

## TAKING ON TERROR IN PAKISTAN : MUSHARRAF'S COUNTER-TERROR POLICY FAILURE AFTER SEPTEMBER 11

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### ABSTRACT

*General Pervez Musharraf embarked upon the political stage through a coup amidst the burning issue of extremism and growing terror in and from Pakistan. To compound to his troubles was 9/11 incident which led America realizing the implications of exporting 'jihad' in Afghanistan via Pakistan in the 80s. Yet, the geographical proximity of Pakistan to Afghanistan and the very fact that Pakistan has had a prime share in the sense of its involvement in the Afghanistan war theatre in the 80s and ever after led America once again to fall back upon Pakistan as an ally in 'War on Terror'. The war theatre once again was Afghanistan but the missing link of willingness and the zeal to partner with was what made the situation of immense significance for Musharraf in dealing with the extremist forces in his own country. The paper argues that Musharraf's U-turn post 9/11 Vis-à-vis Taliban was not complete, rather selective, which in turn was responsible for the less than committed moves on his part to tackle extremist menace in his country. Half-hearted moves led him in a situation bereft of solid support for his moves itself. Whatever move he proceeded with led to a greater reaction from the extremists.*

**KEYWORDS:** Pakistan, Terrorism, General Parvez Musharraf, Counter Terrorism

### INTRODUCTION

Pakistan has had been grappling with extremist menace ever since its Objectives Resolution was passed in 1949 and even before that when it was created in the name of religion and the 'Two Nation Theory'. No regime dared to attack the above theory; rather every one of those [regimes] added some nuance or the other to justify it. Ziaul Haq's military dictatorship was the most noxious of all with laws such as 'Hudood' in its armpit. Zia regime was also path breaker in the pejorative sense for its embrace of Afghanistan 'jihad' in partnership with America. The entire game of justifying 'Two Nation Theory' over the years by different regimes and particularly the Zia regime built up the inherent fissures in the Pakistani society which first resulted in out casting the Ahmadiyas as non-Muslims; then, creation of Pakistan and widening of inter-sectarian, intra-sectarian divides tearing apart the theory propounded by Jinnah. General Pervez Musharraf embarked upon the political stage through a coup amidst the burning issue of extremism and growing terror in and from Pakistan. To compound to his troubles was 9/11 incident which led America realizing the implications of exporting 'jihad' in Afghanistan via Pakistan in the 80s. Yet, the geographical proximity of Pakistan to Afghanistan and the very fact that Pakistan has had a prime

share in the sense of its involvement in the Afghanistan war theatre in the 80s and ever after led America once again to fall back upon Pakistan as an ally in 'War on Terror'. The war theatre once again was Afghanistan but the missing link of willingness and the zeal to partner with was what made the situation of immense significance for Musharraf in dealing with the extremist forces in his own country.

Thus while Musharraf showed to the world his [imposed upon] desire to crack down on extremism at home breeding and fending Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan, researchers like Samina Ahmed and John Norris could see the real side of it as early as 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2002. "Official pressure on extremist parties is easing and the religious right is once again the recipient of official patronage" (Ahmad and Norris 2002). Musharraf's confusions were becoming known to the world within months of becoming partners with the United States in the 'War on Terror'. For example the arrest and release of Maulana Fazlur Rahman, the head of pro Taliban Jamait Ulema-i-Islam [JUI]; giving comforts of home [imprisonment] to Maulana Masood Azhar, the head of banned terrorist organization Jaish-e-Mohammad [JeM]; and, the arrest of leaders and activists of moderate and secular Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy in

Lahore, while allowing holding of public meeting to fundamentalist and orthodox Jamait-i-Islami [JI] in Karachi (Ahmad and Norris 2002) were contradictions and perhaps self explanatory but not heeded by him and which gradually weaved a story of a policy backfiring and dooming for failure. The present paper shall analyze factually Musharraf's counter terror military policy and its eventual failure after 9/11.

