA.

Some legislators argued that committing troops to a distant land don't sit well with Pakistan's existing resource. The country is already thin on resources, as troops are busy in North Waziristan, and conditions on the border with India are equally unfavorable. The defence minister also said, according to a legislator, that already 40% of the troops are committed in war against terror. The country's war doctrine, said a legislator, calls for checking internal security threats.

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Several said Pakistan should not send troops simply because the war in Yemen is not Pakistan's war.

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PML-Q's Mushahid recalled that some time ago, the foreign secretary shared that Pakistan refused sending troops to the international coalition against ISIS, because the move, the secretary said, will be diversion from the country's internal fight against militancy.

Several said Pakistan should not send troops simply because the war in Yemen is not Pakistan's war.

MQM's Farooq Sattar rejected the military option for being pre-emptive in nature now. "If we give Saudis the right", he said, "tomorrow, India too

can express the right of pre-emptive strikes."

PPP's Farhatullah Babar called for limited defence support, "only for the protection of installations in Saudi Arabia", like training facilities, logistical support, intelligence sharing, and mountain warfare assistance and medical relief.

Another legislator said that like the U.S. on Iraq, Saudi Arabia and GCC countries, forming "coalition of the willing" didn't go through the UN's Security Council. "If we bypass the UN now", the legislator said, "tomorrow, non-super powers will fear that the precedent can be set against them." Article 7, the legislator argued, has been sidestepped.

Another legislator said that the military at best can have advisory. Even if we are to send troops, send the non-officers, another said.

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Legislators advised the government of several steps, some of them being the following: ceasefire in Yemen; cessation of fire in Yemen; constitution of interim, consensus government in Yemen; dispatch of humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

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Some legislators supported the enforcing peacekeeping force. PPP's



Babar said that if Pakistan has to send troops, it can send them as peacekeepers under UN's mandate. Already, Pakistan has the largest representation in the peacekeeping force. Another legislator asked the OIC to form peacekeeping force for Yemen; the 40,000 Arab League-constituted troops could be shaped accordingly, one of them said.

### *Diplomacy, foremost*

Many called Pakistan to play the role of mediator, for which Pakistan has to stay neutral. Even the government representative admitted that Pakistan is willing to defuse the crisis and find a political settlement. One member, however, questioned if Houthi rebels will accept Pakistan as mediator.

Legislators advised the government of several steps, some of them being the following: ceasefire in Yemen; cessation of fire in Yemen; constitution of interim, consensus government in Yemen; dispatch of humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

Many legislators advised the PM to engage in what can be termed as shuttle diplomacy, by calling ambassadors, meeting leaders of other countries, or sending his cabinet members for that purpose. One legislator, Siraj, said government should form a delegation, comprising of representatives of different sects.

Legislators also called for invoking Organization of Islamic Countries, which include Saudi Arabia and Yemen. A legislator recalled that in 1997 Pakistan-hosted OIC summit included Crown Prince Abdullah from Saudi Arabia and President Rafsanjani from Iran. Some said both Pakistan and Turkey can jointly co-host officials of the other countries.

Another legislator advised the government to ask China for enforcing ceasefire through the UN's Security Council. Pakistan, another said, may try to opt for a seat at Arab League.



## Crisis in Yemen: threats of another proxy war in Pakistan?

*Shahzad Raza*

On April 10th 2015, the Pakistani Parliament, after deliberation in joint sittings, decided to maintain neutrality on civil war in Yemen. The consensus resolution called for maintaining neutrality, opposing sending troops to Yemen, but resolving to protect territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) (*Dawn*, 2015).

At the start of the joint sitting, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, sharing policy statement on Yemen crisis, revealed that the KSA had requested the government of Pakistan to send its fighter jets (to pound bombs on the rebels) and ships (to check the delivery of arms and wherewithal, allegedly being supplied by Iran). In the same debate, the defence minister, while laying out Pakistan's sacrifices in the war on terror, even questioned as to which country came to help Pakistan in its long war.

To be sure, even though parliamentarians vowed to help the

KSA, should there be any threat to it, they largely conceded there was no imminent danger to the territorial integrity of the Kingdom or the two sacred sites.

Broadly, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), and Awami National Party (ANP) openly and strongly opposed the idea of sending troops to Yemen. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) stayed somewhat vague. The religious parties looked unsure on how to react. The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), two main religious-political parties subscribing to Sunni sect of Islam, also opposed dispatching troops to Yemen. The PTI rather took pride in having pushed the government to insert the word "neutrality" in the original resolution, said to be drafted by the Foreign Office (*Express Tribune*, 2015).

MPs feared that by jumping into Yemen quagmire, Pakistan would face another wave of sectarian

violence. While a few of them rejected the perception that civil war in Yemen was not a Shiite-Sunni conflict, many believed the violence would have deep repercussions for Pakistan, in case it decided to take sides. Parliamentarians argued both Iran and the KSA were furthering their strategic interests in Yemen, from which Pakistan should stay away. By joining the KSA-led coalition against Houthi rebels, Pakistan might annoy neighbouring Iran, several lawmakers feared.

After the Parliament passed that unanimous resolution, the UAE's minister of state for foreign affairs, Dr Anwar Mohammad Gargash, warned Pakistan of paying a heavy price for its neutrality. Pakistan and Turkey, he said, must abandon the so-called mantra of neutrality and help Arab countries quell the rebellion in Yemen (*Khaleej Times*, 2015).

Many saw his reference to Yemen as an epicentre of crisis for the entire Muslim as exaggerating. Yet, many believed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif tried to allay the concerns of Arab countries, by, for instance, terming Houthis as "rebels" and clarifying that Pakistan was against the illegal occupation by rebels of Yemen's territory.

To be sure, Pakistan is heavily dependent on Saudi economic assistance. Around two million Pakistanis work in the KSA and UAE, contributing over \$15 billion annual in foreign remittances. Pakistan's economic cooperation with Iran is not yet ideal, even though the two share strategic interests. But, more than that, KSA and Iran fund the individuals and entities of their choices, in Pakistan.

### Proxy war in Pakistan

As political parties were debating the issue inside parliament, several religious outfits, blatantly divided on sectarian lines, started staging street protests. The outfits like Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ) even vowed to send their *mujahedeen* to fight alongside Saudi forces, if Pakistan refused to send its troops. The outfits hailing from Shiite school of thought warned against accepting Saudi demands.

For long, Pakistan has been a favourite place of both Iran and the KSA to fight their proxy war on sectarian lines, to the disadvantage of the people of Pakistan.

Many seminaries in Pakistan have long been regarded as incubators of religious extremism and

sectarianism. They provide manpower to violent extremist entities belonging to Shiite, Sunni, Deobandi and other sects. Several efforts were launched to reform the seminaries, but failed to yield the desired results owing to multiple reasons (Witter, 2007).

In early 2015, the interior affairs ministry informed Senate, in a written reply, that “financial assistance for religious or sectarian purposes was discouraged, because it was detrimental to law and order and sectarian harmony in the country” (Gishkori, 2015).

At the same time, Pakistani government admitted about over 70 seminaries receiving foreign funds amounting to 300 million rupees in 2013 and 2014 (Gishkori, 2015).

### A sorry beginning

Islamization of Pakistan during the entire 1980s sowed the seeds of poison ivy, which has now developed into a full-grown tree. And, what all the successive governments did was to chop off the branches, instead of eradicating the roots. The influx of petro-dollars and hard cash from Washington during the Soviet war plagued the Pakistani

society with elements, which continue to haunt the entire nation.

That Islamization, led by military ruler General Zia, was tilting towards Sunni Islam, thereby alienating Shiites, “who saw it as a majoritarian attempt to make the country more Sunni” (Rafiq, 2014). The campaign coincided with Iran’s Islamic revolution, which revived Shia political activism across the Muslim world, including Pakistan.

This contrasted sharply with the religious and sectarian diversity of Pakistan. From the onset, differences were set aside in favour of peaceful living. But since 1980s, Pakistan experienced sectarian divide, aggravating further after 9/11, when militants turned against the state. Largely, Sunni/Deobandi militants have attacked Shia Muslims (Rafiq, 2014).

### Iran’s influence

Iran, activated by the revolution in 1979, was also wary of the situation in Pakistan, which, in the 1980s, was turning into a stronghold of Saudi Arabia.

In Pakistan, Shias boldly claimed their rights and representation, believing that Iran’s Khomeini would

support them; that their model of political activism would succeed in challenging authority. Khomeini, once, sent a message to Pakistan's General Ziaul Haq, telling him if he mistreated the Shia, "he (Khomeini) would do to him what he had done to the Shah." In 1979, when tens of thousands of Pakistan's Shias travelled to Islamabad demanding exemption from Islamic taxes based on Sunni law, the Pakistani government had no choice but to concede.

Since 1979, the Islamic Republic of Iran has spent blood and ample treasure to make its influence felt all the way to the shores of the Mediterranean. Iran's attempts were resisted by Arabs, through Sunni sectarianism (Nasr, 2014).

### **Saudis's fears and hopes**

To the Saudi monarchy, post-revolutionary Iran represents a direct adversary, both for ideological and strategic regions. The two have been eager to wrest power in the Muslim world.

Earlier, in 1980s, Pakistan became a fertile ground for the KSA to safeguard its strategic interest. During the Afghan War, Saudi Arabia wholeheartedly backed the

Afghan and Arab *mujahedeen*. According to one estimate, the Saudi government split the cost of that with the U.S., bearing cost of more \$20 billion (Atwan, 2006). Fundraising committees were formed under the chairmanship of Prince Salman bin Abdul Aziz, the governor of Riyadh district. Imams at mosques were encouraged to deliver fiery sermons exhorting young men to join the fight.

Moreover, the relations of Saudi royal family with Sharifs in Pakistan date back in history. When Pakistan detonated nuclear devices, in May 1998, the KSA doled out Pakistan, then ruled by Nawaz Sharif, oil worth of \$2 billion. A year later, when he was ousted in a military coup, the Saudis got him and his family off the hook, providing them refuge in KSA. In 2007, Nawaz Sharif came back to Pakistan, his return asked by King Abdullah, to participate in elections in 2008. When five years later, Nawaz Sharif became Prime Minister for another term, the state of economy was in tatters. Once again, the KSA gifted \$1.5 billion in Pakistan's kitty.

Although Iran and KSA have been waging proxy fight inside countries like Pakistan for long, the recent nuclear deal of Iran with the west

raises a further point of concern for the Saudi Arabia. To the Kingdom, the deal will open more space to Iran.

As of now, not only the KSA demand fighter jets and ships from Pakistan, but a large contingent of its soldiers to participate in ground operation, whenever it is launched inside Yemen. As discussed, the Pakistani Parliament had already rejected the demand and urged the government to stay neutral.

Demanding troops could have been understandable and normal, but what perturbed many people in power corridors was the KSA specific demand of Sunni soldiers for Yemen. Besides, the KSA also wanted that all army officers who would visit Saudi Arabia as part of training or assistance program should hail from Sunni sects (Muhammad, 2015). To some strategic analysts, this was a pathetic attempt to divide the Pakistan army on sectarian grounds.

To be sure, despite all that so-called goodwill gestures and positive attitude, the KSA never made an attempt to heavily invest in Pakistan. The entry of China with \$46 billion of investment over next few years, Pakistani government is thinking differently. One of the main conditions of Chinese to keep their

investment secure was that Pakistan should maintain good relations with its neighbours, especially Iran and Afghanistan. And by taking side with the KSA in Yemen civil war, Pakistani leadership does not want to annoy the Chinese.

### Fallout: sectarian violence

What is pertinent to note is that sectarian difference between Shiites and Sunnis didn't turn violent until 1979. Two external events, the Islamic Revolution in Iran under Khomeini and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, rather set the path to violence in Pakistan.

According to South Asian Terrorism Portal, more than 5000 Pakistanis were killed in sectarian violence since 1989. Majority of the assassinated were Shiites.

After 9/11, hard-core Sunni sectarian groups landed under the umbrella of al-Qaeda and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). They unleashed an unchecked killing spree across Pakistan, much because there has been a strong nexus between sectarian groups, Taliban, and al-Qaeda (Rehman, 2012). Sectarian violence would be a long-term challenge.

The sectarian tension refused to die down permanently, though there are regular intervals in which it subsided only to blow after any triggering event. An example was witnessed in late 2013 in the city of Rawalpindi. When the main Muharram procession was passing outside a Deobandi mosque in the city, the mosque's cleric reportedly passed objectionable remarks against Shiites. Some mourners allegedly entered the mosque and set it on fire. Several people were killed. Later on, the stalwarts of Sunni/Deobandi religious and proscribed outfits resorted to violence and burnt a few *imambargahs* (Shia mosques) in the vicinity. The tension and peril gripped the city for weeks. In order to control the situation, the authorities had to impose curfew.

### Catch-22 situation

Pakistan seemingly is a catch-22 situation on how to respond to the lingering Yemen crisis.

If it comes openly in support of KSA, the next-door Iran will complain, besides possibly imperilling the much-needed Chinese investment in the country. If Pakistan, on the other hand, rejects KSA's stance on Yemen, or even stay neutral for long, Saudi

Arabia might be forced to revisit its historic ties with Pakistan.

In both cases, sectarian outfits of one or other school of thought, with or without backing from KSA or Iran, will raise voice against Pakistan's stance.

Still further, the persistence of Yemen crisis will be detrimental for the internal security and economic stability of Pakistan.

### Conclusion

In the given situation, for Pakistan a steady progress on long-term measures is necessary, which include neutralizing sectarian outfits working under different nomenclatures, reforming seminary, modernizing curriculum, bringing sectarian mongers and criminals to justice, striking balance in relations with Iran and KSA, persuading both countries to find out an amicable solution to Yemen crisis, etc.

One thing Pakistani leadership can do is to build a national narrative, that whatever is happening in Yemen will never threaten territorial integrity of the KSA. This will subside the growing concerns among majority Sunni/Deobandi population of Pakistan, which now

believes that the two holiest sites are under attack because of Iranian conspiracies against the KSA.

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## PAPER

# Madrassa reforms: the debate

*Mujtaba Muhammad Rathore*

## Abstract

The post-Peshawar attack debate on regulating madrassas is similar to those carried out since the inception of war against terrorism in 2001. As with those attempts, this one may fail too, simply because government's policy towards madrassas is reactive, unilateral, and mired with inconsistencies. The policy tends to draw a simplistic line between madrassa and extremism, ignoring the different shades of debates offered in this regard. The author revisits the debate on madrassas. Moreover, madrassa reforms, the paper notes, entail a broad range of issues including their registration and regulation of students and their curriculum. All these issues should be explored, but in a step-by-step approach, argues the author, and by taking madrassa administrators on board.



# Madrassa reforms: The debate

*Mujtaba Muhammad Rathore*

In the wake of December 16th 2014 attack in Peshawar, the government adopted 20-point National Action Plan (NAP), aimed at countering militancy and extremism from the country.<sup>1</sup> One of those points relate to the “registration and regulation of madrassas” or Islamic seminaries, which have been blamed by many for promoting violent sectarianism, extremist ideologies and insecurity in Pakistan (ICG, 2005). The madrassa authorities view the clause as yet another unproductive attempt. If for nothing else, they ask the government to stop looking at all madrassas through the same lens.

So far, the government and madrassa authorities are not on the same page on madrassa reform. They need to be. Madrassa reforms, a must for countering extremism in the long run, include a range of issues,

including checking foreign inflow of money and students. Without any priority list on what needs to be done first and how, progress on madrassa reforms hits snag. A step-by-step approach can help the government and madrassa administrators overcome bitterness and achieve tangible outcomes.

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To be sure, the importance of streamlining madrassas is realized about many madrassa authorities, one of them desiring the issue be the government’s top priority.

Unfortunately, the secretary general of Wafaqul Madaaris al-Salfiya said,

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<sup>1</sup>The National Action Plan was established by the government in January 2015 to crack down against terrorism. It provides the framework for the twenty-

first Constitutional Amendment which established speedy trial military courts for offences relating to terrorism.

the government is not “persistent” on its policy, adding that “whenever there is a burning issue, the madrassas becomes central point of discussion, but when normalcy restores, the government altogether neglects the issue.”<sup>2</sup>

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### **The security context**

- *Militancy*

Experts argue that militancy from madrassas didn’t emerge on its own, but was rather exported by extraneous forces, especially from late 1970 onwards. Since Afghan war and Iranian revolution, in 1979, Sunni madrassas in Pakistan were made overtly militarized. In 1990s, madrassas played a critical role in waging jihad in Kashmir and fanning sectarian fires in Pakistan; outside, in Afghanistan, madrassa students, or

Taliban, established a new regime in mid-1990s.

Security expert Amir Rana (2004), in his book on jihadi organizations in Pakistan, explored their linkages with madrassas. International Crisis Group (ICG), an international think-tank, has reported how madrassas recruited fighters for Afghan war and fed sectarian violence in Pakistan, too (ICG, 2002; ICG, 2005). Some scholars have presented empirical evidence to these ends. Out of 363 madrassas in southern Punjab’s Ahmadpur sub-district, investigated academic Salem H. Ali, majority promoted sectarianism (Ali, 2005).

On the other hand, some studies have challenged the role of madrassas in militancy. American scholar Christine Fair, for instance, questions any direct link between madrassas and militancy. In any case, since 1991, she argues, madrassas’ market share has stayed same or declined. Yet, she claims that madrassas could possibly produce students who are more likely to support militancy than students in mainstream schools are (Fair, 2008).

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<sup>2</sup>Author’s telephonic interview with Maulana Qari Yasin Zafar, Secretary

General of Wafaqul Madaaris al-Salfiya. April 13th 2015.

Madrasahs are often charged for indirectly backing violent means (Abdullah, 2015), by having ties with terrorists and providing them sanctuaries (Azeem, 2015).

The Ittehad Tanzeemat-e-Madaaris Pakistan (ITMP), a coalition of five *wafaqs* (religious educational boards) subscribing to Deobandi, Bareilvi, Ahl-e-Hadith, Shia and Jamaat-e-Islami schools of thoughts, expressed reservations on the National Action Plan's clauses pertaining to madrasa reforms, arguing that linking militancy with religion is wrong.

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A madrasa official said that if a person visits a madrasa and stays there as a student or as a guest of a student, it is difficult for the administration to identify them. In such circumstances, the madrasa should not be considered culpable for an individual's actions.

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For one, they question the sole focus of NAP on religious-based militancy.

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<sup>3</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Mufti Muneebur Rehman, President Ittehad Tanzeemat-e-Madaaris Pakistan and President Tanzeemul Madaaris. April 14th 2015.

Mufti Muneebur Rehman, ITMP's president, said that while "NAP talks about religious terrorism," it is "silent on ethnic, linguistic and other types of terrorism", adding that "all types of terrorism should be part of this plan."