### **MUSHARRAF'S COUNTER-TERROR POLICY**

President Musharraf went on being the partners with America in War on Terror and Pakistan becoming the frontline state once again after the previous stint at it in post- 1979 alignment against Soviet Union. The platform was the same i.e. Afghanistan. The difference was that in the 80s it was alignment for jihad; this time it was to be against jihad. As part of partnership in War on Terror, General Musharraf [had to] opt for some military measures [operations]. The less than desired or rather undesired results of these operations led him to harp on peace deals. The list of major operations undertaken by General Musharraf was as follows:

1. [Support for] Operation Enduring Freedom (2001-2002) - North Waziristan
2. Operation Al Mizan or Justice (2002-2006) - South Waziristan
3. Operation Sherdil or Lion Heart (2007-2009) – Bajaur
4. Operation Rah-e-Haq (2007-2009) – the first battle of Swat
5. Operation Silence (3<sup>rd</sup> July -11<sup>th</sup> July 2007) - Islamabad

Overall, the topography that was touched for these major operations was FATA and NWFP, now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or KPK. Operation Silence was launched in Islamabad to control rebellion of Red mosque and the adjacent Madrassa Jamia Hafsa (Khalid and Roy 2016: 244). Rand Corporation Report points that these operations were unsuccessful in holding territory by the state forces. On the other hand, militant hold of territory increased during these operations (Jones and Fair 2010: 75-77). The Musharraf regime relied on peace accords amidst the military operations manifesting confusion at the helm and acceptance of superiority of the militants. The militants received the signal what authorities passed on to them tacitly. They openly flaunted these deals as surrender on the part of government and took time off to regain the strength during cease of military operations.

### **SUPPORT TO OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (2001-2002)**

As the US like wounded tiger got ready to attack Afghanistan, Pakistan's support became crucial not only for its strategic location but also for its skin deep familiarity with Taliban. Al- Qaida had become the no. one enemy of America and Taliban was the regime harbouring al- Qaida. Having failed to persuade the Taliban in the goal of handing over Osama bin Laden to America there was no option left for him but to severe relations with them [Taliban] (Frontline Interview with Musharraf 2006) . Having failed to persuade the Taliban in the goal of handing over Osama bin Laden to America there was no option left for him but to severe relations with them [Taliban] (Frontline Interview with Musharraf 2006) . After the negotiations with US and the tradeoffs discussed in September 2001 itself, and Pakistan's consent given, the US got Pakistan agreed for partnership in Operation Enduring Freedom. As part of its contribution, Pakistan agreed to provide land base and over flight facilities to the US along with providing intelligence and immigration information on the Taliban, al Qaida and other foreign militants (Jones and Fair 2010: 41). To strengthen surveillance and intelligence, the US military installed radar facilities in Pakistan to obtain extensive coverage over Pakistani air space (Jones and Fair 2010: 41).

Apart from above Pakistan also deployed units of regular army, Special Services Group, Frontier Corps and Inter-Services Intelligence of the army [the intelligence wing of the Army] along Pakistan – Afghanistan border to conduct operations along infiltration points (Jones and Fair 2010: 41).

As soon as Pakistan entered into partnership in War on Terror skirmishes between Pakistani security forces and militants began. The hate demonstrations against America and against Pakistan regime for its alliance with the enemy of Islam also began order of the day. Following paragraphs are to show the glimpse of the wrath that Musharraf regime faced within months following his decision to join the 'War on Terror'.

On September 20, 2001, Sipah-e-Sahaba, Pakistan [SSP] join other members of Afghan Jihad Council by announcing jihad against the US forces if they used Pakistani soil to carry out military attacks on the Taliban regime (South Asia Terrorism Portal Timeline Pakistan 2001-02). On October 11, at a protest rally in Peshawar, SSP provincial chief Maulana Fazal Ahad said that the US should withdraw from Afghanistan, failing which it (US) would "taste fatal upset just like former Soviet Union during Afghan Jihad." On the same day Jamait-Ulema-e-Islam [JI]

also declared jihad against the US and its allies (South Asia Terrorism Portal [SATP] Timeline Pakistan 2001-02). On October 27, approximately 10000 Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi [TNSM] cadres led by the chief Maulana Sufi Mohammad, crossed the Pak-Afghan border (SATP Timeline Pakistan 2001-02). The anti-Musharraf, anti-American protests continued in Pakistan and Musharraf had to explain the actions of his government to the people in defensive tone. For example, on 14 August 2001, Musharraf banned Lashkar-e-Jhangavi [LeJ] and Sipah-e-Mohammad Pakistan [SMP] – the two sectarian organizations representing Sunni and Shia sects respectively (nacta.gov.pk). On January 12, 2002, Musharraf addressed to his nation explaining his stand amidst growing internal troubles for him:

“On 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2001, we finally took a very important decision to ban Lashkar-e-Jhangavi and Sipah-e-Mohammad and placed Sipah-e-Sahaba and TJ [Tehrik-e-Jafariya Pakistan] under observation. In addition, on a number of occasions, I called Ulema and Mashaikh and held extensive consultations with them. The objective was to take them on board in our campaign against terrorism and extremism. These measures have been continuing since our government assumed office in 1999. I am explaining all this to you in great detail only because of the fact that the campaign against extremism undertaken by us from the very beginning is in our national interest. We are not doing this under advice or pressure from anyone. Rather, we are conscious that it is in our national interest...” (Musharraf 2002).

The tone of the speech was defensive ostensibly trying to explain to his own people that Pakistan was not under America's pressure and that whatever he was doing was in the national interest. On January 14, 2002 President Musharraf banned two militant groups, focused on Kashmir in India - Lashkar-e-Taiba [LeT] and Jaish-e-Mohammad [J-e-M], apart from banning Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan [SSP], Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi [TNSM], and Tehrik-e-Islami [TI] (nacta.gov.pk). On January 28, 2002, Tehrik-e-Jafariya Pakistan [TJP] was proscribed (nacta.gov.pk). On May 10, 2002, dozens of proscribed TNSM cadres were arrested in Malkand. On May 15, 2002, Hafeez Mohammad Saeed, the L-e-T chief was arrested from Lahore. FATA landscape was the prime area of operation during Operation Enduring Freedom. The clashes between security forces and the militants continued to deter government. The June 26, 2002 operations at Kazha Punga and encounter in Azam Warsak was the first confirmation of presence of al-Qaida cadres amidst the locals of Federally

Administered Tribal Agencies [FATA] (Jones and Fair 2010: 43). On December 3, 2002, security forces personnel arrested two suspected al-Qaida terrorists in South Waziristan and handed them over to American intelligence agencies for interrogation (SATP FATA Timeline 2002). The above events are not exhaustive. There were many more incidents and the casualties from both sides were there. Many militants were captured, while many escaped to other places. Meanwhile, Operation Annaconda was launched by coalition forces in March 2002 (Wikipedia.org) in Shah-i-Khot Valley in Afghanistan and Pakistan extended its cooperation for it (Khalid and Roy 2016: 241). The objective again was to topple the Taliban government in Afghanistan.

Operation Enduring Freedom was only partially successful in its objectives (Jones and Fair 2010: 44). It threw away Taliban, which was the objective of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Annaconda and was successful in capturing some important al Qaeda operatives such as Khalid Sheikh Mohammad, Ramzi bin Shibh, abu Faraz al-Libbi and Abu Zubeida. Yet, Pakistan was not for all out encirclement of terrorists/extremists of all hues and colours. Deputy Secretary of State [US], Richard Armitage noted that “Musharraf did not push hard against the Taliban” (Jones and Fair 2010: 45). The self-contradictions in policies went on increasing as the war on Terror proceeded ahead leading to self-destruction.

#### Operation Al Mizan (2002-2006)

Operation Al Mizan was started in early 2002 as Pakistan was partnering in Operation Enduring Freedom. By mid-2002, the exodus of militants into FATA was being analyzed on an increasing scale after the Taliban had been defeated in Afghanistan. As FATA became the hub of militants fleeing Afghanistan and seeking shelter in Pakistan border regions and as attacks on American bases became more common, America was for Pakistan launching its own operation in FATA. The enhancement in force levels from Pakistan side had started early on in 2002 which further went on being increased up to 2007-08. By the end of operation Al Mizan, some 80000 security personnel were deployed on Pak-Afghan border (Jones and Fair 2010: 46). It became rather personally imperative for Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf to support a big operation in FATA after more than one assassination attempts at his life. The main area of Operation Al Mizan was South Waziristan region of FATA although raids and minor operations here and there were also conducted in North Waziristan. The main objective was to get rid of foreign, particularly al Qaida and Taliban, as well as local