Mufti Muneeb, for instance, said the "ITMP support the government, and action should be taken against those madrasahs which are involved in terrorism, irrespective of their religious affiliation."<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Qari Muhammad Haneef Jalandhari, Secretary General of Wafaqul Madaris al-Arabia, said the state should "pinpoint" madrasahs involved in militancy and then take measures.<sup>4</sup> Allama Niaz Hussain Naqvi, Vice President Wafaqul Madaaris Al-Shia, said that "the government should not blame all madrasahs for involvement in terrorist activities; it is necessary to identify such institutions those have links with any kind of militancy, and we support the government in this

<sup>4</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Qari Muhammad Haneef Jalandhary, Secretary General of WafaqulMadaaris al-Arabia (Deobandi) and Principal of Jamia Khairul Madaaris, Multan. April 14th 2015.

regard.”<sup>5</sup> Maulana Yasin argued that they have “time and again” asked the government to take action against those involved in terrorist activities.<sup>6</sup>

A madrassa official said that if a person visits a madrassa and stays there as a student or as a guest of a student, it is difficult for the administration to identify them. In such circumstances, the madrassa should not be considered culpable for an individual’s actions.

Overall, madrassa authorities stress for transparency in identifying terrorists in madrassas. On concrete evidence of suspects, the government should take action but the law enforcement agencies must first contact the madrassa administration and inform them about suspects and keep intact sanctity of the seminary by sending only a few personnel to detain them rather than raiding the madrassa in full force.<sup>7</sup>

They differ on modalities, nonetheless. The debate draws strong argument that anti-terrorism policy related to madrassas in security paradigm should be focused only on those madrassas involved in

violent activities. Madrassa authorities agree with the government over taking action against such kind of madrassas.

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Much of the controversies arise between the government and madrassa authorities over the issues as how to orchestrate an operation against involved summaries because the action is considered as an attack on their sovereignty and independence.

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Much of the controversies arise between the government and madrassa authorities over the issues as how to orchestrate an operation against involved summaries because the action is considered as an attack on their sovereignty and independence. ITMP argue that if any madrassa is involved in violence, the government first should inform the concerned educational board (*wafaq*) before the operation; however, they differ on how to launch operation for detention of suspects hiding in religious

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<sup>5</sup>Author’s telephonic interview with Allama Niaz Hussain Naqvi, Vice President of Wafaqul Madaaris Al-Shia. April 13th 2015.

<sup>6</sup>Author’s interview with Qari Yasin Zafar.

<sup>7</sup>Author’s interview with Qari Haneef Jalandhary.

seminaries. Wafaqul Madaaris al-Arabia asserts they do not have any sympathy for any madrasa that is involved in nefarious activities but find it difficult to identify terrorists.

Tanzeemul Madaaris, on the other hand, concedes that the security agencies should have complete authority to arrest any suspects hiding in any madrassas by ensuring credibility of madrassas to avoid maligning them. “Tanzeemul Madaaris does not impart education of hate and violence and if any institution involved in such activities, it is the responsibility of the government and law enforcement agencies to shut down these seminaries.”<sup>8</sup>

- **Sectarianism**

Madrassas play a primary role in furthering sectarian divides in the society. Much of it has to do with the sectarian foundation of madrassas. Thus, even though basic curriculum remains uniform across many madrassas, it is taught on different sectarian lines in different madrassas.

Most madrassas have disassociated themselves from sectarian outfits,

though. Yet, these too do not deny the role of clerics in promoting sectarianism. However, because madrassas do not give education of violence, some argue, it is necessary to impose ban on those clerics who stir hate in society.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, many Deobandi madrassas continue having well-established links with sectarian groups such as Sipah-e-Sahaba and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi. Similarly, some Shia madrassas have affiliation with sectarian groups like Sipah-e-Muhammad (ICG, 2005).

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Scholar Christine Fair emphasizes that sectarianism does not inevitably lead to violence, which derives from externalities that propel violence between religious groups depending on external strategic interests and objectives (Fair, 2012).

For instance, when it comes to political participation, students from

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<sup>8</sup>Author’s interview with Mufti Muneebur Rehman.

<sup>9</sup>Author’s interview with Allama Niaz Naqvi.

madrassas naturally side with religious parties of their sects; at times, such politics erupt into violence, hence the oozing out of sectarian bloodshed.

The principal of Jamia Salfiya Faisalabad, Maulana Qari Yasin Zafar says “establishment of politico-religious organizations on the basis of sect is not right, and overwhelmingly madrassas are against sectarian violence.”

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One attempt to bring all sects under one umbrella is through Ittehad Tanzeemat Madaaris. ITMP argues that they are trying to create consensus in curriculum and system by promoting commonalities.

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Madrassa administrators realize that sectarianism is an alarming issue for them. It damages their cause of education. Many of them think that every sect should follow the proverb of “neither leaving one’s sect nor disturbing other’s.”<sup>10</sup>

Qari Muhammad Haneef Jalandhari, Principal Jamia Khairul Madaaris

Multan, wishes that “the system of education in religious seminaries should not be based on sects” but a long history of sects does not allow it in present days. Differences of opinion, he argued opens new debate; however, madrassa should avoid imparting education on sectarian lines.

One attempt to bring all sects under one umbrella is through Ittehad Tanzeemat Madaaris. ITMP argues that they are trying to create consensus in curriculum and system by promoting commonalities.

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It is rather external political actors who want to tap the existing manpower of these madrassas to their political ends. Madrassas, when affiliated with political and sectarian organizations, shape radical ideas among their students.

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## • Radicalization

On two grounds, some madrassas are deemed to be involved in promoting extremist and radical ideologies. One, the subject of “jihad” taught at

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<sup>10</sup> Author’s interview with Qari Yasin Zafar.



the madrassas stimulates the students to join jihadi outfits. Two, rigid political views set in intolerant attitude among the students.

Teaching about jihad doesn't necessarily translate into readying students for jihadi outfits. Madrassas deem teaching on jihad as obligatory in Islam.

When it comes to participating in jihad, one madrassa administrator argued that it is up to the state to declare jihad. "If everyone wage jihad on his own," he reasoned, "the country will plunge into anarchy."<sup>11</sup> Another administrator, Lahore's Jamia Naeemia agrees. "The army of the state is the only institution that can wage jihad with the permission of the state."<sup>12</sup> Many argued that there is no need of non-state actor to wage jihad.<sup>13</sup> Maulana Qari Hanif Jalandhary recommended that the Council of Islamic Ideology should guide the people regarding critical aspects of jihad in present circumstances.<sup>14</sup>

It is rather external political actors who want to tap the existing

manpower of these madrassas to their political ends. Madrassas, when affiliated with political and sectarian organizations, shape radical ideas among their students.

A study conducted by Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), an Islamabad-based independent think-tank, revealed that the political attitudes of madrassas align with the mainstream political behaviour. According to study, majority of madrassas have political affiliation, thereby denying the students the ability to tolerate other views (Rana, 2009). Many students join violent sectarian and militant outfits to fulfill their agenda. To overcome such intolerance, reconciliation among politico-religious parties can be opted for.

### **Registration and regulation of madrassas**

A key issue pertaining to madrassas is streamlining them. Some issues under this category include registration of madrassas, illegal

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<sup>11</sup>Author's interview with QariYasin Zafar.

<sup>12</sup>Author's interview with Dr.Raghib Naeemi, Principal Jamia Naeemia. Lahore. April 12th 2015.

<sup>13</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Maulana Abdul Malik, President of Rabita-tul-Madaaris. April 7th2015.

<sup>14</sup>Author's interview with Qari Haneef Jalandhary.

construction of mosques, and entry of foreign students.

- **Foreign funding**

Seminaries in Pakistan have been charged with furthering the agenda of their foreign donors. Because such donors espouse different sectarian ideologies, the seminaries they support too end up feeding sectarianism in Pakistan.

The recently-announced National Action Plan (NAP) attempts to overcome any gaps in financial regulations. The Foreign Office in Pakistan has clearly said that funding by private individuals and organizations to private entities through informal channels is being brought under tighter scrutiny to choke off any possibility of financing for terrorists and terrorist organizations” (Wasim and Syed, 2015).

According to government’s documents, during 2013-14, nearly 12 countries provided up to 300 million rupees to about 80 seminaries in

Pakistan. Moreover, it is not that funds are transferred by countries alone. Often, individuals or institutions from abroad send funds to madrassas, without any proper checkup, it is alleged.

Dr. Syed Muhammad Najafi, a Shia scholar, pointed out that according to the Shia jurisprudence, 5 percent of the whole wealth has to be collected from the (Shia) community and submitted to *mujtahid* for distribution among Shia madrassas and the needy people in the entire world.<sup>15</sup>

To the madrassa authorities, state intervention into their financial accounts is a redundant exercise. Maulana Qari Yasin Zafar says that the government is well-informed about foreign funding and donation. Few madrassas, out of thousands, receive foreign funds.<sup>16</sup> In any case, other administrators reasoned, they already submit their annual audit reports.<sup>17</sup>

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*“If a foreign country send donation, it should be come through government channel.*

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<sup>15</sup>Author’s telephonic interview with Dr. Syed Muhammad Najafi, Principal of Jamiatul Muntazir, Islamabad. April 3rd 2015.

<sup>16</sup>Author’s interview with Qari Yasin Zafar.

<sup>17</sup>Author’s interview with Qari Haneef Jalandhary.

Such funds can be easily tracked.”

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beneficiary of foreign funding” but without any “audit system”.<sup>19</sup>

As of the individual funding, Qari Muhammad Hanif Jalandhary stated that “philanthropists in Pakistan” are the major sources of income for madrassas. Yet, if overseas Pakistanis want to donate, they should, he said. A religious cleric said that foreign countries extend facilities related to health, education and food on ground of Islamic brotherhood through welfare institutions.

Mufti Muneebur Rehman calls that some mechanism for funding should be charted out and distributed among madrassas.<sup>18</sup> One such way was proposed by Qari Yasin. If a foreign country send donation, he said, it should be come through government channel. Such funds can be easily tracked.

Some of them think that the focus on foreign funding of madrassas is a play of anti-madrassa lobby. Qari argued that if the government wants to keep tabs on madrassas’ funds, similar rule should also be applied on non-governmental organizations, which, according to Qari, are “major

### • Registration

One issue is about “irregular” registration of madrassas. No proper mechanism of madrassa registration exists.

In the past, seminaries were registered as charity organizations under Societies Registration Act 1860. The registration requirement, however, was removed in 1990. The issue rose to prominence during Musharraf’s regime in 2000s.

Unregistered seminaries add into security problems, it is said.

At that time, madrassa authorities and government agreed to initiate a plan of registration and to conduct audit of accounts of madrassas through independent auditor firms. However, the process dragged on, partly because of government’s lack of will.

As of now, a large number are unregistered. The exact figure of madrassas is unknown. The figures

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<sup>18</sup>Author’s interview with Mufti Muneebur Rehman.

<sup>19</sup>Author’s interview with Qari Yasin Zafar.

quoted by five *wafaqs*, boards, are of the registered madrassas.

Only recently, in light of the National Action Plan (NAP), the government introduced a new pro-forma for madrassa registration. Madrassa authorities reject the form for its “illogical questions”.

They argue that registration should be a done in a proper way.<sup>20</sup> Madrassa administrators have never refused registration, argues Qari Muhammad Haneef Jalandhary.

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Only recently, in light of the National Action Plan, the government introduced a new pro-forma for madrassa registration. Madrassa authorities reject the form for its “illogical questions”.

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They point towards a process the madrassa authority and the government adopted in 2005. “We are ready to adopt that process”, Qari said, adding that if the “government wants to include new clause in the registration law, the madrassas are

ready to cooperate with the government.”<sup>21</sup>

Other schools of thought also pointed out that department of education should look into the registration matter as educational institutions are looked into.

- **Land grabbing and illegal construction**

Another issue is about the illegal construction of mosques and seminars, often by grabbing someone else’s land (Shah, et al., 2015). In Karachi, some mosques and madrassas got so much power in their communities that those institutes became major power brokers. In Islamabad, about 305 mosques/madrassas had been illegally constructed whereas 69 madrassas/mosques had “encroached upon, on average, 100 square yards each” (Asad, 2015).

Challenging these mosques and seminaries then become a touchy issue, thereby making such constructions more or less a permanent feature.

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<sup>20</sup>Author’s interview with Mufti Muneebur Rehman.

<sup>21</sup>Author’s interview with Qari Haneef Jalandhary.

In fact, when the government tried to release captured land the cleric occupied in the name of mosques and madrassas, seminaries administrators reacted strongly, terming the government's action as "anti-Islam".

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Authorities complain that the government has failed in formulating any mechanism ensuring admission of foreign students in religious seminaries.

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However, this is not to say that all clerics are into land grabbing. Instead, the major portion of clerics condemned the act of land grabbing. They argue that building mosques or madrassa at controversial land is prohibited in Islam.

- **Foreign students**

At one point of time, students from more than 64 countries including the United States, United Kingdom, India, China, Russia, and Afghanistan were enrolled in madrassas in Pakistan.

Prevailing security threats have forced the government to send back many foreign students to their native countries. To enroll foreign students, madrassas were supposed to obtain No-objection Certificates (NOCs) from foreign ministry. Many countries also grew reluctant in permitting their students to educate in Pakistani seminaries.

Over the years, their number has dwindled significantly.

Madrassa authorities demand that the government should treat foreign students of madrassa and of other educational institutes on equal footing. Dr. Raghbir Naeemi says that these days, the foreign students "seeking to get madrassa education prefer India instead of Pakistan" because of "strict policy" the government had adopted.<sup>22</sup>

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The government, in consultation with representatives of madrassa boards should evolve a strategy to enhance interaction among madrassas of different sects.

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<sup>22</sup>Author's interview with Dr. Raghbir Naeemi.

Authorities complain that the government has failed in formulating any mechanism ensuring admission of foreign students in religious seminaries. Qari Muhammad Haneef Jalandhari lauded that “it is an honour for the country to host foreign students, because after completion of education, foreign students serve as ambassadors of Pakistan in their respective countries.” He argued that the “*wafaqs* are ready to play their part for addressing reservations of foreign countries.”<sup>23</sup>

- **Curriculum**

When it comes to madrasa curriculum, the debate revolves around two issues: curriculum is not up to date to the requirements of modern era, and two, the text reeks badly of hate material, which often feed sectarianism and extremism.

The curriculum in madrassas, called as Dars-e-Nizami, comes with a long history in the subcontinent. The main subjects in the curriculum include the Quran, *hadith*, *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), Arabic language,

literature, rhetoric, logic and philosophy.

Even though the interpretations offered are sectarian, the curriculum per se doesn't directly indicate violence.

The government, in consultation with representatives of madrasa boards should evolve a strategy to enhance interaction among madrassas of different sects.

All madrasa boards have agreed to include modern subjects in curriculum in addition to religious education. They, however, demand that the government grant madrasa boards the status of other educational boards issuing other degrees. Beside this, they are jointly compiling a book on peace education; the book will be part of madrasa curriculum.<sup>24</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The government needs to come with a consistent policy towards madrassas. Madrasa authorities, in spite of their differences with the government, are ready to sort out the issue. To undertake reforms, the

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<sup>23</sup>Author's interview with Qari Haneef Jalandhary.

<sup>24</sup>Author's interview with Qari Yasin Zafar.

government should chart out a priority list of their security concerns

from madrassa; those lost can then be worked upon in consultation with madrassa administrators. The process of negotiation can be greatly facilitated, once the government stops leaving the impression of painting all madrassas with the same brush. To be sure, not all indulge in violence.

At the same time, madrassa administrators should be open to reforming themselves by transforming radical ideologies with more tolerant and peaceful ones. Even if deep-rooted sectarian divides may take time for complete elimination, a culture of intra-faith can produce at least some semblance of sectarian harmony. Madrassa authorities should strive to produce the minds who, after graduation, offer their best services to the state and society.

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## Debating drones

Drone operations in Pakistan's tribal areas continue to draw a wide range of debate. Even where their accuracy is less disputed, reliance on this technology is brought to notice on different grounds, like sovereignty, human rights, legal.

Strikingly, there also remains a spark of debate on the accuracy of the strikes, too. The next two papers tend to present the drone strikes from all these perspectives.

The first paper, by Asmatullah, presents a summary on the drone operations of different perspectives, including the American, the Pakistani, the human rights, and the locals. The second paper, Dr. Zeehsan's, aims to analyse accuracy of the strikes, by relying on his own unique database.



# Exploring the drone syndrome

*Asmatullah Wazir*

## Abstract

This essay captures the different angles through which the drone operations are approached in Pakistan. The paper takes note of almost all the players involved in the program: the United States, operating the program; Pakistan, which is at the receiving end of the strikes; tribesmen, whose area have received almost all drone strikes; and human rights advocate. The timing of drone strikes is also criticized often, for derailing Pakistan's attempt to lure militants to negotiating table.



# Exploring the drone syndrome

*Asmatullah Wazir*

## Setting the ground

As American invaded Afghanistan in late 2001, many Taliban and al-Qaeda fled across the border in Pakistan, to its bordering tribal areas. The areas' some 'hospitable' people and much 'hostile' terrain provided the escaping militants the much-needed breathing space. Soon, from there, they launched attacks on international troops in Afghanistan and against Pakistani state inside the country.

Hundreds of miles away, the United States had been monitoring the tribal areas, using drone technology, ever since the war started. In 2004, the U.S. used the same technology for killing a key militant. Since then, several drone attacks have been launched; while many militants have been killed, questions are also raised over the death of innocent civilian casualties.

During the Bush administration (2002-2008), drones operations

mostly fired in FATA at the "high-valued targets", the top militants like al-Qaeda's. The incoming Obama administration (2008) introduced the concept of 'signature strikes', which targets those who are concluded to be terrorists on the basis of their ground behaviours (Patel, 2012).

As to why the U.S. shifted the drone's usage from monitoring to striking, several explanations can be offered. It was then, in 2004, when American intelligence started pointing towards heightened militant activity inside Pakistani tribal areas. Simultaneously, the Afghan government raised their complaint bar against Pakistan for supporting Taliban. Reports about militants getting training in the area also trickled in national and international media (Abbas, 2014).

Yet strikingly, the first attack was wrongly claimed by Pakistani armed forces (Hudson, Owens, & Flannes, 2011). The attack was meant to pressurize President Musharraf into

taking decisive action against Taliban as well to counter the growing threat of militants from FATA.

The Taliban, on the ground, responded brutally. They went on a rampage, killing those tribesmen who, the Taliban thought, had spied for the Americans by pinpointing the location of Taliban fighters (Rashid, 2012). A tribesman with any sort of electronic chip was often killed.