militants threatening the writ of Pakistani state (Jones and Fair 2010: 46). Al Mizan was a conglomerate of many smaller operations including Operation Kaloshah II (Abbasi, Khatwani and Hussain 2018: 5), which became the most important component of Operation Al Mizan. Apart from “regular infantry, Special Forces Units of the Pakistani Army like elite Special Services Group [SSG], were also directly engaged in fighting the militants” (Shah 2014). The US granted a massive \$ 2 billion a year to conduct the Operation successfully (Jones and Fair 2010: 46). As the Operation progressed, on April 22, some 125 Russian made rockets were recovered from a truck loaded with animal fodder in North Waziristan. On September 2, security agencies seized 11 rounds of RR-15, 9 rounds of RR-75, 30 rounds of RGP-7, 17 MRO-82 type bombs and 69 12.7mm rounds during a raid in North Waziristan. On October 1, 12 al Qaida operatives were killed and 18 others injured by an operation launched by the Pakistan Army in South Waziristan on Pak- Afghan border. On October 8, the political administration of South Waziristan launched a crackdown on a particular tribe for not surrendering their fellows accused of harboring al Qaida and Taliban cadres. The crackdown was on Wazir tribesmen (SATP South FATA Timeline 2003). On October 11, in another crackdown on Yargul Khel, Atman Khel, and Kray Khel tribesmen in South Waziristan, the authorities sealed business opportunities by sealing three petrol pumps, eight hotels and 232 shops belonging to them (SATP South FATA Timeline 2003).

The above account of events is reflective of the fact that War on Terror path for Musharraf was neither easy nor short. It kept engaging and troubling his regime. The FATA region, especially South Waziristan, by 2003 had become extremely volatile. The mosques and the Madrassas alike were causing troubles to him, difficult to be handled. The sectarian clashes were increasing rather than diminishing. In his January 12, 2002 speech referred above, he confessed:

“...This is the state of affairs. To what purpose are we using our mosques for? These people have made a state within a state and have challenged the writ of the government...Terrorism and sectarianism must come to an end...I had announced a ban on Lashkar-e-Jhangavi and Sipah-e-Mohammad on 14<sup>th</sup> August last year...I am sorry to say that there is not much improvement in the situation. Sectarian violence continues unabated...” (Musharraf 2002).

The events starting January 2004 turned very significant as far as deciding the direction of upcoming

events was concerned. The resistance on the part of tribes of FATA kept taking bigger canvas and more and more tribes started rebelling against the government orders. The events led to army getting engaged in operations in Wana, South Waziristan [Operation Kaloshah II] in March 2004.

#### **SHAKAI ACCORD (April 24, 2004)**

The Government had given the deadline of April 10, 2004 for Nek Mohammad’s surrender, the most wanted militant commander in South Waziristan (SATP FATA Timeline 2004). However, on April 8, just two days before the deadline for his surrender, he declared that he would neither surrender nor accept military interference in South Waziristan. If the Government did not come to terms with his condition, he would be forced to launch offensive in all seven tribal agencies of FATA (SATP FATA Timeline 2004). Nek Mohammad’s stand sent stirrings not only in authorities’ circle but also among Ahmadzai Wazir tribesmen [Nek Mohammad belonged to Yargulkhel sub-tribe of Ahmadzai Wazir tribe of south Waziristan, FATA]. On April 18, 2004, a 1950 strong tribal force or lashkar, in support of the government, was reported to have launched operations against al Qaida and their supporters in South Waziristan. The tribal force was reported to have launched search and demolition activities in Azam Warsak, Shin Warsak, Kaloshah, Manra, Seirkamar, and Pervezi Raghzai (SATP Waziristan Timeline 2004). However, with little sign of success, an all-out behind the scene parleys by government on breaking the deadlock took place and on April 22, Brigadier Mahmood Shah, Chief of Security for the tribal regions, announced that the local authorities had met the wanted men - Nek Mohammad Wazir, Haji Sharif, Maulana Abdul Aziz, Maulavi Abbas and Haji Noor-ul-Islam at an undisclosed location to whom the militants conveyed their desire to surrender. In sequence, these five militants harboring al Qaida surrendered to the Pakistani Army at a tribal council ceremony that took place at a Madrassah in Shakai, 20 km north of Wana. The ceremony led to signing of the famous Shakai agreement, whereby the militants offered their loyalty to the Government in return for Government granting amnesty to the militants (SATP FATA Timeline 2004).