### American perspective

Drone attacks in FATA, and elsewhere, remain an integral part of the U.S.'s counter-terrorism policy. They provide a ready-made solution of targeting enemies without risking personnel in the inhospitable of tribal areas.<sup>1</sup>

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta told AFP in February 2013 that drones are an "important part" of America's "operations against Al-Qaeda, not just in Pakistan, but also in Yemen, in Somalia and I think it ought to continue to be a tool we ought to use where necessary" (*Express Tribune*, 2013).

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Many in the U.S. administration deem drone strikes as legal and ethical. By allowing drone strikes, they argue, the U.S. president is doing his constitutional role of protecting the American nation from any imminent threat.

Drone attacks alone can't eliminate terrorism. Physical elimination of enemy is not the decisive step in combating terrorism, which requires discrediting the ideas of the militants. Extending proper rule of law such as thorough investigation and prosecution is more likely to be more damaging to what terrorists stand for (Abbas, 2014).

The drone strikes that target hard-core terrorists can be effective, provided they are supported by

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<sup>1</sup> Author's interview with Dr Qibla Ayaz, ex-vice chancellor of the University of Peshawar. June 3rd 2013.

parallel public relations exercise to challenge the ideas projected by those terrorists

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Drone attacks alone can't eliminate terrorism. Physical elimination of enemy is not the decisive step in combating terrorism, which requires discrediting the ideas of the militants.

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### Pakistani perspective

Pakistan opposes American drone strikes in its territory, deeming them as violation of its sovereignty.

There is ample evidence suggesting tacit approval by Pakistani authorities of the drone attacks. It was even reported that Pakistan has provided two of its airbases to the USA for drone operations (ICG, 2013). Some officials may, too, appear confused on whether or not to support the drone attacks against key militants. Yet, no formal bilateral agreement, allowing Americans drones in FATA, has surfaced (LUD, 2012).

At the same time, Pakistan has also demanded transfer of drone technology to Pakistan, so that, it is

argued, its own forces can strike out militants, without evoking strong resistance from the people (*Dawn*, 2010).

### The human rights perspective

Several human rights groups have expressed legal concerns over drone attacks. The UN's special rapporteur on human rights, Ben Emmerson, has said that drone strikes on Pakistani soil are a violation of the country's sovereignty and as such illegal (*The News*, 2013). Similarly, according to another special rapporteur, on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, drones are a major challenge to the system of International law (Abbas, 2014).

Rights bodies have called upon the United States administration to ensure that the drone strikes are transparent, accountable, and legal. Questioning the secrecy surrounding the whole program, watchdogs have demanded from the U.S. Department of Justice "the memorandum", that outlines on what legal grounds drones carry out target killing and "signature strike", the behaviour hinted to be that of a terrorist.

The U.S. has been asked to ensure that proper procedures, in compliance with international law,

are followed for selecting a target, especially in case of signature strikes, and to investigate into civilian deaths and injuries (ICG, 2013).

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Rights bodies have called upon the United States administration to ensure that the drone strikes are transparent, accountable, and legal.

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### Contradictory claims

According to The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, from 2004 to 2013, the casualties from drone strikes fell in the range of 2520 to 3621, of which 416 to 948 people were civilians. Similarly, a recent report published by Amnesty International, an international human rights organization, revealed that most of the drone victims were non-combatants. AI even reckoned that some of the drone strikes in Pakistan constitute as war crime. Meanwhile, Pakistan's defence ministry too released its estimates of casualties from drones: since 2008, 38% of the

deaths were those of civilians; the rest were militants.

A local journalist questioned the credibility of different surveys on drone attacks in North Waziristan where the situation is "quite fluid". "In the absence of government writ there," he argued, "the possibility of conducting credible survey is simply possible", further adding that "even if one does take place, the results will be influenced by the fog of fear factor". He believed that "most of surveys are either bogus or conducted under the patronage of one or the other actor of this conflict, which means tilted and biased output."<sup>2</sup>

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"I consider drones as a main hurdle in the way of any peaceful settlement as dialogue process has always been sabotaged under well planned agenda." a tribal elder.

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Another local argued on similar lines, "Usually the sites of drone attacks are immediately cordoned off by the

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<sup>2</sup> Author's interview with Umer Daraz, a local journalist in North Waziristan. March 2013.



militants, and access is denied to everyone.”<sup>3</sup>

## Spoilers

Pakistan has also voiced its concerns on the timing of some of the drone strikes, which, Pakistan argues, spoiled the country’s efforts in resolving differences with the militants.

Two recent cases in point are Waliur-Rehman and Hakimullah Mehsud, two top leaders of anti-Pakistan Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP) who were eliminated at the time, when Pakistani state was reaching out to them to hammer out a peace deal. According to Ziaur Rehman, who has extensively reported the conflict in FATA, “Ample time and hectic efforts are needed to establish any contact with such leaders. These include initiation of trust-building measure to create conducive environment, for kick-starting any dialogue process. But, with the elimination of such leaders/commanders, all efforts go in van, and the process would have to start from the scratch again.”<sup>4</sup>

Malik Khan Marjan Wazir, a *malik* (tribal elder) from the troubled North Waziristan and patron of Tribal Grand Alliance, also echoes those concerns. “I consider drones as a main hurdle in the way of any peaceful settlement as dialogue process has always been sabotaged under well planned agenda,” he said.<sup>5</sup>

The very first drone strike, in June 2004, targeted Nek Muhammad Wazir, the leader of the inchoate Taliban, who had, only two months earlier, signed a cease-fire agreement with Pakistan. For a while, Pakistan claimed the attack. Resultantly, the agreement soon fell apart (Ahmed, 2013).

Some argue that even peace building efforts between Pakistan and Afghanistan hits a toll from drones. Raza Shah, a peace building expert, whose institution Sustainable Peace and Development Organization runs dialogue between civil societies of Pakistan and Afghanistan, agrees, “drones are indeed playing the role of active spoiler in this whole equation between ANSA and the government of Pakistan.”

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<sup>3</sup>S. Dawar’s interview with a local tribesman W. K. Wazir. March 11th 2013.

<sup>4</sup>Author’s interview with Ziaur Rehman. February 12th 2015.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with the author. January 27th 2015.

“Unfortunately, we don’t have any control over it. And having no control means no public ownership,” he says.<sup>6</sup>

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Another local argued on similar lines, “Usually the sites of drone attacks are immediately cordoned off by the militants, and access is denied to everyone.”

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### What do people say?

Public opinion in the FATA seems divided on the issue of drone attacks. According to a local from Miramshah, headquarter of North Waziristan, “there is sizable portion of population especially in North Waziristan who approves of drones and call them as *Ababeel*,<sup>7</sup> out of their support for the strike. Yet there is a section of society within tribal belt, who believes otherwise. They believe that the harm inflicted by drones to the local population, be it psychological, social or economic it is met with reduce support for the

Pakistan Army and increase support of the Taliban be that Afghan or Pakistani version of Taliban”.

### The tribal factor

Some argue that the tribal of FATA who have the element of revenge in their bloods always reacted to the drone attacks for which the Pakistani government took responsibility. As a reaction, the tribesmen took revenge on anything they thought represented the government.

### Impact

Residents, hunted by continuous risk of death, have developed serious levels of stress. Notable families often face frustration. A journalist said about this dilemma:

“Being the elders, they can’t refuse stay to TTP members on account of Pashtun Wali, the Pashtun code of conduct; at the same time, they are wary of the fact that if, God forbid, they are targeted by a drone strike, they will have to face the

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<sup>6</sup>Interview with the author. November 2nd 2013.

<sup>7</sup> According to the Quran (105:1-5), God sent *Ababeel* (swarms of flying creatures) who pelted the owners of the Elephant with stones and baked clay and made them like green crops devoured (by

cattle). The exegesis writers say the reference of the owners of the Elephant is to army of Abrahah Ashram, the Abyssinian viceroy, who led a big expedition against Makkah to destroy the Ka'bah around 570 A.C.

consequences from both the government for providing shelter to the commanders and from the TTP who may suspect them for spying. We are caught between the devil and the deep sea”.<sup>8</sup>

The mobility of tribesmen has also been restricted due to drones. Now, they prefer to avoid gatherings such as weddings, funerals and the jirgas, the tribal way of conflict resolution

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“I consider drones as a main hurdle in the way of any peaceful settlement as dialogue process has always been sabotaged under well planned agenda,” he said.

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## Conclusion

The value of drones for intelligence and surveillance purposes is undisputed. In war zones, drones can support ground operations in significant, often decisive, ways.

However, what remains debatable is their seemingly-unilateral use as a counterterrorism instrument in theaters not declared as war zones. Resultantly, people of the tribal area seem stuck between the war of technology and ideology. On the one side are drones from the sky; on the other side are militants on the ground. However, people do support the strikes for killing militants.

But, by not taking on board completely the sovereign state where these drone strikes are targeted, and lacking transparency over the nature of attacks, question marks will be raised every now and then.

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<sup>8</sup> S. Dawar’s interview with W. K. Wazir.

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# Demystifying the drone operations in Pakistan

*Zeeshan-ul-Hassan Usmani*

## Abstract

This paper studies the accuracy of the drone operations in the tribal areas. The author has developed his own unique database, after collecting the data from publicly-available news sources, government's periodic information releases about the drone incidents, summary report on drone strikes in national parliaments, interviews of the locals in drone affected areas of FATA, think tank analyses, personal contacts with the media, law enforcement agencies, and political agents in the tribal regions. Dataset is publicly available on Pakistan Body Count (PBC) website. The paper provides a detailed data analysis on the numbers of drone strikes and fatalities in the tribal area of Pakistan, background and history of drone strikes in FATA, and reveals the most authenticate database on drone strikes in Pakistan.



# Demystifying the drone operations in Pakistan

*Zeeshan-ul-Hassan Usmani*

## Introduction

The Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) of Pakistan is an autonomous region controlled by the Federal government and is located on the border with Afghanistan. This region has a historical importance as many invaders passed through here to reach the Indian subcontinent. During the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, FATA was used as training ground for the mujahedeen fighting in Afghanistan. However, after the defeat of the Soviets the region became oblivious to the world for some time.

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Critics argue that drones kill without trial and deny justice to the affected civilians

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It was in 2001, after the attack on World Trade Centre and the ensuing war on terror, that the importance of FATA was highlighted again. The border between Pakistan and

Afghanistan is very porous and not completely manned by the military. When the US offensive against the Taliban intensified, many Al-Qaeda and Taliban militants infiltrated into Pakistan through the porous border. The allied forces could not follow these elements inside Pakistani territory and they kept pressurizing the Pakistani government to do more operations against the militants. The Pakistani military responded by conducting operations within the tribal areas but the US and the allied forces were not satisfied by these efforts. To counter this problem of cross border infiltration of terrorists, the US initiated its drone strikes in FATA in 2004 to eliminate some of the high profile terrorists. It is not clear whether there was any deal on this issue between the US and the Pakistani government but Pulitzer prize-winning journalist, Mark Mazetti wrote that the program started as a result of deal between Pakistan and United States (Mazetti, 2013: 108-109). The drone strikes might have achieved some of the

objectives of the US, but it has raised a number of ethical and legal issues both for Pakistan and the US. Critics argue that drones kill without trial and deny justice to the affected civilians (CCC, 2012).

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To counter this problem of cross border infiltration of terrorists, the US initiated its drone strikes in FATA in 2004 to eliminate some of the high profile terrorists.

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number of people killed by it. The paper also calculates how many victims have died on average in a single drone strike as well as what percentages of attacks have hit women and children.

### Brief history

Before analyzing the data, to find the reasons for increased drone strikes in Pakistan, a brief overview of the war on terror in Afghanistan and the adjoining tribal areas of Pakistan will help understand the issue. The



**Figure 1:** Map of the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan

This paper analyses the frequency of drone strikes in Pakistan and the

attacks on World Trade Centre in 2001 led to the US invasion of



Afghanistan, and the war on terror started. When Mullah Omar turned down the U.S request to hand over Arab Mujahidin after 9/11, President George W. Bush declared no distinction between the Afghan Taliban and Al-Qaeda members, vowing to combat them both without discretion (CCC, 2012). Operation Enduring Freedom started on October 7th 2001, and by November 2001, the United States had taken over Mazar-e-Sharif in the north of Afghanistan – a holy place for the members of Al-Qaeda and Taliban – with the assistance of Uzbek fighters (New America Foundation, 2015). The Northern Alliance took over Kabul a few days later.

As the allied forces tightened their circle, Osama bin Laden had no choice but to retreat towards Pakistan's border. The United States knew about his presence in Tora Bora, but the allied forces decided to rely on the Pashtun tribes to locate bin Laden and kill or apprehend him. This strategy was not successful. The Afghan Pashtuns played a double game and accepted money offered by Arabs fighters as well, to let bin Laden and his exhausted affiliates trickle into Pakistan (Serle and Ross, 2014). The Pakistani tribesmen were sympathetic towards the people crossing the border. Apart from

being obliged by *melmastia* (a Pashtun code for hosting guests with honor), they shared the same experience of the struggle against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s, which enhanced their personal bond.

The United States pressurized Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to apprehend members of Al-Qaeda and Taliban crossing the border, and the Pakistan military began a ground offensive in October 2003. A dozen gunship helicopters airlifted 2,500 commandoes into South Waziristan (TBIJ, 2013). This was the first time in the history of Pakistan that the military intervened in the tribal areas. The *mashars* (tribal elders) reprimanded the army, emphasizing that any operation in Waziristan would be equated to war against Pashtuns (TBIJ, 2014).

Nek Muhammad, a former mujahid in Afghan Jihad, surfaced as the militant's leader to avenge Pakistan military operation in FATA in 2003. After two assassination attempts on President Musharraf, Pakistan's military decided to attack Muhammad's hometown Kalusha in Waziristan in March 2004. The military offensive followed a truce between the military and Nek

Muhammad (Rt.com, 2014) known as the Shakai peace treaty (Shah, 2013). This treaty aimed to have a ceasefire between the militants and the government. Nek Muhammad was killed shortly after the signing of the treaty in a US drone strike in June 2004. Muhammad's death near Wana in South Waziristan was the first known assassination in the tribal areas by use of armed drones.

In 2006, the government of Pakistan signed a pact – the Waziristan Accord – with the Taliban and Waziri tribal elders in North Waziristan. However, the pact did not stop the

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Media reports leave a room of ambiguity on numerical details.

Several times, words like “many” and “several” are used to describe the number of people killed or wounded. Even if the media releases the figures of casualties obtained from government sources, it takes a long time to ascertain the veracity of the government information.

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militants from expanding their activities.

Many militant leaders emerged later on. Baitullah Mehsud was another important Taliban commander in the FATA region. The United States continued to target terrorist networks in Afghanistan and the tribal areas of Pakistan. Mehsud was also killed later on in a US drone strike.

### **The number game**

Several independent organizations maintain databases that document casualties from the drone attacks in Pakistan's tribal areas. According to the New America Foundation, a U.S. think tank, there have been a total of 370 strikes from 2004 to 2013, killing between 2,080 to 3,428 people, out of which 258 to 307 are marked as civilians, 1,623 to 2,787 as militants, and 199 to 334 remain unknown (New America Foundation, 2015). The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ) reported 383 drone strikes for almost the same period (2004-April 2014). TBIJ report shows

2,296 to 3,719 people were killed, in which 416 to 957 were civilians and included 168 to 202 as children (Serle and Ross, 2014).

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The leaked Pakistani government's report was severely criticised for being not accurate and many organizations presented proofs of civilian casualties. The ministry's top officials retracted their earlier statement, terming it "wrong and fabricated"

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TBIJ also received leaked copy of the Pakistani government's document on drone strikes. This document recorded figures on drone strikes from early 2006 to September 2013 as reported by local political agents (FATA's top administrative officers) (TBIJ, 2014). Although the TBIJ stated that the casualties data in the leaked government report are "broadly similar" to TBIJ's own findings, as discussed above, the government document did not carry any record for the entire year of 2007 and for civilian casualties after 2008 (Rt.com, 2014). The document, therefore, didn't cover some strikes which got worldwide publicity, like the one that caused the death of Manana Bibi a 68 year old woman in the tribal areas of Pakistan (Shah, 2013).

Pakistani officials refused to verify the figures in the leaked document (Behn, 2013). Amnesty International's multiple requests to the representatives of the Pakistani government for information about the strikes have remained unanswered (Amnesty International, 2013:63). In March 2013, Ben Emmerson, UN's special rapporteur on human rights and counter terrorism, reported that Pakistan had confirmed the death of 400 civilians from the drone strikes and another 200 casualties were non-combatants (UN-OHCHR, 2013). Later, in October 2013, Pakistan's defence ministry submitted a report to the parliament, claiming that from 2008 to 2013, the number of civilians killed in drone strikes was 67. The report acknowledged 317 strikes during that time period. Moreover, it claimed that no civilian died of the strikes after 2012. This report was severely criticised for being not accurate and many organizations presented proofs of civilian casualties. The ministry's top officials retracted their earlier statement, terming it "wrong and fabricated" (Noorani, 2013).

## **Data analysis**

The U.S. drone strikes have mostly targeted sites in Pakistan's tribal areas located on the border with Afghanistan. The identity of those killed and injured in the drone strikes remains contested. To justify the drone strikes, US consider all victims as guilty until proven innocent. The database used for this study makes a reverse assumption that all victims of the drones are innocent until proven guilty.

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Later, in October 2013, Pakistan's defence ministry submitted a report to the parliament, claiming that from 2008 to 2013, the number of civilians killed in drone strikes was 67.

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It is certainly difficult to ascertain the exact number of casualties in FATA because media does not have easy access to the region and the reports of the government officials also seem unreliable. Media reports leave a room of ambiguity on numerical details. Several times, words like "many" and "several" are used to describe the number of people killed or wounded. Even if the media releases the figures of casualties

obtained from government sources, it takes a long time to ascertain the veracity of the government information. The casualty figures are confirmed later by database administrator for PBC after interviewing the locals, government administrators, checking out nearby health facilities or "medical-aid houses" for injured victims of drone strikes, tribesmen, and political agents. For, those who get injured in a drone strike and are under treatment but die later on are still considered among the injured. This makes the fatality database less accurate as it is not updated for those who die much later after the drone strike was conducted. The database prepared by the administrator and used for this study, takes into account the people who get injured in a drone strike and die much later. This makes the database more comprehensive and is much larger in size as compared to other publically available datasets.