#### **THE CLAUSE OF THE DEAL WERE**

1. The government will release prisoners taken before and during the recent operations in the area.
2. The government will pay compensation for the *shuhada* or martyred and injured persons during the operation and

for the collateral damage caused during the military operation.

3. The government will not take action against Nek Mohammad and other wanted individuals.
4. The government will allow foreign mujahideen to live peacefully in Waziristan.
5. Mujahideen-e-Waziristan will not resort to any action against the land and the government of Pakistan, and will not resort to any action against Afghanistan (Abbas 2010: 16).

The peace agreement lasted for not more than seven weeks (Abbas 2010: 16). There were evident flaws in the deal, if peace was the objective and restoration of government decrees was the intention. The deal was signed in a Madrassah - Jamia Arabia Ahsan-ul-Madaris. This fact coupled with the fact that encroachment of ulema was allowed as part of negotiations, led to virtual erosion of authority of the political *maliks* [power bearers who act as intermediaries between the government and the local populace] in FATA. Also, the Madrassa was a training centre for the militants. The deal was signed with the militants directly, which was tacit acceptance by the government of the entity parallel to government or rather the entity with the status of one-upmanship. The signing of the deal amidst the ongoing military operations was the signal of government's defeat. At least this is what the militants proclaimed. Nek Mohammad after signing the deal said, "I did not go to them, they came to my place. That should make it clear who surrendered to whom". (Jones and Fair 2010: 53). Nek Mohammad became a household name all across Pakistan after the deal (Yusufzai 2004b).

From September 2004, the militancy turned insurgency by now, another tribe - the Mehsuds turned headache for the government. In limelight were Abdullah Mehsud [captured in Afghanistan during fighting with Taliban by the Americans, kept in the Guantanamo Bay [US military prison, located within the Guantanamo Naval Base] for 25 months, indoctrinated by them to fight against the jihadis (Belharvi 2013) and released in 2004, then after returning to Pakistan, vowing to continue fighting against the American and allied forces in Afghanistan] and Baitullah Mehsud [participant in Shakai I deal] (SATP FATA Timeline 2004). The abduction of two Chinese engineers, working on Gomal Zam Dam project by Abdullah Mehsud, threatening Pak-china relations and killing of one of them on October 14, 2004, alarmed the Pakistan officials (SATP FATA Timeline 2004). However,

his arrest remained elusive despite heavy searches in Spinkai Raghzai area of South Waziristan.

### **SARAROGHA PEACE ACCORD (SOUTH WAZIRISTAN)**

The [draft] deal mentioned above was formally signed on February 7, 2005 at Sararogha, South Waziristan (Abbas 2010: 18). The terms of the agreement were as follows:

1. Militants under Baitullah Mehsud will neither harbor nor support any foreign fighter in the area.
2. Militants shall neither attack any government functionary nor shall they damage the property. They will also not hamper developmental activities.
3. The government shall not take any action against Baitullah Mehsud and his men for the previous acts done by them. However, future involvement in the terrorist and criminal activities shall be dealt with as per prevailing laws of FATA. Violators of the agreement shall be handed over to the government.
4. Pledge from the Baitullah side was that culprits other than from his own group, found in his area of influence shall be handed over to the government.
5. All other issues not covered under the agreement shall be resolved by mutual consultation between political administration and the Mehsud tribe (Abbas 2010: 18).