Media reports about the drone strikes may be biased at times. If a drone strike kills a large number of people, the media may report fewer casualties due to pressure from both national government and international actors involved. In extreme cases the reports may not even be published. Media in

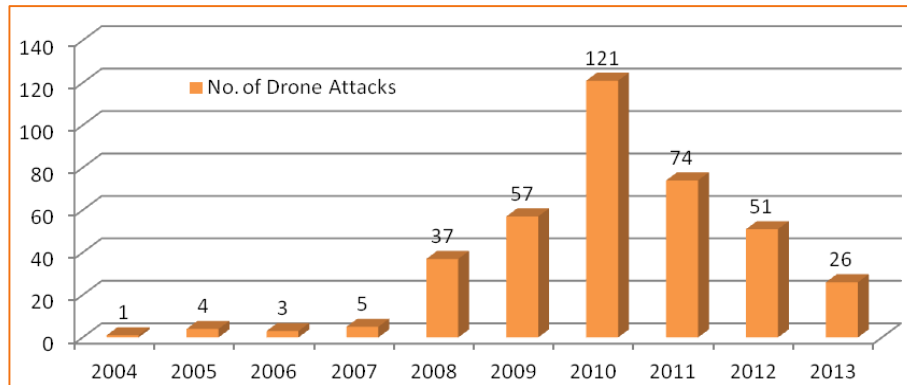
Pakistan has not matured as compared to the media in the developed countries and is also not completely independent. On the other hand, if a strike killed more foreign miscreants than local miscreants few would conceal the details of such a strike. Parsing through these biases is a big challenge in collecting the exact numbers of casualties. It is, therefore, necessary to make sure that diverse sources are explored, beyond mere reliance on media reports.

FATA is a male-dominated society and women are not allowed to interact with outsiders. Due to this reason the PBC database could not document a few cases, especially of pregnant women, who were reportedly killed or injured in a drone strike. Investigating those cases in the tribal region was difficult due to cultural sensitivity and norms

surrounding female members of the family.

A detailed analysis of the data of drone strikes in Pakistan as provided by the Pakistan Body Count (<http://www.pakistanbodycount.org>) was conducted which revealed very interesting facts. It is fascinating to see how data can reveal facts which otherwise would be oblivious to the world.

Figure 2 shows the annual frequency of attacks each year for the period 2004 to 2013. According to author's database (PBC), there were 379 drone strikes in Pakistan from 2004 to 2013 which killed 3,597 people and injured 1,357 others. A single drone strike claimed the lives of 10 people on average. Around 13% of the strikes have hit women and children. Almost 97% of the total strikes that our database recorded occurred from



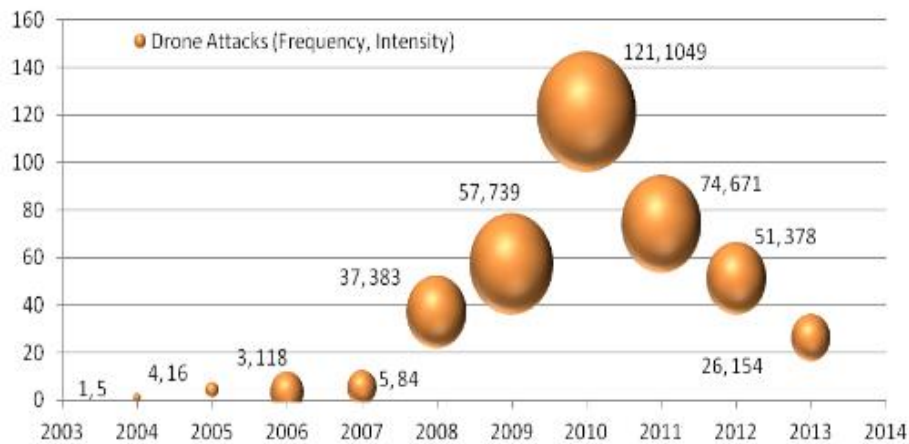
**Figure 2:** Annual Frequency: Number of Drone Attacks (2004 - 2013)

2008 to 2013. On average, a drone strike occurred every sixth day in those six years (2008-2013). In 2010 alone, 121 drone strikes occurred, the highest in any year, with a drone strike every third day. Very few attacks were launched in the first four years of the drone operation from 2004 to 2007.

Figure 3 shows the frequency of drone strikes along with their intensity (the size of the bubble represents the number of people killed in each year), for each year since 2004. It can be observed that the drone strikes increased in frequency and intensity after 2008

Figure 4 demonstrates the headcount for the dead and the injured. The death to injured ratio in this drone war has been 2.5:1. From 2008 to 2010

on average 720 people died in 72 strikes each year. The frequency and intensity decreased later on from 2011 to 2013. On average 400 people died in 50 strikes each year during this period. 2010 can be termed as the deadliest year of drone strikes in FATA. Besides recording the highest frequency of attacks, 2010 also witnessed the highest intensity of casualties. More than 1000 people died, with an average of 3 deaths per strike in that year. The figure also shows that there was a large number of injured in all the drone strikes since 2008. A large number of these injured might have died after a few days but most of the public databases about drone strikes do not count those.



**Figure 3:** Drone Attacks: Frequency and Intensity (2004 - 2013)

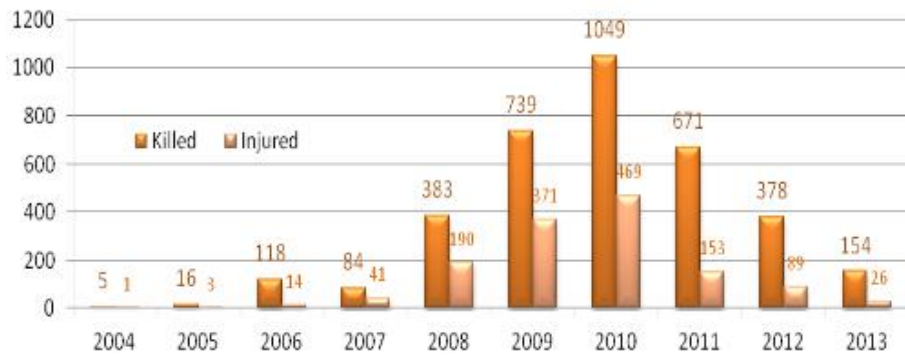


Figure 4: Killed vs. Injured (2004- 2013)

The effectiveness of the drone strikes can be evaluated from the different categories of people that were killed in these strikes. Figure 5 shows different categories of people killed in drone strikes in Pakistan since 2004. Of the total people killed so far, 2,604 were civilians accounting for 72% of the total casualties. Only 2% of the drone strike casualties were members of the Al-Qaeda outfit, while 15% of the targeted militants fall in the “Taliban” category.

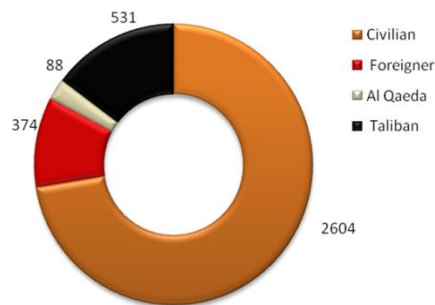
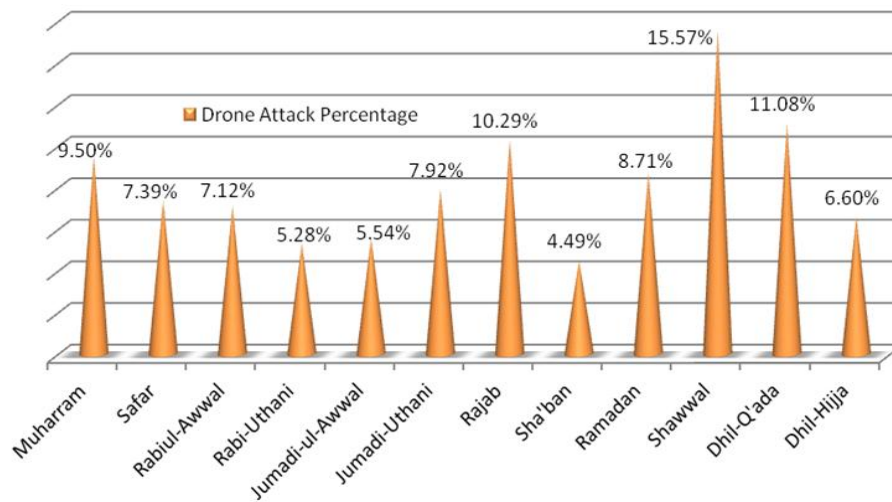


Figure 5: Drone Targets (2004- 2013)

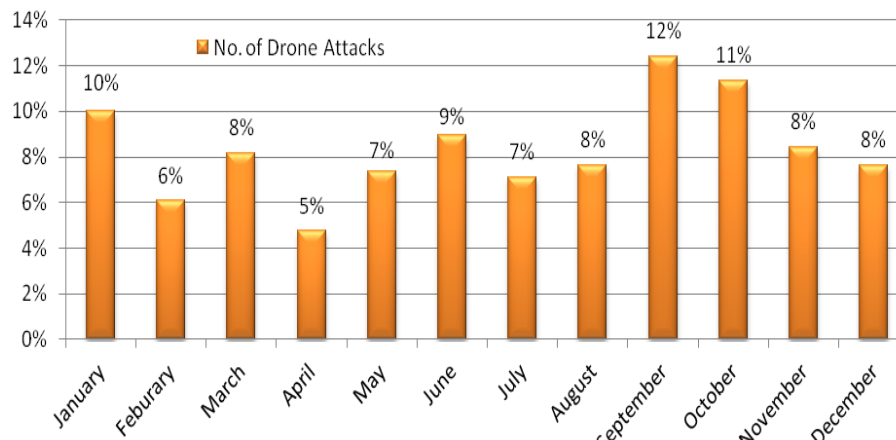
Figure 6 shows the percentage distribution of drone strikes in Islamic months. The statistics of the drone strikes data reveal another interesting fact. The Islamic month of *Shawwal* witnessed the highest number of drone strikes, constituting approximately 16% of the total. The beginning of *Shawwal* is marked with the biggest Islamic festival of the year, Eid-ul-Fitr, in which congregational prayers are offered and visits paid to each other’s houses. It could not be a mere coincidence that such high number of strikes was conducted by chance during a particular Islamic month. It was probably due to the religious festivities that there was more movement of suspected terrorists as they would come out of their hiding places and visit family and friends.



**Figure 6:** Percentage of Attacks by Islamic Months (2004- 2013)

Figure 7 provides the frequency of drone strikes according to the Gregorian calendar. The highest number of drone strikes occurred in September, constituting up to 12% of the total strikes. The month of April, on the other hand, has seen least

strikes, followed by February and July. The pattern seems cyclical with attacks increasing after every few months. When it comes to days, nearly 20% of the strikes have been on Fridays as shown in Figure 8 below. Most of the drone strikes were



**Figure 7:** Frequency of Attacks by Gregorian Months (2004- 2013)



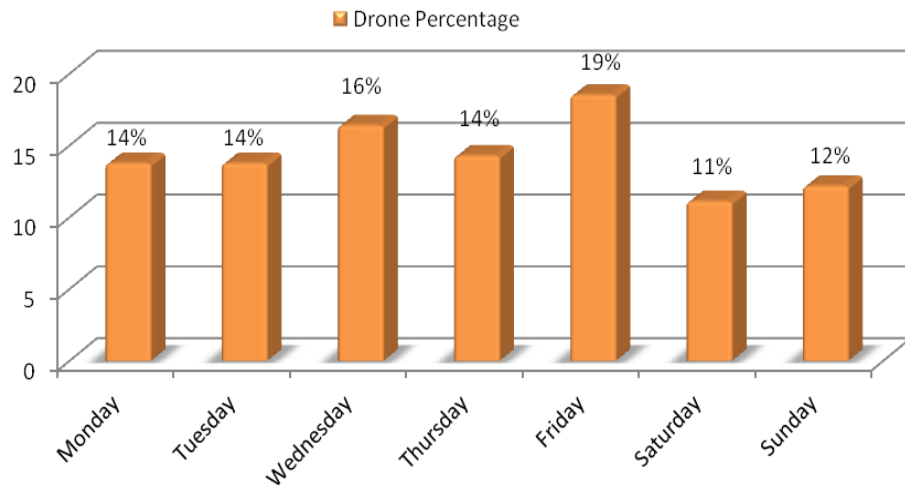


Figure 8: Percentage of Attacks by Weekdays (2004- 2013)

on Fridays indicates that the militants might have been travelling to mosques to offer prayers when they were targeted.

Almost 84% of the total attacks between 2004 and 2013, took place from August 2008 to August 2012. Approximately 85% of the total deaths from drone strikes were recorded in this time span. 85% of the total civilian deaths were also witnessed in this time period, going all the way till the end of 2013. What makes this period unique is the occurrence of multiple attacks on a single day irrespective of their target sites. Nearly 30% of the attacks from Aug. 2008 to Aug. 2012 have been multiple ones. Interestingly, multiple attacks were witnessed only during this time period. Before August 2008

and after August 2012, no single multiple-attack was carried out. These multiple attacks claimed 21% of the total deaths and 20% of the total injured. Out of every 10 deaths of multiple attacks, 8 were civilians; such attacks could take out two Al-Qaeda militants only.

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Almost 84% of the total attacks between 2004 and 2013, took place from August 2008 to August 2012.

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In September 2010, a cluster of drone strikes was carried out. In less than thirty days 24 attacks were carried out with 80% of the total in North Waziristan Agency. Half of cluster attacks were multiple attacks. In the

clusters attacks, 10 Taliban militants and 138 civilians died, accounting for 5% of the total civilian deaths. . This again highlights the priority of the US government to eradicate terrorist networks in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The data shows that the drone strike intensified and peaked in 2010 and a year later US forces killed OBL. The drone strikes reduced after 2011. As the top target was eliminated, there was no need to conduct multiple strikes. However data suggested that the civilian casualties were much higher as compared to the official figures.

### **The cost**

The death and injury of civilians in the drone strikes has devastating effects on the society. Injuries of the survivors of drone attacks are very severe, mostly resulting in loss of limbs. This is not only painful for the people but it incapacitates the person for life. The tribal society in FATA has a joint family system. In most cases there is only one male bread earner of the family. Injury of civilians in drone strikes incapacitates the only bread earner in the family. Pakistan is not the best place for the handicapped, particularly the tribal areas where people still live a traditional life

without electricity, roads and other basic amenities of life.

A walk out for work in the agricultural fields may require navigating through twisty muddy tracks as FATA has mostly a mountainous terrain. A person with a leg amputation in FATA cannot even use the regular wheel chair, go to school or hospital, or even use a toilet on his own. And this makes life of an amputee in FATA difficult inside the house as well as outside it. Disability of the primary bread winner can change the course of life for an entire family, since most of the jobs in a village require physical exertion.

The drone attacks have left the tribal society devastated and angry. A lot of fear is observed in the local communities, which is even highlighted by an American scholar who wrote about children getting hysterical from the buzzing sound of drones in FATA (Kugelman, 2012).

### **Conclusion**

This paper analysed the data about drone strikes in the tribal areas of Pakistan. The author spent a lot of time in interviewing people in the tribal area, government officials and media persons to come up with a unique database of drones strike

casualties. The drone strikes started in 2004 and peaked in 2010 killing thousands of people. This paper has tried to highlight that the number of civilians killed in the drone strikes is much higher than what is claimed by the authorities.

Due to these killings hatred has been created against the US in the region. Some hint that people who lost dear ones and their only bread earners

may have joined the ranks of the terrorists, as they pay them a decent monthly stipend and other facilities. The drone strikes have also created problems for the Pakistani government as the terrorists also attack its people and installations. Pakistan is fighting the war on terror on its home territory and has given a lot of sacrifices. Pakistan government has condemned the drone strikes as violation of its sovereignty.

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## APPENDIX A:

### Definitions

The following terms are defined by reviewing the journalism norms practiced in the areas affected by drone strikes, and internationally agreed definitions, including the ones that are mentioned in the UN charter on human rights.

*Civilian:* A person not on active duty in the armed services or police or firefighting force, and also not belonging to or working for any terrorist or anti-government organization

*Foreigner:* Any person belonging to or owing allegiance to a foreign country. In the scope of this text, the category of terrorist supersedes the category of foreigner; a foreigner terrorist will be listed as a terrorist. Therefore, a foreigner is any non-combatant person belonging to a foreign country. It includes settlers, like Afghans (who usually have kith and kin in FATA), as well as others who crossed the border before, during or after the US Invasion of Afghanistan, or the Soviet war.

*Terrorist:* A person who is against a government, or a particular sect, ideology, or group, and uses terrorism in the pursuit of political aims (He/she can be a local or a foreigner).

*Taliban:* A person affiliated to any of Taliban's militia groups engaged in fighting in Afghanistan and/or Pakistan against the government (He/she can be associated with any sister groups like Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), TTP-Jandullah, Jamaatul Ahrar, Ansarul Mujahidin, Haqqani group, Fedayeen al-Islam, Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi etc)

*Injured:* A person with a physical damage to the body caused or aggravated by a drone strike (Injuries can be direct by blast waves and shrapnel or can be in-direct due to building collapse or stampede while rushing from the scene of the attack)

### *Definitions*

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*Killed:* The act of termination of life right then, or later, due to primary, secondary, or tertiary injuries caused by a drone strike

*Al Qaeda:* A global militant group founded by Osama Bin Laden to fight against the government for political gains

*Children:* In the scope of this text, persons below the age of 12 are considered children

## BACKGROUND

### The mystery of Jundullah

*Farhan Zahid and Andrew McGregor*

#### Abstract

This essay attempts to understand Jundullah, a militant organization, which, despite some high-profile attacks, remain enigma for analysts. For, what is striking about Jundullah, the authors of the essay note, is the group's propensity to claims attacks, which are carried out by other groups. The article narrates the history of Jundullah by exploring the histories of the top leaders of the group. Starting off as a radical outfit by ambitious students, the group, despite several crackdowns, has evolved into a virulent anti-Shia militant outfit, eager to make mark on international scene by allying with the Islamic State. The article is based mostly on extensive media monitoring, along with some interviews for information verification purposes.





## BACKGROUND

# The mystery of Jundullah

*Farhan Zahid and Andrew McGregor*

### Introduction

Jundullah (Army of Allah), a Pakistani terrorist outfit, proclaimed its allegiance to the Islamic State in November 2014. Not much is shared as to what will be impact of this development on this broad militant landscape in Pakistan. Part of the confusion on Jundullah emanates from the secretive nature of this entity. Investigators recently found that some of the attacks claims made by Jundullah were wrong. Yet, security officials have traced the same group's involvement in wide-range of terrorist activities in Karachi, since 2004.

To understand the nature of Jundullah, it is important to revisit its different historical phases. This essay

tries to uncover the shred of that secrecy.

Jundullah is closely tied to the wider network of al-Qaeda core based in Pakistani cities and tribal areas as well as Sunni extremist groups, which have largely pledged allegiance (*bay'a*) to al-Qaeda core.<sup>1</sup>

Contrary to popular commentary, Jundullah is not related to another organization by the same name, the Iran-based Jundullah – a Sunni militant group focused on greater autonomy for Sunni community in Iranian Sistan-Baluchistan province, and also present in areas of Pakistani Balochistan bordering on Iran. The latter's founder Abdul Malik Regi was executed in Iran in 2010 and his

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<sup>1</sup> Punjabi Taliban is a term used to identify Taliban and Al-Qaeda-linked groups of Pakistani origin and having a non-Pashtun membership in their organizations. Most of the Punjabi Taliban are former Kashmiri jihadis

previously involved in Islamist insurgency in Indian Kashmir, sectarian jihadis based in Pakistan, and former Punjabi veterans of Afghan War (1979-89) (Abbas, 2009).

brother arrested in Pakistan in 2013 (*The News*, 2014).

## Genesis

The founding members of Jundullah were once part of the student wing of a Pakistani Islamist political party, Jamaat-e-Islami (Misra and Clarke, 2012: 82). The group was formed in Karachi in 2003. What eventually became Jundullah was initially comprised of no more than 20 students, some of whom have fought in Kashmir.

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These members resented Pakistan's apparent policy shift after 9/11. Readily joining the U.S.-led war against terror, Pakistan helped arrest many foreign fighters from Pakistan and launched a military operation in the country's tribal areas. Some Islamists deemed the shift a sell-out, justifying attacks against the state of Pakistan.

The group made headlines in June 2004, when it launched its most-damaging attack, against Corps Commander of Karachi, Lieutenant General Ahsan Saleem Hayat, who was then tipped as General Musharraf's military heir. Jundullah hit the cavalcade of General Hayat near his official residence, killing 11 people including seven military personnel, two off-duty policemen and two passers-by. General Hayat barely survived the attack.

The attack on General Ahsan was one of the early-day attacks on Pakistan. In hindsight, it appears that the country was not ready against such backlash. The attack, and many others in that year, realized upon the security high ups that the jihadi community in Pakistan had revolted against the state and its policies. And that, a full-fledged law enforcement strategy was required to deal with the plethora of jihadi outfits.

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Jundullah is tied to al-Qaeda network based in Pakistani cities and tribal areas as well as Sunni extremist groups, which have largely pledged allegiance (*bay'a*) to al-Qaeda core.

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### **Breakaway faction?**

Some of Jundullah's early members were once part of Jamaat's student wing, Islami Jamiat Talaba.<sup>2</sup> Others were part of Kashmir-jihadi outfits. It is pertinent to note that Jamaat itself had played active role during the Afghan War (1979 – 89) and later in Kashmir insurgency.<sup>3</sup>

Like its parent JI, the initial-days Jundullah had an urban, middle-class base in the metropolitan cities of Pakistan. Some were brought up in strongly religious homes. Incidentally, key al-Qaeda figures like Khalid Sheikh Muhammad were even arrested from the houses of JI's members based in urban areas, like Rawalpindi in KSM's case.

Similarly, the Jamaat-e-Islami too disliked Pakistan's policy shift after 9/11. The party had already protested nationwide against American invasion of Afghanistan.

Given that members of the early-days Jundullah were once associated with the JI, it could be argued that the formative ideology of the group was

inspired by the work of Jamaat, not least its founder Maulana Maududi. Often singled out for his pioneering role, Maududi argued that the purity of Islam is threatened in the contemporary era, which, he termed, has reverted to the stage of *jahiliya*, the pre-Islamic state of ignorance. While Jamaat has, historically, largely remained political in nature, Jundullah seems to be an offshoot of those who were disappointed by the slow change through democratic process.

But these don't suggest that Jamaat had any direct link with the militant outfit. The parent JI has remained mostly a political force – albeit not winning more than 4 seats in the 300-plus legislature. Yet, it enjoys cadre-wise membership across the country. Jundullah, from early on, was a militant outfit.

### **Ata ur Rehman: the ring leader**

Jundullah was first led by Ata ur Rehman aka Naeem Bukhari, a student of the Statistics Department at the University of Karachi

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<sup>2</sup>One of the authors' discussion with a senior police official in Karachi. November 30th 2014.

<sup>3</sup>JIBacked Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islam movement during the war against

the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, while JI's armed wing, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, was heavily involved in the Indian Kashmir insurgency (SATP, 2015).

(Rediff.com, 2004), where he joined Jamaat-e-Islami's student wing, Islami Jamiat Talaba.

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Later on, he moved to Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), a Kashmiri Islamist group based in Pakistan. In fact, it was as HuM's member that he received jihadi training at a camp in Afghanistan in late 1990s (Chishti, 2014a). These camps were run by al-Qaeda. But because of its strong bond with al-Qaeda and Taliban, which ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, HuM established number of jihadi training camps, where al-Qaeda would train future jihadis. Rehman was one of them.

Rehman disliked what he saw as Pakistan's policy shift in the wake of war on terror. He along with other

friends founded Jundullah in 2003. To carry out their terrorist activities, these people received funds from Waheed brothers, who themselves were members of the Jamaat. The group's members also robbed banks (*Taipei Times*, 2004). In one such incident, seven police officers were killed (*The News*, 2008a).

Rehman was finally arrested in 2004, in response to the attack on the convoy of Karachi's corps commander. During interrogation, he revealed the names of his accomplices.<sup>4</sup> They were arrested, too. Their revelations, in turn, resulted into other arrests along with recovering of cache of arms and ammunition. To the police, the whole episode hinted at a wide network operating against the state (Khurshid, 2008a).<sup>5</sup>

As late as August 2012, one of Atta's colleagues at Jundullah, Ahsan Aziz, also a statistics student, who had run to the tribal areas, was killed in a drone strike.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly Jamaat's

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<sup>4</sup>Saddam Ali, Yaseen, Mohammad Naeem, and Rafiqul Islam.

<sup>5</sup> Some key members of the network included Shahzad Ahmed Bajwa, Yaqoob Saeed, Uzair Ahmed,

Shoaib Siddiqui, Danish Inam, Najeebullah and Khurram Saifullah.

<sup>6</sup>Ahsan Aziz was never arrested as he fled to tribal areas and stayed there. He was finally killed in a drone strike in August 2012.

leaders attended his funeral prayer (Mir, 2014a).

### **Qasim Turi: the successor**

After the arrest of Rehman, Qasim Turi was made the leader of Jundullah (Perwaiz, 2014a).

Turi was hardly associated with the group at its conception. Unlike other members who were students at a public-sector university, Turi had managed to finish high school only.

Instead, Turi worked in the public service in various capacities in Karachi. His first such service was reportedly with the National Database Registration Authority (NADRA), the country's national identity card-issuing body. After that, he served as constable in Karachi Police. Incidentally, he was dismissed from the service and declared proclaimed offender, when he was charged with sodomizing a child inside the police station (*The News*, 2008b). To be sure, he managed to evade arrest and indictment for this crime, which is punishable by death in Pakistan.

It was his former classmate, Shahzad Bajwa, Jundullah's deputy amir, who asked Turi to join the group. Bajwa

was the one who inculcated jihadi ideals in Turi's mind.

Turi's experience in government departments helped the group gather key information, required for planning future attacks. An ex-police man, Turi had some know-how of the reach and capacity of Karachi's police. He knew what entails VIP movements, the sensitive spots, security plans, and, some say, the composition of paramilitary forces assisting the police.

Following the arrests of his colleagues in 2004, Turi fled north, making all the way to the country's tribal areas, where he met al-Qaeda operatives who had come from across the border in Afghanistan. Eager to add on to his jihadi credentials, he got to learn how to manufacture a bomb and use heavy weapons.

Turi's police training followed by jihadi training injected ferocity in the new generation of Jundullah's militants. On his return to Karachi, he indulged in several criminal activities including robberies (*The News*, 2008c). During this time, activities of the group expanded, which had received a jolt after its founder's arrest. It is said that the group often operated at the behest of al-Qaeda

and Taliban, in Karachi (*The News*, 2008b).

He was finally arrested in January 2008 in Karachi's suburbs, after a brief shootout with police (Tanoli, 2012).

### **The Waheed brothers: medical caretakers**

Jundullah received financial and medical support from Waheed brothers, who were trained as physicians (Chishti, 2014b).

Dr. Arshad Waheed, a kidney specialist, ran own private medical clinic in Karachi, where he also worked at the state-owned Jinnah Hospital Karachi, one of Pakistan's biggest hospitals. Dr. Akmal Waheed was a cardiac surgeon, on the other hand. Both were members of Pakistan Medical Association (PMA), the country's principal organization for registered medical practitioners.

At the same time, the two were active politically. They were member of Jamaat-e-Islami's Karachi chapter and its medical wing (Chishti, 2010).

Covertly, they assisted Jundullah. One such support came to the group's deputy *amir*, Shahzad Bajwa, who received bullet wounds in an

attack on Rangers' mobile van in March 2003. The two brothers, it is alleged, treated Bajwa at Dr. Arshad's clinic (*Dawn*, 2004).

A year later, when the group's amir Ata ur Rehman and other members were arrested, the law-enforcement agencies also arrested the Waheed brothers. Although tried with the main accused, the duo was cleared of the charge of treating the militants (*Dawn*, 2006).

Escaping the clutches of the law-enforcement agencies, one of the brothers, Arshad, fled to the tribal areas to join al-Qaeda. In Wana, South Waziristan, he ran a clinic to treated wounded Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters, until he was killed in an American drone attack on March 16th 2008 (Khurshid, 2008b).

As of his brother Akmal, he later migrated to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In April 2010, the Emirati authorities arrested him along with five other colleagues on suspicion of ties to Islamist terrorist organizations. Once again, he was again accused of providing medical treatment to wounded Islamist militants (Khurshid, 2011; Imtiaz, 2012a). After serving a short prison sentence in the UAE, he was deported to Pakistan where the

authorities took him into custody in 2012 (Imtiaz, 2012b).

Incidentally, two their other brothers, Osama and Ajmal, reportedly active members of Jamaat-e-Islam, went missing at Karachi's airport in July 2011, after their return from the UAE. The two, it is alleged, were taken into custody.

While the government eventually released Ajmal, it failed to respond to the court's order on Osama's detention (*Dawn*, 2014a; *Express Tribune*, 2013).

### **Break?**

In February 2006, Karachi's anti-terrorist court sentenced to death 11 Jundullah activists for killing 11 people in the attack on the convoy of the corps commander. As the group's commander Ata ur Rehman was leaving the courtroom, he told a group of newsmen dramatically that the conviction will not stop them, saying "the death penalty is an honour for us." "If one Ata dies", he claimed, "another will be born in this way of jihad" (Mir, 2014b).

Since those convictions, the group has been able to reinvigorate itself,

partly because of drawing assistance from some larger group, if only to survive. Part of the group's survival owes to its leadership, which has remained educated and tech-savvy. The group has the capacity of resurrection.

Ever since its foundation, Jundullah has maintained its distinct identity, irrespective of its affiliation with other groups. According to a Karachi-based superintendent of police, Jundullah is a resilient outfit, which has survived three major attempts of the Karachi police to disrupt and dismantle the group. The officer believes that in its consecutive resurgences since 2003, the group has managed to gather 20-22 members for launching a new wave of terrorist attacks (Perwaiz, 2014a).

### **Jundullah, reincarnated?**

In recent times, the group is believed to have found refuge with Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, a virulently anti-Shia militant outfit. Jundullah's current ringleader, Fasihur Rehman, works closely with Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, by surmounting the previous damages inflicted by police and security forces (Perwaiz, 2014a).

According to security sources, Naeem Bokhari's faction of Lashkar-e-Jhangvi is now working in tandem

with Jundullah.<sup>7</sup> The Bokhari faction is based in Karachi, with a strong network of operatives in mosques and madrasahs in different parts of the city. The group has been involved in some of the most spectacular terrorist attacks in Karachi since 2002.

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Apart from its anti-Western stance, Jundullah appears to have a staunchly anti-Shia agenda. Many of Jundullah activists had overlapping membership of LeJ. The LeJ provides a plethora of trained members to Jundullah, something that partly explains its survival despite many ups and downs.

On September 25th 2014, Jundullah cooperated with LeJ in an attempt to assassinate in Karachi Superintendent of Police Farooq Awan, who had earlier spearheaded several operations against Jundullah in the past (Perwaiz, 2014b; *Express Tribune*, 2014). Awan got injured in

the attack, which killed two other people.

Yet, Jundullah activists always claim terrorist attacks in their own name, without attributing them to any other militant group.

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In recent times, the group's activities are attributed far away from Karachi, in the western part of Pakistan.

In October 2014, Jundullah's spokesperson Fahad Marwat announced a wave of upcoming terrorist activities it had planned.

On October 23rd 2014, the group attempted to target Maulana Fazalur Rehman, leader of his own faction of

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<sup>7</sup>Authors' discussions with senior police officers in Karachi who requested anonymity. November 30th 2014.



Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, a key religious-political party. The failed bombing was immediately claimed by Marwat, warning that “we will do it again.” As to why an Islamist politician would be targeted, Marwat said that the “Maulana was targeted because of his pro-democracy views and because he has been speaking and acting against us” (*Express Tribune*, 2014).

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The group also disclosed plans to assassinate other notable figures including Bilawal Zardari, son of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto and former president Asif Ali Zardari; workers and leaders of the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), a Karachi-based secular party; and Pervez Musharraf, former

president and chief of army staff (*Pakistan Today*, 2014).

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In recent times, the group’s activities are attributed far away from Karachi, in the western part of Pakistan

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The group also claimed responsibility for an attack on a church in Peshawar in September 2013, killing more than 80 Christians. In its statement, Jundullah warned of continuing with their attacks on “enemies of Islam” and “non-Muslims on Pakistani land” (Aziz, 2013).

### **Riding the ISIS horse**

In November 2014, Jundallah’s spokesman Fahad Marwat claimed that the group had pledged its allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of Islamic State, which quickly rose on the militant landscape of Middle East, where it even claimed to have established caliphate in parts of Iraq and Syria. Marwat said that IS’s delegation met Jundullah’s warriors at Saudi-Iraq border, after which the pledge was announced, “They [the Islamic State] are our brothers, whatever plan they have we will support them (Mehsud and Bukhari,

2014). Both Jundullah and the IS share deep hatred towards Shias.

Jundullah has been linked, directly or indirectly, to al-Qaeda core. Osama Bin Laden had pledged allegiance to Afghan Taliban's supreme leader, Mullah Omar. After Bin Laden's death in May 2011, new al-Qaeda Amir Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri reaffirmed his organization's allegiance to Mullah Omar (Brown, 2010).

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Most likely, the group will have to contribute into IS's competition with Al-Qaeda, which has opened a new chapter in the Indian Subcontinent.

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Jundullah's fresh pledge seems to end its lengthy association with al-Qaeda in Pakistan and its allied groups. Quite likely, the group is ready to initiate a new era of terrorism in Pakistan – especially on sectarian lines and in Karachi. Most likely, the group will have to contribute into IS's competition with Al-Qaeda, which has opened a new chapter in the Indian Subcontinent.

Jundullah may be given a more instrumental role in establishing

Islamic State's Pakistan chapter. No other group pledging allegiance to the IS matches Jundullah's profile.

## Confusion

Compared to other groups, Jundullah is not much disciplined and large. Largely a decentralized outfit, the group has overlapping membership with other Islamist terrorist organizations in Pakistan. These realities explain why the group is often in the news for issuing statements, found to be misleading after investigations.

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Jundullah may be given a more instrumental role in establishing Islamic State's Pakistan chapter. No other group pledging allegiance to the IS matches Jundullah's profile.

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Doubts about the active presence of Jundullah were raised when investigators negated the group's claim of the suicide attack on Pakistan-India border at Wagah, Lahore in October 2014 (*Dawn*, 2014b). Police and intelligence sources maintain that the Pakistani Taliban's Lahore operative, one Roohullah, had carried out the attack.

He was killed by security forces some months later (Samaa TV, 2015; *Dawn*, 2014b; Sherazi, 2014).

Earlier, in 2013, Jundullah claimed that it along with LeJ have attacked the foreign hikers in the mountainous Gilgit-Baltistan region, killing nine foreign climbers and their one Pakistani guide. This claim was negated by another claim, made by Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's Junood-e-Hafsa faction (Khan and Abbot, 2013; Khan, 2013). It would be surprising, not possible, if Jundullah's active present is found in that remote and distant part.

Investigators argue that Jundullah's strength lies in southern metropolis of Karachi. Terrorist operations outside Karachi do not fall under Jundullah's jurisdiction. Even the attack on the church in Peshawar is believed not to be Jundullah's work.

## Conclusion

Jundullah fits into a case study of a radicalized group, which splintered off from a religious political party – JI, in this case. What is of equal interest about Jundullah is its ethnic composition: some members like Qasim Turi and Shahzad Bajwa were raised in Karachi in Punjabi or

Pashtun families who had migrated to the city. Others like Ata ur Rehman was from Urdu speaking community.

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Investigators argue that Jundullah's strength lies in southern metropolis of Karachi. Terrorist operations outside Karachi do not fall under Jundullah's jurisdiction.

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Groups like Jundullah are small, secretive and highly un-penetrable. A parallel could be drawn from N-17 (November 17), a Marxist terrorist group that survived for 22 years in Greece, carrying out over a hundred attacks and numerous kidnappings before its break-up by security forces in 2002. The N-17 terrorist group never had more than 15 members in its fold at one time; its members were all educated, well-off and frequently-related, thereby overcoming police penetration.

Karachi's Jundullah has likewise been able to exploit its small size and sophisticated membership to survive several waves of crackdowns. The survival of Jundullah owes to the broader survival of jihadi movement in Karachi and beyond.



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## BACKGROUND

### National Action Plan: Performance so far

*Azam Khan and Aamir Saeed*

#### Abstract

In April 2015, the government released performance report of the National Action Plan (NAP) the government had charted earlier to confront militancy. This essay assesses the performance on the NAP by consulting the performance report and interviewing experts. Besides taking note of the progress the government achieved in this time frame, the essay looks for areas which the government has completely ignored. Specific issues the authors delve into are: regulation of madrassas, undecided status of FATA, resumption of death sentence, curbing of hate speech, and establishment of military courts. The authors note that a lot needs to be done, to translate words into action, reminding the government that it should take effective use of the rare consensus achieved on anti-militant front



## National Action Plan: Performance so far

*Azam Khan and Aamir Saeed*

The National Action Plan or NAP, meant to collectively fight extremism and terrorism came in the wake of the brutal attack on a school in Peshawar by militants in December 2014 (Doherty and Weaver, 2014).

Within a week to the attack, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif convened an all-parties conference, where leaders of all major parties agreed upon a 20-point plan.<sup>1</sup> The outcome of that conference is hailed as the first time when all political parties unanimously reached a consensus to root out terrorism and extremism from the country. A week later, on January 2nd 2015, another all-parties conference was convened, in which the chief of army staff also participated, more so to offer his input in establishing military-led courts for the trial of terrorists.