The Sararogha deal like the previous deal had apparent flaws. "No clause was inserted for cross border infiltration" into Afghanistan from Pakistan (Abbas 2010: 18). Like the previous deal, there was no specific clause for the 'surrender' of foreign militants. Hasan Abbas points out that through this deal, the government was also trying to pit Wazirs against the Mehsuds, a move that did not work (Abbas 2010: 18). Later events showed that both the tribes united in waging a war within Pakistan, because, both considered Pakistan army as foreign force in their land. The year 2005, since the beginning, witnessed increasing incidence of terrorist activities and violence in North Waziristan and despite the government's claim on more than one occasion since 2004 that militancy had been flushed out from South Waziristan region, the facts spoke differently. On April 18, 2005, General David Barno, the Commander of the coalition forces in Afghanistan, speaking to the journalists at the US embassy in Islamabad said, "we collectively feel that there is a need to undertake an operation in North Waziristan..." (SATP FATA Timeline 2005). The very next day however, Pakistani authorities, criticizing the American statement as 'figment of

imagination' denied having any plan of starting operations in North Waziristan (SATP FATA Timeline 2005). On April 18, 2005, fresh leaflets were reported having been distributed to the locals by militants asking them to join jihad and calling upon them 'not to miss the caravan'. Leaflets signed by al Qaeda and Taliban were distributed in Miranshah, headquarter of North Waziristan, asking the businesses in five days to stop showing movies, television and obscene movies or else be prepared for dire consequences (SATP FATA Timeline 2005). The warning period of five days gone expired; the militants exploded a bomb at a video market allegedly selling vulgar cassettes and CDs. Surprisingly, however, the locals did not demonstrate against the extremists. Rather, they rallied against the government and the US. The rally was organized by Jamait-e-Islam, partner in the government with Mr. Musharraf's party [PML-Q], asking the government to stop 'illegal military operation' (SATP FATA Time line 2005). The drone strike was imminently executed in Mir Ali, North Waziristan, to get hold of al-Qaeda and reportedly, Haitham al-Yemeni was killed in May 8, 2005 drone strike. Al Qaeda militants issued death warning to 28 pro government tribal elders to 'get ready to die'. It is clear from the above elaboration of events that by 2005, the Musharraf regime was facing an insurgent situation in the tribal areas. On July 28, Haji Mohammad Omar, militant 'commander' of Ahmadzai wazirs in South Waziristan claimed that sector commanders of the North and South Waziristan Mujahideens met at a secret location in the third week of July to coordinate their efforts to launch simultaneous attacks against the government (SATP FATA Timeline 2005).

This proclamation of Muhammad Omar must have sent shock waves across the Pakistani regime, because by Sararogha peace deal, the government as per the analysts view, might have thought of creating the rift between Ahmadzai Wazirs and the Mehsuds (Abbas 2010: 18). On August 2, 2005, Lt. Gen. Safdar Hussain said that foreign Mujahideens and their local partners had shifted their base from South to North Waziristan after the military operations were launched in South Waziristan (SATP FATA Timeline 2005). By the onset of March 2006, militants in North Waziristan had taken control of government buildings, telephone exchange and the main Miranshah bazaar. Meanwhile, the enforcement of *Sharia* in South Waziristan was announced by the clerics, maintaining that feuds from now on shall be resolved in accordance with the *Sharia*, by the Islamic judges and no longer in the tribal *jirga*.

#### NORTH WAZIRISTAN OR MIRANSHAH PEACE DEAL (SEPTEMBER5,2006)

The 16-clause deal, which was considered an improvement over the previous deal by the analysts, had its terms as follows:

1. There will be no attacks on law enforcement agencies and the government property. There would be no target killings.

2. No parallel administration would be established in the area and the government's writ would prevail. In case of any problem, the political administration in consultation with the Utmanzai tribes would resolve the issue in accordance with the traditions and the FCR.

3. There would be no cross-border militant activities in Afghanistan. However, there would be no restriction on crossing the border for trade/ business and for meeting relatives according to the local *rivaz*.

4. There would be no terrorist activity in the district adjacent to North Waziristan.

5. All foreigners residing in North Waziristan would either leave Pakistan or remain peaceful according to the prevailing law and the current agreement. All the clauses of the agreement would also apply to the foreigners in the tribal agency.

6. All the captured government property during the operation including vehicles, weapons or any other equipment would be returned (Tajik 2011: 8-9). The government agreed for:

1. All the individuals apprehended during the operation would be released and would not be arrested again on the previous charges.

2. The government would release all political benefits [that were hitherto given].

3. The government would remove all newly established check points on the roads and would post Levies and *Khasadar* personnel on the old check points as was demanded by the militants and as was done in the past.