With points agreed, the Prime Minister announced on television, “A line has been drawn. On one side are

coward terrorists, and on the other side stands the whole nation.” In the address, the Prime Minister also detailed the twenty (20) points of the National Action Plan.

Soon, the government started pursuing the NAP. To give legal cover to the military-led courts, one of the 20 points of NAP, the parliament passed a constitutional amendment. Moreover, the government, among other things, constituted 15 committees overseeing NAP’s implementation.

But, not everything was smooth about NAP. Many experts wondered many things, above all, the secrecy of the military-led courts and the resumption of death penalty, another NAP point. As if policy disagreements were not sufficient, personal differences within the cabinet too hindered progress of the NAP.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Full text of the prime minister’s speech to the nation regarding National Action Plan can be accessed at <[http://www.pmo.gov.pk/pm\\_speeches.php](http://www.pmo.gov.pk/pm_speeches.php)>

<sup>2</sup> Authors’ interview with General (retd.) Talat Masood, a defence and security expert based in Islamabad.

To recall, Pakistan has suffered enormously at the hands of militants in the last 13 years. 26,385 civilians and security personnel have died from the attacks since 2003. Yet, successive governments failed to strategize consensus on countering militants. The Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), after coming into power in 2013, presented the country's first-ever National Internal Security Policy (NISP) in the National Assembly on February 26th 2014. Even though the NISP, first approved by the federal cabinet, was accepted as satisfactory document, it lacked implementation in the end (PILDAT, 2014).

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A step ahead of the NISP, National Action Plan was announced. The December 16th attack called for

taking this document with seriousness.

To document the progress on the NAP, the interior ministry also compiled performance report. The report, enlisting all actions taken so far under the NAP to counter terrorism and extremism, is presented to the prime minister. This essay assesses the NAP's progress in light of that report, a copy of which is also available with the authors.

### **"Ambitious wish list"**

More than three months have lapsed, after the NAP was announced. Still, a lot needs to be done.

NAP's twenty points, aimed at fixing administrative bottlenecks mostly, make the list exhaustive and at times, digress from taking on militants.

Security expert Imtiaz Gul, who also runs an independent think-tank, argues that the NAP sounds an "ambitious wish list". Except for the resumption of death penalties and establishment of military courts, he argued, "no practical measures are initiated to implement" the plan.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Authors' interview with ImtiazGul, a defense and security analyst and

executive director of Center for Research and Security Studies in Islamabad.

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The plan itself came in haste, more like a reactive consensus against the militants' attack on a school, rather than a well thought-out plan.<sup>4</sup> Those who worked on the NAP complain the government didn't give them enough time to come up with a "concrete document" against terrorism and extremism. That is why, they said, part of the focus was synched with the ongoing military operation in North Waziristan and Khyber agencies of FATA (Khan, 2015).

### Who is in charge?

The task for implementing National Action Plan comes under interior ministry, responsible for internal security, under the supervision of the prime minister. On the night of December 25th 2014, the prime minister, for instance, directed the interior minister to work on

immediate activation of National Counter-Terrorism Authority (NACTA), so that to materialize a joint intelligence directorate.

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Some point towards the personal differences between the prime minister and interior minister. The two – Prime Minister Sharif and Nisar Ali Khan, interior minister – have often been in the

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However, within four months, the interior ministry seems to be somewhat sidelined from the NAP. An April 2015 performance report presented to the prime minister, on implementation of the NAP, doesn't even mention the ministry of interior.

Some point towards the personal differences between the prime minister and interior minister. The two – Prime Minister Sharif and Nisar Ali Khan, interior minister – have often been in the news for mutual differences.<sup>5</sup>

Apparently, the civilian government has outsourced the plan to the

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<sup>4</sup>Authors' interview with Rustam Shah Mohmand, a former diplomat and one of the authors of the NAP.

<sup>5</sup>Authors' interview with Gen (retd.) Talat Masood.

military, to the determinant of civilian supremacy.

The institutional crisis was summarized by a retired military officer:

“At the moment, no institutional decisions are being taken to ensure implementation of the action plan. At least, I haven’t heard or read about a cabinet, security committee or Nacta (National Counter-Terrorism Authority) meeting on impending threats of terrorism and extremism.”

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Apparently, the civilian government has outsourced the plan to the military, to the determinant of civilian supremacy.

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The performance report also reveals that nothing practical has been done so far to activate the joint intelligence directorate, a key department envisioned streamlining intelligence sharing among provinces and different security agencies (Ghumman, 2015). Little is known why. Still, it must, however, be recalled that the government’s present attempt of coming up with a

satisfactory document, National Internal Security Policy (NISP) failed, because of the tussle between the civilian and military bureaucracies, which were tasked to pool their information to a single-point intelligence authority.<sup>6</sup>

### Death penalties and military courts

The very first point of the NAP calls for “implementation of death sentence of those convicted in cases of terrorism.” To undertake the point, the government lifted moratorium on death penalty of all the condemned prisoners (Syed, 2015).

Since then, till April, 65 death row prisoners were executed.<sup>7</sup>

Strikingly, only 22 of the hanged men were terrorists, meaning that the majority (43) were awarded penalty for other crimes. Even, of the 22 hanged terrorists, nothing is shared on which groups those terrorists belong to.

Responding to criticism that death penalties might be awarded without

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<sup>6</sup>Authors’ interview with General (retd.) Talat Masood.

<sup>7</sup>Based on the April performance report.

due process, the interior ministry wrote:

“The execution of death sentences may be carried out strictly as per the law and only where all legal options and avenues have been exhausted and mercy petitions under Article 45 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan have been rejected by the president” (Syed, 2015).

Besides the normal courts, the military courts too have been awarding death sentences. On April 2nd 2015, according to military’s media arm, the military chief confirmed death sentences to six hardcore terrorists under military courts (ISPR, 2015).<sup>8</sup> However, two weeks later, the country’s apex court, the Supreme Court of Pakistan, halted execution of death sentences of all the six convicts.

It was in line with the National Action Plan that the parliament passed Pakistan Army (Amendment) Act 2015, which sets in place military-led courts to trial terrorists. The duration of these courts, which the

military supervises, has been fixed for two years.

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Many in the legal community question the rationale of setting up military courts. The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), for instance, challenged the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Act 2015, arguing that its operation and outcome contradict the fundamental rights the Constitution promises (*The News*, 2015). While some question the secrecy surrounding the convictions, others wonder as to why not civil courts can adopt the same secretive procedure the military court follows in convicting terrorists.<sup>9</sup> Instead of relying on military courts for speedy justice, argued Talat Masood, “the government needs to come up with

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<sup>8</sup>Those awarded death sentence are identified as Noor Saeed, Haider Ali, Murad Khan, Inayatullah, Israruddin and

QariZahir while Abbas has been awarded life imprisonment.

<sup>9</sup>Authors’ interview with Gen (retd.) TalatMasood.

legislation to ensure protection of witnesses and judges.”

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The report claims that 34,517 people have been arrested since December and more than 30,314 combining operations have been conducted across the country to arrest terrorists and militants.

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What’s more, even the routine actions and arrest made by provincial law enforcement agencies are presented under the performance of the government on NAP.

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Imtiaz Gul, however, questions capacity of the state to investigate and prosecute all these people arrested by the security agencies. “It’s virtually impossible to investigate and prosecute such a huge number of people. It is just face saving as the government has been

portraying itself to be tough against the nefarious elements,” he says.

The report remains silent on links of these people with terrorist outfits and when would they all be produced before courts of law.

What’s more, even the routine actions and arrest made by provincial law enforcement agencies are presented under the performance of the government on NAP.

Even though NAP envisions “reforms in criminal court system to strengthen the anti-terrorism institutions including provincial CIDs (criminal investigation departments),” no practical work has been started on this front, so far.

### **Regulating seminaries, terrorist network and financing**

The government has yet to task a specific ministry or department to work on “registration and regulation of the religious seminaries” – one of the key points of NAP. Firstly, the ministry of interior was mandated the responsibility; then, ministry of religious affairs, admitted its minister, was directed to take the



charge.<sup>10</sup> As of now, confusion remains which institute actually looks after this point.

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What is noteworthy is that the performance report on NAP excludes any discussion on the seminaries, even though some of them have come under the intelligence radar for militant ties.

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What is noteworthy is that the performance report on NAP excludes any discussion on the seminaries, even though some of them have come under the intelligence radar for militant ties.

Earlier, intelligence reported that anti-Pakistan outfits like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) have been getting active support in Rawalpindi and Islamabad from religious seminaries, often for lodging and sheltering purposes (Azeem, 2014). The report identified 20 seminaries in Rawalpindi alone actively supporting militants in their operations in the twin cities.

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<sup>10</sup>Authors' interview with Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and

But the debate on watching madrassas is more than just registering them. Expert Gul likens government's sole effort in registering madrassas to "flogging the wrong horse". "The real issue," he argued, "is the content the seminaries' students are taught.

The possible backlash from religious clerics and madrassa students seem to be holding the government from taking any concrete action against them.<sup>11</sup>

Gul says the government has neither devised a concrete plan nor allocated funds to take care of the students who may be on the roads, if some seminaries are closed.

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The government's progress report, however, fails to elaborate on the suspects, their source of funding and how are they traced.

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On dismantling "communication network of terrorists", the government has been focusing, so far, mostly on registration of SIM cards, used in mobile phones for terrorism.

Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousuf.

<sup>11</sup>Authors' interview with Sardar Yousuf.

According to the government's April report, 42.84 million SIMs have been verified. But that leave more than half SIMs, of the targeted 103 million, unverified. To subscribe the remaining, the government has been pushing ahead the deadline.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has registered 64 cases of money transfer through *Hawala Hundi*, illegal means of money transfer; arrested 83 people, recovered 101.7 million rupees, and registered nine cases for suspicious transaction. Simultaneously, the State Bank of Pakistan, the country's central bank, has frozen 120 accounts worth of 10.1 billion rupees.

The government's progress report, however, fails to elaborate on the suspects, their source of funding and how are they traced. It is therefore unclear if those who transferred money were really linked to terrorism. The report is also silent on the action taken against the accountholders.

### **Hate speech, social media and glorification of terrorists**

Owing to the fact that hate material contribute in furthering militancy, the NAP vowed to take concrete measures against hate literature,

terrorism promotion, and terrorist glorification. Yet, very little progress has been made on checking hate speeches through different mediums of communication.

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Ever since the launch of NAP, interior ministry and NACTA have taken no action against any proscribed organization, citing legal complications and required lengthy process.

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One of the reasons why keeping check on hate material proves daunting, is because contributors to such publications reportedly include "influential" figures like former army chief General Aslam Baig, former Director General Inter-Services Intelligence General Hamid Gul, PM's advisor Irfan Siddiqi, and columnist Aurya Maqbool Jan. Likewise, one contributor 'Abu Shams', investigated Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), is actually Jamaatud Dawa's (JuD) chief Hafiz Muhammad Saeed; another, 'Saadi' is the pseudonym of Jaish-e-Muhammad's chief Maulana Masood Azhar (PIPS, 2013).

The JuD continues to publish seven periodicals including *Tayyibaat*, in Urdu, for women; *Rozatul Atfal* for children; *Zarb-e-Taiba*, in Urdu, for

younger readers; and *Babul Islam* in Sindhi. The Al-Amin Trust, formerly known as the banned Al-Rasheed Trust, apparently a charity organisation, spreads its message through daily *Islam* and weekly *Zarb-e-Momin*. Jaish-e-Muhammad, a proscribed group publishes the weekly *Al-Qalam* in Urdu and English. Masood launched *Al-Qalam* and a monthly publication for children, *Musalman Bachay*, in 2003, while continuing a monthly publication for women under the same name (PIPS, 2013).

These groups and their literature provide fuel to extremism and militancy. Islamabad, the federal capital city, has become the best venue for these outfits for expressing their outrage against the government's policies and their critics.

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For the government, loudspeaker remains the only source of hate speech.

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Ever since the launch of NAP, interior ministry and NACTA have taken no action against any proscribed organization, citing legal

complications and required lengthy process.<sup>12</sup>

For the government, loudspeaker remains the only source of hate speech. According to the government's performance report, police have arrested a total of 4,068 people, including 3,313 in Punjab, 192 in Sindh, 462 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 3 in Balochistan, and 98 in Islamabad, while 955 cases have been registered across the country for spreading hate speech and material. The law-enforcement agencies also arrested 979 people and sealed 70 shops on the same charges.

The police are directed to raid shops and confiscate the hate material even though they (police) are neither trained nor they have proper education to identify hate material in a shop.<sup>13</sup> "For police personnel, any book with a rifle, pistol or bomb on its cover comes under hate literature, and this is simply ridiculous," said a former police officer.

As for internet and social media, Pakistan has still to come up with its cyber laws to protect users from any kind of abuse and to curb promotion

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<sup>12</sup>Authors' interviews with Interior Ministry's joint secretary Muhammad Asghar Chaudhry and Nacta's chief coordinator Hamid Ali Khan.

<sup>13</sup>Authors' interview with Tariq Pervaiz, a former police officer, head of Nacta and one of the authors of the NAP.

of terrorism online. The government's performance report is silent on the issue. The government announced passage of a bill "Prevention of Electronic Crimes Bill 2015" from the parliament, but it still remains under consideration, despite passage of over 100 days to declaration of the NAP.

A complaint cell regarding hate material and glorification of terrorism on internet and social media has been set up in Pakistan Telecommunication Authority but its performance and functioning remains a mystery for many (MITT, 2015). Different proscribed outfits

have been openly using Facebook, Twitter and many other social media accounts besides running their websites and blogs to reach their followers and general public with their messages.

Numerous social media accounts of terrorists and extremists, their websites, blogs and videos thrive online. So far, the government seems least interested to monitor social media and internet to curb hate speech and promotion of terrorism and extremism.

Print and electronic media often publish the statements of terrorists



out of fears of attacks. On the other hand, Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) has not devised any strategy to check the glorification of terrorists on the media.

### **Counter-terrorism force, protection of minorities and reforms in FATA**

NAP also promises establishing a dedicated counter-terror force, to be deployed across the country, besides ending religious extremism and protecting minorities. The government has yet to start practical work on these fronts – neither a new counter-terror force has been set up nor any concrete steps taken to protect minorities.

Numerous stakeholders agreed that permanent peace in FATA is contingent upon cogent reforms in its archaic legal and governance model.<sup>14</sup> “It requires political will, wisdom and vision to reconcile the tribal people and grant them the rights that other Pakistanis are enjoying in other parts of the country,” Rustam Shah Mohmand, an ex-government official, said. But

based on the progress on NAP so far, bringing in administrative and development reforms in Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) seem a distant dream.

The government’s performance report is also hushed on the repatriation of internally displaced persons.

The report, however, mentions that around 20,024 Afghan refugees have been deported since announcement of the NAP, including 6,323 from KPK, 798 from Balochistan, 1 from Islamabad, 2 from Gilgit-Baltistan, and 1,200 from FATA, whereas 358,288 have been registered. Mohmand says the government should formulate a comprehensive strategy to deal with the Afghan refugees instead of trying to hide its governance failures behind them.

On extremism, proscribed outfits and sectarianism, the government’s report simply says the consultations with the provinces are underway on these issues. Shortly after a controversy stirred on whether Jamaatud Dawa and Haqqani Network are banned or not, the

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<sup>14</sup>Authors’ interview with Rustam Shah Mohmand, a former diplomat and one of the authors of the NAP.

interior ministry removed the list of outlawed organizations from its website. This raises serious questions on the government's will to implement the NAP.

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*But based on the progress on NAP so far, bringing in administrative and development reforms in Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) seem a distant dream.*

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There are also some abstract points in the NAP too, such as that "ongoing operation in Karachi will be taken to its logical end" and that "Balochistan government to be fully empowered for political reconciliation with completes ownership by all stakeholders." Obviously, the government's performance report prefers to remain silent on these points too, among others.

## **Conclusion**

The government is heavily reliant on the military, which needs active civilian support to justify the actions. The ruling party needs to take ownership of the National Action Plan.

The government's latest performance report on the NAP and interviews with relevant experts and government officials hint at infighting in the ruling bloc, to the detriment of proper implementation of the plan. There is need to bring clarity in mandate of different stakeholders and institutions.

For the first time, all political forces are standing behind the government. It should not lose this opportunity. To curb militancy, the state should play a proactive role instead of being reactive.

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*Numerous stakeholders agreed that permanent peace in FATA is contingent upon cogent reforms in its archaic legal and governance model.*

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Now that political forces are backing the fight, the state should take on board people nationwide, by strengthening their bond with local police stations. Police, in turn, can help dry up financial resources of terrorist by raising awareness among the people about extremism, violence and extremism (Shigri, 2015).

At the same, the government needs to overcome possible diversions that

have been betraying its focus from implementation of the NAP. The political crises, exemplified in the tussle between Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and the ruling party, continues to divide the government's focus on the NAP. Likewise, media remains too much focused on the Karachi operation and Yemen crisis.

The state should take the militant fight to its logical end. The

government also needs to chase all militants without any discrimination, along with allocating sufficient resources for activation of NACTA. Revamping the criminal justice system to ensure speedy justice is all the more important, not least because the military courts will expire after two years. For long-term peace, the government should review the curriculum taught in seminaries as well as in public schools.

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## Indo-Pak relations: views of Pakistan's political and religious parties

*Ahmad Khan*

### Abstract

The study aims to understand the views of different political and religious parties in Pakistan on the country's relations with India. It also offers a brief history of Pakistan-India relations, touching upon different hostile factors and pro-peace initiatives. The author has consulted latest manifestoes of the parties, along with having interviewed representatives of some of the parties. The paper found that almost all parties in Pakistan support peace with India. Rejecting Indian claims over Kashmir, parties in Pakistan term the issue 'dispute', the resolution of which is necessary for smooth relations. Political parties also welcome moves to open trade with India, but several condition such openness to reciprocity by India.



# Indo-Pak relations: views of Pakistan's political and religious parties

*Ahmad Khan*

## Introduction

The genesis of the soured relation between India and Pakistan dates back to 1947, when the British were leaving the subcontinent. The “threat perceptions” between the two countries have “a physical manifestation in the form of dispute” of princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), a central element to Indo-Pak relation from the onset (Siddiqi, 2004).

Since then, Pakistan-India relation has seen periodic ups and downs, with three major wars being fought to settle their territorial conflicts (Rizvi, 2011).

Immediately after independence, the two states engaged in a war over the princely state of Kashmir, a Muslim-majority state, whose ruler acceded in favour of India.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, India went to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to resolve

the issue. The UNSC passed Resolution 47, reaffirming the right of self-determination of Kashmiris and asking both the governments for a plebiscite to decide the fate of the formerly princely state of Kashmir. The issues remained unresolved, setting the tone for a bitter relation between the two countries. In 1965, another war was fought, once again touching Kashmir (Siddiqi, 2004). Six years later, in 1971, the two countries fought again; the war ended in Pakistan losing its eastern wing. Pakistan blamed India for creating and training Mukti-Bahini's guerrilla fighters to fight Pakistani military (Rehman, 2014). An entrenched security dilemma set in for Pakistan, after the war (Rizvi, 2011).