4. The government would return all vehicles, weapons and other equipment captured during the operation.

5. The government would stop all land /air operations and all issues would be resolved according to the local traditions.

6. The government would pay compensation for all collateral damages to the affected

7. There would be no restrictions on carrying weapons as per the tribal tradition. However restrictions shall continue to be imposed on heavy weapons.

8. Implementation of the agreement would begin with the withdrawal of the army from the check posts to the barracks (Tajik 2011: 8-9).

Peace however remained elusive still even after the government committing and surrendering so much. Leventis writes: “It can thus be summarized that the government of Pakistan entered into the aforementioned agreements due to its inability to impose its control on a particular region—as a result of both its fractured stance regarding radical Islam within the country and its chronic mismanagement of the area under consideration [namely, the FATA as well as NWFP and Baluchistan]” (Leventis 2007). Post-Waziristan accord, resistance against the regime increased further. The siege of Lal Masjid in Islamabad from July 3-10, 2007 was an indication of the parallel process that the militants were running.

#### **OPERATION ZALZALA SOUTH WAZIRISTAN**

Even while the government was engaged in North Waziristan, South Waziristan continued to simmer under Baitullah Mehsud supported militancy. The year 2007, particularly, started witnessing more of Baitullah Mehsud’s adventures against the government. Attacks on Security forces’ check posts, clashes with them, beheadings, killings of pro-government clerics, tribal elders and tribesmen continued by simply terming them as American ‘spies’. the Mehsuds were on an all-out confrontation with the government. Among many incidents of threatening the writ of the government and directly directly taking upon it [the government], on August 30, 2007, the Mehsuds in South Waziristan abducted around 280 soldiers by intercepting a military convoy in Momi Karam area, Laddha sub-division of South Waziristan (SATP FATA Timeline 2007).

The climax of events took place on December 14, 2007, when the Taliban militants from tribal areas announced the formation of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan [TTP]—a centralized organization of 40 militant groups operating under different militant leaders. Baitullah mehsud was declared to be the Amir or central chief of the organization. The objective of the militant organization was stated to “unite the Taliban against NATO forces in Afghanistan and wage a ‘defensive’ jihad against Pakistani forces here” (SATP FATA Timeline 2007). After the formation of TTP the gruesome murders and killings, heinous abductions and imposition of ideology and *Sharia* rule across FATA and beyond FATA in NWFP, now Khyber Pakhtunkwa [KPP] became a common place exercise. The Musharraf regime already was facing tough time with Baitulla Mehsud and his supporters in South Waziristan after the collapse of Sararogha arrangement with

the militants. Now, with the formation of TTP, and Baitullah’s elevation at a greater pedestal, government nightmares were quite natural. In South Waziristan, on January 15, 2008, some 1000 militants attacked Sararogha fort which was manned by South Waziristan Scouts, with rockets and mortars, killing 38 paramilitary soldiers and 6 civilians and also blew up the fort after taking away weapons and communication tools of scouts.

On 18 January 2008, the government launched Operation Zalzala in Spinkai area of South Waziristan, inhabited dominantly by Mehsud tribe. Using 14<sup>th</sup> infantry division to attack Baitullah’s militants in several parts of South Waziristan, including Spinkai and Kotkai, the security forces had to bear hard fight from militants. Fierce clashes were also reported from North Waziristan, inflicting casualties on both sides and the ceasefire announced by militants there seemed to have gone over. Within few days of the start of the operation, clandestine talk between militants both in North and South Waziristan were reported. Hafiz Gul Bahadur in North Waziristan and Faqir Mohammad from South Waziristan were nominated by TTP to hold talks with the government (SATP FATA Timeline 2008).

Operation Zalzala was opined to have mixed results. Although Pakistani government had claimed victory, but the main objective—the killing or capturing of Qari Hussain, the suicide bombing campaign leader remained unattained. “More than 2,00,000 people got displaced during the operation...” (Jones and Fair 2010: 62). Qari Hussain restarted the suicide training camps at Spinkai Raghzai which led to an even more gruesome suicide bombing spree not only in FATA but beyond FATA, across the borders in Afghanistan (Jones and Fair 2010: 62).