During this period, even when wars were not fought, the two continued to engage in hostile relations. In 1986, the two countries were on the brink of war when Indian military started

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<sup>1</sup> Details can be seen at <<http://www.pakun.org/kashmir/history.php>>

major Brass-tacks exercises near Pakistani border, raising alarms on the Pakistani side. 1998 saw the overt nuclearization of South Asia, The next-year's war in Kargil made the entire region a nuclear flashpoint. The bilateral relations also faced dents at the hands of militants launching attacks in India. In 2001, after terrorists attacked Indian parliament, India deployed military forces along Pakistani borders. In 2008, when militants attacked Mumbai, India started pointing fingers at Pakistan and threatened of surgical strikes in Pakistan (Pandit, 2008). Regular border skirmishes too have destabilizing effects on the regional peace and stability (Hashim, 2014). Both countries are spending billions on defences, widening the conventional asymmetry between the two and eventually lowering the nuclear thresholds of Pakistan, which seeks parity with India.

At the same time, several attempts have been made to normalize the relations. After the 1971 war, leaders of the two states, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Indira Gandhi, signed Simla Agreement, which resulted in the release of Pakistani prisoners of war and captured territory in the western part of Pakistan. More than two decades later, in 1999, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited

Lahore to meet Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The two, discussing all outstanding issues including water and the J&K dispute, signed Lahore Declaration, which helped the two countries to further normalize the strained relations. Likewise, in 2001, Pakistani military ruler General Musharraf met Indian PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the Agra Summit. Although a ceasefire was announced along the Line of Control (LoC) in 2004, small border clashes continued since then.

Besides high-level talks, dialogue process and state visits, both countries also agreed upon military and non-military Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in the 1980s and the 1990s, to ease tension. The military CBMs include PM-to-PM hotline, military-to-military hotline, declarations on non-use of force, ballistic missile flight-test pre-notification, military exercises, non-intrusion of air space, and several other measures; the non-military ones include regular high-level talks, relaxed-visa requirements, cricket diplomacy, bus service, etc. The two has also signed a major water-distribution agreement, the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), in 1960.

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The mutual trust deficit also hampered bilateral trade. Trade volumes did not expand because of multifaceted problems of “non-tariff barriers, poor infrastructure resulting in costly transportation, poor trade facilitation measures, and restricted visa regime” (Mehta, 2012). Realizing the true potential of economic relations, the two countries are now progressing towards more economic interdependency. India has granted Most Favourite Nation (MFN) status in 1996, whereas Pakistan has yet to do so, given heated debate on the issue (Mehta, 2012).

Presently, attempts are being made to bring back the previous efforts of peace process. After the Mumbai attacks in 2008, the bilateral peace talks were suspended, only to resume three years later in 2011. Because of border clashes in 2014, the relations are, so far, in the doldrums.

Meanwhile, in India, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) won elections in 2014, coming to power after a decade. At the height of cross-border tensions, in 2014, Prime Minister Modi threatened that “this is not the time for empty *boli* (talk), but for *goli* (bullet) by our *Jawans* (*Indian Express*, 2014).” Many in Pakistan think the BJP government seems to have adopted the policy of achieving political objectives by threatening a war with Pakistan.

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. The survey-based study also tries to encapsulate the strategies, if any, the religious and political parties may have devised in countering the challenges towards normalization of the bilateral relations.

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Such statements raise fears of rise in ideological extremism. At the same time, religious and political forces retain some say in deciding about Pakistan's relation with India.

This research aims to understand the stance of Pakistan's major parliamentary parties on relations with India in the contemporary foreign, defence, and economic arenas. The survey-based study also

tries to encapsulate the strategies, if any, the religious and political parties may have devised in countering the challenges towards normalization of the bilateral relations. The study explored manifestoes of the parties, key news reports, and carried out interviews with party representatives.

The study has tried to explore answers to the following questions:

- What is the party's view on Pak-India relations, and where does India lie in the party's policy?
- What constraints and opportunities exist in Pak-India relations, and how does the party plan to use the opportunities for improved relations?
- How does the party look at the various security issues between Pakistan and India? Issues include:
  - Confidence building measures between Pakistan and India
  - Strategic stability
  - Pakistan's internal security
- What is the party's stance on Kashmir issue and the resolution of the lingering problem?
- What should be Pakistan's foreign policy priorities that best encapsulates the country's

regional security approach towards India?

- How can trade ties between India and Pakistan be improved? What is the party's stance on the following?
  - Formal trade across borders
  - Informal trade (smuggling, drug trafficking)
  - Most Favoured Nation status

### **Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)**

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is currently the largest political party in the parliament, having 188 elected representatives in the lower house and 26 senators in the upper house. A centre-right and socially-conservative party, PML-N is also the largest political entity in the most populous province, Punjab. The party also formed governments in 1990 and 1997.

PML-N thinks that the country's foreign policy has been facing the pressing issues of "social, economic and political schisms" (PML-N, 2013). The party's 2013 manifesto briefly expressed party's willingness in making an independent foreign policy and a comprehensive national security strategy. The party has vowed to bring about comprehensive reviews in national security and

foreign policy, which will also bring about friendlier and better relations with its neighbours, especially with India (PML-N, 2013).

PML-N presses for enhancing efforts to normalize relations with India, foreseeing a peaceful resolution of all outstanding issues. Working on these issues, the party argues, will help it turn challenges into opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

The party has repeatedly rejected India's claim over Kashmir, terming it a bilateral dispute (Wasim, 2013). The party argues that the resolution of J&K dispute should be "in consonance with the aspirations of the people of the territory for their inherent right of self-determination (Wasim, 2013)." The party has endorsed all previous efforts on J&K dispute, including the United Nations resolutions (1948), Simla Accord (1971), and Lahore Declaration (1999), one of the signatory of which was the party's president, Mian Nawaz Sharif.

The party supports better economic ties with its immediate neighbours, including India.<sup>3</sup> In fact, PML-N, considered as a business-friendly

party, firmly believes in the economic prosperity of the region, also achievable through establishing cordial relations with India. The party manifesto called for strengthening of "regional economic cooperation in the forums like SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] and ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization]" and supports free or preferential trade arrangements" (Wasim, 2013).

In 2014, the PML-N government offered New Delhi the Most-Favoured Nation (MFN) status, contingent on the abolition of negative list of 1,209 items. The status award reportedly was an attempt to reduce the political fallout of the border clashes (Khan, 2014).

PML-N believes in maintaining a strategic balance with India. It was during the second tenure of PML-N that Pakistan detonated nuclear weapons in May 1998 in response to India's. The party prides in sticking to its decision of testing the weapons, amid international pressure not to do so.

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<sup>2</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Siddiqui Farooq, PML-N's official spokesperson. March 20th 2015.

<sup>3</sup>Author's interview with Siddiqui Farooq.

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At the same time, the party looks forward to future dialogues and negotiations as important in establishing peace. The party supports strengthening multi-tier military and non-military CBMS with India, as well as the people-to-people contact, cultural relationship, relaxed visa regime, improved trade ties.<sup>4</sup>

### **Pakistan People's Party (PPP)**

Pakistan People's Party enjoys support across Pakistan. Founded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and later led by his daughter, Benazir Bhutto, and then her spouse Asif Ali Zardari, the party has come into power after winning general elections in 1970, 1988, 1993, and 2008. Currently, the

PPP is the ruling party in Sindh province.

The PPP's 2013 manifesto vowed to end "Pakistan's isolation," by framing "an independent and multi-dimensional foreign policy," which will also focus on "better relations" with the country's neighbours (PPP, 2013).

When it comes to the eastern neighbour, India, the PPP firmly believes in having cordial ties. All outstanding issues with India should be resolved through honest and sincere dialogue, reads the PPP manifesto (PPP, 2013).

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PPP supports cooperation and engagement of South Asian countries, at all levels. Of special interest to the party is having security cooperation and economic

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<sup>4</sup>Author's interview with Siddiqui Farooq.



engagement in the contemporary world. The party manifesto encourages Pakistan's enhanced regional cooperation with its neighbours, by adopting an institutional framework to promote business and investment (PPP, 2013).

Moving beyond South Asia, the party aims for an Asia-wide cooperation, which includes countries like India and multilateral organizations like SCO, ECO, SAARC and ASEAN. To attain this aim, normalization of relations with India is necessary. The party asks for a proactive policy in building trade, social and cultural ties with India, Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Gulf Countries Cooperation (GCC) (PPP, 2013).

The party, however, hopes for the peaceful resolution of the disputes with India. The party believes that if India and China can live in a "tension-free relations" amid all odds on their border, why can't Pakistan and India? (PPP, 2013)

To achieve peace, the party argues, dialogue with India can be opted for.

On Kashmir, the PPP supports the demand of the people of Kashmir to

exercise their right of self-determination under the UNSC resolutions. The PPP manifesto calls for "open and safe borders at the Line of Control to socially unite the Kashmiri people" (PPP, 2013).

Recently, however, the party's chairman criticized the United Nations for failing to resolve the Kashmir dispute, saying that Kashmir was "an example of the failure of the United Nations" (*Dawn*, 2014). He said that "the Kashmiri people continue to await the realization of the promise the world made to them" (*Dawn*, 2014). A party representative, in interview to the author, also endorsed chairperson's remarks on UN inaction on its own resolution.<sup>5</sup>

However, the party understands certain challenges causing friction with India. To overcome them, better build confidence and stability in the region.<sup>6</sup> CBMs can help both India and Pakistan resolve their outstanding issues.

The party understands that the two countries have different positions on the resolution on Kashmir. The party,

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<sup>5</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Qamar Zaman Kaira, PPP's party representative. April 10th 2015.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

however, is hopeful that negotiation and public diplomacy can transform these differing positions into a solution (PPP, 2013).

It was the PPP which recently initiated the process of granting MFN status to India.<sup>7</sup> During its last tenure, from 2008 to 2013, the PPP government announced granting MFN status to India, along with releasing a negative list of 1,206 items including automobile, textile and pharmaceutical products. The process, however, suffered a major setback, as India refused to remove non-tariff barriers on the list Pakistan had provided (Kiani, 2013).

### **Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-e-Azam)**

Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-e-Azam), PML-Q, was founded by former party leaders and workers of Nawaz Sharif-led Pakistan Muslim League, after the military coup in 1999. After winning the 2002 elections, PML-Q formed central government and provincial governments in Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab.

The party manifesto emphasizes on an independent foreign policy, “aimed at protecting, protecting, promoting and preserving” the supreme interest of the nation at the highest echelon of the nations (PML-Q, 2013). Taking this realism into account, the party says, Pakistan’s foreign policy should be aimed at achieving a fair relationship with India. At the same time, the party puts, India should also respect the sovereignty of Pakistan at all levels and it should not undermine the security of Pakistan.

The party believes in maintaining equality in Pak-India relation, so that “balance of power” stays in place.<sup>8</sup> The party strongly believes that India’s “regional hegemonic designs” which pivot around the notion of “might is right” should be reverted (PML-Q, 2013).

The party’s stance on Pakistan’s relationship with its neighbours, especially India, is primarily focused resolution of all disputes through comprehensive and meaningful dialogues. The party argues that Pakistan’s relationship with its neighbour India should be

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Author’s telephonic interview with Mustafa Malik, PML (Q) Deputy Secretary Information. April 9th2015.

“exemplary,” achievable through resolution of the issue of J&K.

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The PML-Q believes in maintaining equality in Pak-India relation, so that “balance of power” stays in place. The party strongly believes that India’s “regional hegemonic designs” which pivot around the notion of “might is right” should be reverted.

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To the party, the “lingering issue of J&K is a test case for normal relations between two neighbouring countries” (PML-Q, 2013). Terming Kashmir as “core issue,” the party sees in the issue’s resolution as equivalent to respecting the “aspiration and the sentiments of the oppressed people of J&K.” The party supports peaceful resolution of the issue of J&K dispute, stressing upon India to give the Kashmiris their right of self-determination as enriched in the United Nations resolutions.<sup>9</sup>

Efforts should be made, the party believes, to reduce the friction in the bilateral relations, says the party representative. PML-Q believes that constraints in improving Pak-India

relations can be managed and converted into opportunities – if some adequate initiatives are taken.<sup>10</sup> Some such initiatives include a process of regular people-to-people contact, cultural exchange and interaction of business communities on both sides. Likewise, political and religious parties across the border can also be helpful.

The party also supports establishing full-scale Pak-India trade relations, the party’s deputy secretary information said. He asked Indian government to facilitate Pakistani traders in their access to Indian markets. On the other hand, he conditioned Pakistani willingness to grant MFN status to India to its lowering of non-tariff barriers on Pakistani products.<sup>11</sup>

### **Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM)**

Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) draws political support from Urdu-speakers in Sindh’s urban cities such as Karachi, Hyderabad, and Sukkar.

MQM believes that the cordial relationship with neighbours should

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<sup>9</sup>Author’s interview with Mustafa Malik.

<sup>10</sup>Author’s interview with Mustafa Malik.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

be the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. This way, regional cooperation will also be strengthened. The party puts that the SAARC forum should made more active for further regional integration, which will help find solutions to the shared miseries (MQM, 2013).

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A party representative said that "we should seriously consider for a "No War" peace pact between India and Pakistan".

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With India, maintaining good relations should be the primary objective of Pakistan's foreign policy, the party argues.<sup>12</sup>A party representative said that "we should seriously consider for a "No War" peace pact between India and Pakistan".<sup>13</sup>

The party understands that over the past sixty-eight years, the "primary issue" of J&K dispute didn't let to ease out tensions between the two countries. Similarly, all other outstanding disputes, such as over

Siachen glacier and Sir Creek water strip, didn't help in turning the bilateral relation friendlier (MQM, 2013).

Tensions, however, can be lowered through opportunities. The party wants an environment of peaceful coexistence, based on the "live and let live" philosophy (MQM, 2013).

When it comes to resolving Kashmir issue, the party supports the wishes of Kashmiri people. For enduring solution of Kashmir, the party proposes, the Kashmiri leadership should be declared as "third party" in the dialogue process. In yet another party proposal, the area of Jammu and Kashmir, including Azad Kashmir should be demilitarized.

All disputes and conflicts, the party argues, should be resolved through peaceful negotiations. MQM supports military and non-military confidence building measures (CBMs), as well as the process of talks and dialogues with India.<sup>14</sup> The party, in fact, emphasizes on more people-to-people contacts, relaxed visa regime, revival of Munabao-

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<sup>12</sup>Author's telephonic interview with FarooqSattar.MQM'ssenior leader and member National Assembly.April 10th 2015.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Author's interview with FarooqSattar.

Khokhrapar rail link to Karachi, and granting MFN status to India.<sup>15</sup>

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To the PTI, Pakistan's internal politics has driven its foreign policy; thus, wrongs on foreign policy end are a result of internal political instability and weak leadership.

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MQM supports Pak-India cooperation in all fields, especially economy, which, wrote the party's manifesto, will encourage "progress and prosperity to one fifth population of the world living in this region" (MQM, 2013). Trade relation will help improve communication, reposting mutual trust (MQM, 2013).

The party proposes that Pakistan should grant India the MFN status; such a move, the party says, should be reciprocated generously, that is hurdles from the other side should be taken care of.<sup>16</sup>

### **Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)**

Founded by cricketer-turn politician Imran Khan, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) vows to fight corruption

and injustice in Pakistan. PTI gained popularity in the last few years, especially in 2013 elections, when it emerged as a strong third force on the national landscape. The party is presently ruling Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province.

To the PTI, Pakistan's internal politics has driven its foreign policy; thus, wrongs on foreign policy end are a result of internal political instability and weak leadership. The party desires of a foreign policy that encompasses Pakistan's "national interests" to make Pakistan a "free and sovereign state." (PTI, 2013)

With India, like other neighbouring countries, the PTI foresees friendly relations of Pakistan.

The party desires for a "peaceful co-existence with India based on sovereign equality, and a just solution of outstanding disputes" (PTI, 2013). The country's vulnerable eastern borders, with India, the party says, are indeed threatening to the sovereignty of the state.

As far as disputes with India are concerned, the party suggests a policy which enables their peaceful resolution. A party representative

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Author's interview with Farooq Sattar.

termed Indian occupation of J&K “illegitimate,” to be permanently revisited as per UNSC’s resolution.<sup>17</sup>

The party “resolutely supports the Kashmiri freedom struggle and promotes resolution of the dispute on the basis of their right of self-determination” under the mandate of UN resolutions (PTI, 2013). Moreover, the party representative said that normalization process with India have to be reciprocated on parallel lines; the party, he said, will not support any unilateral resolution on Kashmir.

The party representative further argued that normalization with India is incumbent upon India coming to the negotiating table, rather just singing the old rhetoric of blaming Pakistan of a proxy war.<sup>18</sup>

The PTI recognizes the importance of CBMs, military and non-military. The party’s central defence secretary blamed India for deliberately delaying the dialogue process and negotiations.<sup>19</sup> He suggested said that a roadmap of CBM process be charted, which makes India

responsible enough in ensuring its implementation.<sup>20</sup>

The party also supports trade relations with India. Pakistan should grant India the MFN status, the party says, but at the same time, asks India to lower trade barrier on Pakistani products.<sup>21</sup>

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, read its manifesto, “recognized the necessity of maintaining and developing an effective” deterrent capability, which will thwart India from any course of action (PTI, 2013). The party is committed to strengthen the country’s nuclear deterrent, which is by and large India-centric. The party is also committed to rationalizing the size and structure of armed forces. The growing asymmetrical nature of Indian conventional forces has forced Pakistan to make its nuclear deterrent more credible to persuade India (PTI, 2013).

### **National Party (NP)**

National Party, a ruling party in Balochistan, is a Baloch nationalist party, headed by Dr. Abdul Malik

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<sup>17</sup>Author’s telephonic interview with Samson Sharif, PTI’s Central Secretary Defence. April 9th 2015.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Author’s interview with Samson Sharif.

Baloch, the current chief minister of the Balochistan.

National Party suggests an independent foreign policy, which should encapsulate the national interest of Pakistan.<sup>22</sup>

The party emphasizes a foreign policy that develops fair ties with neighbouring countries, including India.

Acknowledging the importance of normal relation with India, the party believes that regional progress and prosperity could only be possible in a peaceful co-existence of the region's people. The party discourages the security-centric mind set (NP, 2013).

On Kashmir, the NP's Punjab president said that the people of Kashmir should be given full freedom to exercise their right of self-determination under the UN resolutions.

To resolve all outstanding issues, the party supports creating an environment for Pakistan and India. The party also believes in expediting CMBs through dialogues and negotiations at all diplomatic and

military levels, along with supporting government-level talks. It asks India to reciprocate in the same manner.<sup>23</sup>

The party advocates engaging intellectuals, too, who can play a vital role in erasing the historical misperceptions found in societies on both sides of the border.

Trade could be another instrument to ease the tensions, the party underscored. The party's manifesto stated that the party will promote peace and stability across Pakistan. These, the party believes, will be greatly helped by normalizing trade relationship with India. The party supports more economic integration between India and Pakistan, within the sphere of "decent capitalism."<sup>24</sup>

### **Pakistan Muslim League Functional (PML-F)**

Pakistan Muslim League (Functional) draws support in the interior rural Sindh, especially among the Hurs, the followers of the spiritual leader Pir Pagara, the party's head. The

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<sup>22</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Ayub Malik, NP's president for Punjab. April 8th 2015.

<sup>23</sup>Author's interview with Ayub Malik.

<sup>24</sup>Author's interview with Ayub Malik.

party presently sits on opposition benches in Sindh Assembly.

The party supports good relation with India on equal terms. The party favours peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute, adding though that Indian intentions and military capabilities have always been threatening to Pakistan (PML-F, 2013).

The party blames India for distrust, given, the party says, Indian interference in Pakistan's internal issues such as Balochistan through Afghanistan.<sup>25</sup>

The party desires of peaceful resolution of all issues impairing peace and stability in the region.

PML-F is concerned over trade agreements between India and Pakistan (PML-F, 2013). Expressing concerns over import of Indian commodities to Pakistan without any duties or regulation, the party argues such a move puts local farmers at severe disadvantages. Without subsidies, these farmers will suffer, should Indian agricultural commodities import into Pakistan (PML-F, 2013).

Likewise, granting MFN status to India, too, will adversely affect the Pakistani farmers. The party, therefore, argues that before inking any trade agreement with India, Pakistani government should award subsidies on the local agricultural commodities (PML-F, 2013).

### **Awami National Party (ANP)**

Awami National Party is a Pashtun nationalist party, popular in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and Pashtun pockets in Karachi. The party is headed by Asfandiyar Wali Khan, grandson of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who, for his non-violent opposition to British Raj in India, was known as "Frontier Gandhi." ANP was a part of the PPP-led coalition government from 2008 to 2013.

The party manifesto underscores the importance of Pakistan's geostrategic location; having borders with China, India, Afghanistan and Iran is a "mixed blessing." While such location can be advantageous to Pakistan, the neighbouring states are also exploiting Pakistan for its vested interests (ANP, 2013).

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<sup>25</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Ghous Bux Khan Mehar, Member

National Assembly and former speaker Sindh Assembly. April 8th 2015.



The party does not perceive India to be a threat to the Pakistan's "independence and freedom of action." One of the key elements of foreign policy, the party manifesto reads, pivots around the principle of "establishing friendly and peaceful relations with all countries particularly with our neighbours" (ANP, 2013). The party firmly believes that India and Pakistan can live in peaceful environment in the larger interest of their people.

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Expressing concerns over import of Indian commodities to Pakistan without any duties or regulation, the PML-Fargues such a move puts local farmers at severe disadvantages.

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The people of India and Pakistan, the party says, share a lot of commonalities, in culture, civilization, history, traditions, linguistics, and other spheres of life. There is not much difference between a common Indian and a common Pakistani, the party spokesperson

believes, and this gives us hope to resolve our disputes.<sup>26</sup>

The party argues that the "deep-rooted enmity" of India has repulsed efforts towards normalization of relationship, agreeing that similar feelings are found on other side of the border. This situation, the party says, is quite appalling.<sup>27</sup>

As a way out, the two countries should increase non-military CBMs, like people-to-people contacts, cultural exchanges, sports visits, industrial and trade cooperation, etc.

On the question of maintaining strategic stability, the party's spokesperson reiterated party's stance, that the party supports regional and international moves for arms control and abolition of nuclear weapons, on a universal and non-discriminatory basis.<sup>28</sup>

The party affirms its support to the rightful struggle of Kashmiri people against the illegal occupation of India. At the same time, the party supports establishment of peaceful, cooperative and better relations with

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<sup>26</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Zahid Khan, ANP's official spokesperson. April 9th 2015.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Zahid Khan.

India in all fields. All outstanding issues including J&K dispute, the party says, should be resolved in a peaceful manner and only through meaningful negotiations and open dialogue (ANP, 2013).

The party sees terrorism as a major challenge in attaining regional peace. The “non-state actors” are posing threats to not only Pakistan but also Afghanistan, Iran and India. These violent actors, he said, should be dealt with iron hands.

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The ANP's spokesperson reiterated party's stance, that the party supports regional and international moves for arms control and abolition of nuclear weapons, on a universal and non-discriminatory basis.

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According to the party's spokesperson, ANP has a long struggle against militants, which, one way or the other, are still being supported by other states, as proxies. Support to non-state actors has, in the party's view, deteriorated Pakistan's relations with its immediate neighbours. Therefore, the party

puts, it is not in the interest of states to interfere in the internal politics of other states.<sup>29</sup>

The party spokesperson also stated that drawing trade relationship with India will not only benefit the people, but also give peace a chance to prevail in the society.<sup>30</sup> Trade cooperation, besides strengthening Pakistan's economy, will “reduce trade deficit to a sustainable level and make special efforts to boost the country's exports and remittances” (ANP, 2013).

### **Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F)**

Jamiat-Ulema Islam (Fazl) is a religio-political party subscribing to Deobandi school of Sunni Islam. The party, headed by Maulana Fazlur Rehman, enjoys support in KP and Pashtun areas of Balochistan.

The party's official spokesperson stresses upon better relations with India, saying that Pakistan always tried to improve its relations with India. Similar words are echoed in the party manifesto, which reads that “establishing friendly relations with neighbouring countries will be our

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<sup>29</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Zahid Khan.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

priority" (JUI-F, 2013). The party spokesman asked India to reciprocate in the same manner, to lower the trust deficit between the two states. All disputes, including the J&K dispute, should be resolved through the process of dialogue and negotiations.<sup>31</sup>

Geopolitical challenges are the primary irritants towards improving Pak-India relations. The regional situation is volatile, ever since the U.S. and allied forces have planned their withdrawal from Afghanistan. "Afghanistan's peace and stability are correlated with peace and stability in Pakistan" (JUI-F, 2013). In this circumstance, Pakistan has to deal with its internal situation as well as threat emanating from its eastern and western borders.

The party's spokesman argued that India wants to achieve status of regional power, by playing an active role in geopolitics of the region. The party blames India for supporting nationalist insurgents in Balochistan and terrorist activities in Karachi. If the Indian proxy war in Balochistan continues, the spokesperson said, it will further deteriorate an already-

fragile relationship between Pakistan and India.<sup>32</sup>

The party strongly believes that both countries should surrender their policies of fighting the war through their proxies, and should not interfere in each other's internal issues. This way, more opportunities will appear for improving relations.<sup>33</sup>

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**The JUI-F blames India for supporting nationalist insurgents in Balochistan and terrorist activities in Karachi.**

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Responding to a question on the CBMs process, the party representative argued that so far, CBMs have not worked in improving the relations. Skirmishes along the Line of Control (LoC) and the Working Boundary reveal the obsolescence of existing CBMs. Right now, the spokesman said, there is an urgent need to improve the existing model of CBMs, especially, by establishing hotline between prime ministers and resolving bilateral differences.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Jan Achakzai, official spokesperson JUI-F. April 9th 2015.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Author's interview with Jan Achakzai.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

The party calls for peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute, supporting the UN resolutions to this end. Both India and Pakistan with utmost seriousness should work to resolve Kashmir issue, as Kashmiris have become disillusioned. India, the spokesman said, should not disappoint Kashmiris. At the same time, the party will continue to support a foreign policy that will support the Kashmiri people on diplomatic, moral and political fronts.

Being an energy-deficient country, Pakistan needs regional energy corridors, the party says. At the same time, India too is banking on energy reservoirs in Central Asia. The party spokesman suggested that multilateral forums like SAARC, ASEAN, and SCO can be used to joint ventures, to meet the future demand of energy in the region, including of Pakistan and India.<sup>35</sup>

The party realizes that progress in today's world hinges a lot on external trade. That is why the party supports more external trade with neighbouring countries. Pakistan can benefit from its trade with India in

such a way that balance is maintained in the trade. As far as granting MFN status to India is concerned, the party says, it would likely be supportive of steps that facilitate India to get MFN status; however, such steps should be linked with a balanced approach in equal economic and trade terms.<sup>36</sup>

### **Jamaat-e-Islami (JI)**

Ji, founded by Maulana Maududi, an Islamic scholar, has a well-organized political structure across Pakistan and beyond. Senator Siraj-ul-Haq is the party's present *emir* (leader).

Ji desires of peaceful relation with India, to establish peace and stability in the region.<sup>37</sup>

Friendly relations, Jamaat says, will benefit people on both sides. A party official said that most of the expenditures of Pakistan and India are made on "solidifying defences against each other" (JI, 2013). If all disputes, including the dispute of J&K are resolved, then, he said, "our [Pakistan and India] defence expending will be reduced,

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<sup>35</sup>Author's interview with Jan Achakzai.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Author's telephonic interview with Abdul Ghaffar Aziz, Ji's Director Foreign Affairs. April 10th 2015.

increasing our spending on our health and education budgets.”<sup>38</sup>

The party, therefore, will endorse all peace-leading efforts.

On disputes, JI desires their peaceful resolutions. It wants end to an environment of “warmongering, jingoism, and war hysteria.”<sup>39</sup>

The party, however, understands constraints in establishing friendlier relations with India –one of the constraints being the hostile geopolitics. The security situation in the region is not favourable, as the Americans and their allies are planning to withdraw from Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the JI representative pointed out, both India and Pakistan are in a desperate mood to find new energy resources, and Central Asian Republics (CARs) have become a new venture of competition among states looking for regional roles. India is a big country with a large desire to get the CAR’s energy resources; as a bigger country, India’s chances of progress are higher.

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The JI supports freedom fighters in Kashmir, and condemns Indian involvement in Balochistan and Karachi.

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But, the unresolved status of J&K dispute will stay as a hurdle for India in achieving the goal, the representative said, reminding that after all, the proposed route goes through Pakistan. Resolution of J&K issue will be in the interest of both the countries, therefore.<sup>40</sup>

The party representative argued that it is “highly plausible” that the J&K dispute will remain “unresolved”. The arms race in South Asia will further expand, reaching an exhausting level.<sup>41</sup>

The “deep-rooted” issue of Kashmir should be solved, the party’s director foreign affairs said. The brute force by Indian forces against Kashmiri freedom struggle has, he said, widened the gulf of mistrust between Pakistan and India.

JI believes that the process of CBMs will lay down the basis of creating

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Author’s interview with Abdul Ghaffar Aziz.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

trust between India and Pakistan. However, little has been done in solidifying the foundation stone of mutual trust between the two countries, he said. Whatever steps were taken in the past to ease the tension, are seen with suspicion from both sides, the member said. Perhaps, this is the reason, he said, why CBMs failed in the past.<sup>42</sup>

The party looks forward to the end of proxy wars in the subcontinent. The party supports freedom fighters in Kashmir, and condemns Indian involvement in Balochistan and Karachi. The party's director foreign affairs reiterated the party's official stance, that elements active in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa enjoy Indian support. Some Indian officials don't hide their open relations with insurgents in Balochistan and militants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he said.<sup>43</sup>

JI desires of a relationship built on equality and justice, achievable through resolution of Kashmir issue. The doors of mutual cooperation should be open, the party says, adding that India should fulfil all its

commitments in resolving the issue (JI, 2013).

JI favours cordial trade relations with India. However, a one-way trade relations and granting MFN status to India will be considered illegal, the party says, if India does not lower its trade barriers towards Pakistan. Pakistani products are not allowed to reach large India markets, which is indeed appalling, he said.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusion

Most of the political and religious parties in Pakistan support bringing Pak-India relations on a smooth track. The parties surveyed for this study support establishing normal relations, achievable through concrete and meaningful dialogue and negotiations on all outstanding issues.

PML-Q, however, believes in maintaining a balance of power with India, whereas MQM calls for a "No War Pact" between the two countries.

Parties call resolution of Kashmir issue, as compulsory for establishing cordial bilateral relations. Most called for peaceful resolutions through

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<sup>42</sup>Author's interview with Abdul Ghaffar Aziz.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Author's interview with Abdul Ghaffar Aziz.

UN's resolutions, reflecting the aspirations and willingness of Kashmiris.

Political parties also support the process of military and non-military Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs), suggesting that cracks therein should be filled. Of special interest to the parties has been the non-military CBMs, like regular people-to-people contact, cultural exchange, interaction between the business communities, relaxed visa regime, improved trade ties, and revival of Munabao-Khokhrapar rail link.

Some parties also linked internal insecurity to Indian interference. Representatives from PML-F, JUI-F and JI strongly condemned Indian involvement in Pakistan's internal issues. They believe that India is supporting nationalist insurgents in Balochistan and Karachi.

On the question of maintaining strategic stability with India, PTI,

PML-N, PPP, JI and JUI-F representatives and party manifestos support a strong deterrent capability to maintain balance of power with India. The ANP's representative vowed to make South Asia a nuclear-free zone.

Political and religious parties also support efforts for regional cooperation, especially with India, such as by engaging forums like SAARC, ECO, SCO, and ASEAN. One of the ways this cooperation can be helpful is by meeting energy needs in the region.

The idea of granting Most Favourite Nation (MFN) status to India was endorsed by many parties, conditioning that India should remove non-tariff barriers on Pakistani products. PML-F feared Pakistan will lose its agricultural market; whereas JI asked India to step ahead in resolving outstanding bilateral disputes with Pakistan.

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## Last issue

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Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)

## LAST ISSUE

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#### **The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: an assessment of potential threats and constraints**

*Safdar Sial*

This report assesses potential security, political, economic and geostrategic threats and constraints that could affect the implementation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project. It notes that long-term political and economic stability in Pakistan are vital to smoothly implement the project. Secondly, while cooperation among all countries in the region, at least in terms of trade and economy, would be an ideal scenario in the emerging regional dynamics, there is a strong likelihood that persisting bilateral conflicts and an environment of mistrust will keep them polarized and part of alliances where Pakistan would certainly remain closer to China, thus having little impact on the construction of the CPEC and functioning of the Gwadar Port. Nonetheless, the prevailing environment of insecurity, militancy and violence in Pakistan can pose serious threats to the construction of the corridor although the finalized eastern alignment of the corridor will run through relatively more secure areas than those of the earlier planned western alignment.

#### **Persecuting Pakistan's minorities: state complicity or historic neglect?**

*Razeshta Sethna*

This report examines the socio-political views and notable challenges faced by Pakistan's largest minority communities – Christians, Hindus, and Sikhs – analyzing findings from a countrywide survey conducted by the Pak Institute



of Peace Studies in 2014 with 327 respondents belonging to religious minorities from Pakistan's four provinces – Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Findings reveal that discrimination against minorities—within the social and cultural mainstream, undermining economic livelihoods and political participation—is connected with overall inequality and government inattention. The report also observes that most respondents although deeply committed to their faith are able to integrate and live peacefully with other religious groups but feel threatened by the overall deteriorating security situation countrywide and the wave of extremism that threatens their existence. Because minority groups are excluded from political decision-making matters that in the long-term not only affects but further marginalizes those communities persecuted by the religious right.

### **The good governance model to counter extremism: an historical perspective**

*Ummad Mazhar*

The history of South Asia provides significant insights into the purpose of religion in the governance of the state. When analyzed, this discussion can offer explanation and methodologies that may be used to counter extremism presently taking hold in the region and beyond. This paper focuses on governance principles adopted by what were known to be two of the most durable empires in the region that is currently South Asia – the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire – as a way of studying and learning from these historical attempts at curbing the spread of extremist ideologies. The emphasis, by way of historical example, is that governance models and principles followed by Muslim rulers in the sub-continent from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century were based on ideologies of inclusivism. This approach allowed for the continuation of governance with the provision of security for diverse communities, without having to contend with serious threats from multi-religious, multi-ethnic populations.

### **From intra-sectarianism to fragile peace: the Gilgit-Baltistan model**

*Peer Muhammad*

This paper discusses diverse factors, actors and dynamics of sectarian conflict in Gilgit-Baltistan. Certainly these factors include the state's jihad policy during the 1980s, the fall-out of Afghan war, the Iran-Iraq war, as well as demographic changes in Gilgit-Baltistan after the construction of Korakorum Highway. The denial of constitutional and political rights to the people for almost six decades, the indifferent attitude of the local and federal administrations, misunderstanding among various sects, absence of an effective criminal justice system, ethnic divisions and lack of education and awareness, and the exploitation of the religious sentiments by different interest groups further aggravated the situation. This paper argues that despite some recent successful efforts by local religious scholars to achieve inter-sectarian harmony there, Gilgit-Baltistan will remain hostage to sectarian-oriented religious sentiments, unless the political and constitutional alienation of the people of this region is addressed through reforms at the federal level.

### **Understanding the Islamic State: ideology, affiliates and the Da'esh model**

*Farhan Zahid*

The emergence of the Islamic State has not only threatened to change the map of the Middle East but also heightened security concerns of whole world. This paper focuses on the foundation of the Islamic State and its ideology since its inception under the founding Al-Qaeda chief for Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and looks at factors that have fuelled its rise through the last decade. With Al-Qaeda losing its operational strength and independence, disappointed Al-Qaeda fighters and affiliated groups and movements began looking for a new terror base when IS appeared on their radar to provide such an opportunity after parting ways with Al-Qaeda in Syria. The IS has diverse sources of funding including captured oil fields, smuggling, extortion of taxes from businesses in Mosul in Iraq, and ransom for kidnapping. The IS model could be replicated in territories where governance is weak and states are unable to counter the rise of terrorist groups.

### **The evolution of militant groups in Pakistan (5)**

*Muhammad Amir Rana*

A previous backgrounder, titled “Evolution of militant groups in Pakistan (4)” published in the spring issue of this research journal focused on primarily on Shia sectarian groups. This follow-up backgrounder reviews the evolution of sectarian groups belonging to other sects, mainly the Deobandis. An effort has been made to consult and depend on primary sources, particularly literature produced by different sectarian organizations and associated groups. There are about 45 Deobandi organizations operating in Pakistan, out of which 33 are directly involved in promoting sectarian hatred. Few of them including Sipah-e-Sahaba and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi have changed the sectarian landscape of Pakistan, triggering violent trends in religious discourse. Meanwhile Sunni Tehreek and Ahle Hadith Youth Force, subscribing to Barelvi and Ahle Hadith sects respectively, have remained involved in violent activities

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