#### **A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF MUSHARRAF’S COUNTER-TERROR POLICY**

As Pakistan’s partnership into war on terror began post 9/11, it began deploying forces for the first time in its lawless frontiers. To begin with it deployed some 25000 military and non-military forces in Federally Administered Tribal Agencies [FATA]. Later they [Pakistan] had to increase the strength of the forces up to 1,00,000 gradually. Various minor operations were conducted to begin with, before launching the gigantic Operation Al Mizan. Both the above facts—deployment of comparatively low level of forces to begin with and relying on minor operations to start with—reflected the perception of the Musharraf regime that extremists/militants were no match to State forces as far as the strength and the depth was concerned. To begin with up

to 2003, some big al Qaida operatives were captured in Pakistan. Operations director, al Qaida - Abu Zubaydah was arrested from Faisalabad [Pakistan] in March 2002. He was the first high ranking member of the al Qaida to be arrested from Pakistan. Khalid Sheikh Mohammad - al Qaida's number three ranked and alleged mastermind of September 11 attacks, was captured in Rawalpindi during raids in March 2003 (Reuters 2008). Ramzi Bin-al-Shibh - a Yemeni national was captured in Karachi (Reuters 2008). However, these successes do not tell the entire story. As the Operation Enduring Freedom progressed, it was started becoming clear that Pakistan was more interested in killing or capturing al-Qaida. For that matter, even America's interest was more in al-Qaida rather than Taliban. Al Qaida was treated as number one enemy for the obvious reasons (Jones and Fair 2010: 45). For America, they [Taliban] were the "spent" force, having been defeated and ousted in Afghanistan. This spent force for Pakistan was the strategic asset for Pakistan. It is no more a hidden secret that Taliban would not have come to existence without Pakistan's help and support. They were created for a purpose, the purpose being to counter India -- Pakistan's strategic and ideological enemy. In fact, even top ranked al Qaida operatives—Osama bin Laden and Ayman-al-Zawahiri were not the targets of Pakistan's hunt. They were rather provided 'safe' heavens inside Pakistan (Jones and Fair 2010: 45-46).

As the threat of militancy seemed more real than the perceptive, Pakistan went in for force enhancement in Waziristan. Operation Kaloshah was launched which led to high degree of casualties and collateral damage. The enhancement in the number of forces was taken by tribal people as enemy's forces leading to tribal resistance. The casualties accruing to the military were as high as 50 soldiers dead in just 12 days of fighting (Hussain 2010: 69). Even at this level the regime continued to underestimate the militant threat to the internal security of the country or they got overawed by the militants' threat or both. The best option they found to tackle the militants was appeasement in the form of pacts with them. The first such pact was Shakai Agreement, signed on April 24, 2004 during Operation Al Mizan. The deal signed with militants — Nek Mohammad, Noor-ul-Islam, Hazi Sharif and Baitullah Mehsud sidelined the Maliks - the caretakers of administration under the Political Agents in the previous environment. The prominence given to the militants led to a situation comparable to a saying: 'feeding milk to the snake'. The milk-fed snake becomes even more ferocious to the perceived enemy. This is what happened in Pakistan under President Musharraf. As 106 militants were released

granting them amnesty under the Shakai deal, the promises that were undertaken by the government from the militants' side — registration of the foreigners, the stoppage of attacks—were not fulfilled. Rather, the violence level got enhanced. The foreign terrorists kept on being harbored. The murders and assassinations of pro-government tribal Maliks and elders and anyone who would not come up to the whims and fancies of the Taliban became the order of the day. As the foreign militants were not surrendered, the government had to revoke amnesty and restart the military operations. The agreement worked for not more than seven weeks and the military operations were restarted on June 11, 2004 (Younus 2015). While the government fought with several thousand forces, jets and helicopters, the militants relied on a few thousand men and guerilla technique. However, the support and sympathy of the people remained with the militants. While the conventional warfare techniques' use against the tribal extremists and foreign *Mujahideens* enforced among them the feeling about government and military as an enemy, the collective punishment against them rekindled and reinforced among them the ties of unity despite the traditional inter-tribe rivalry. While the government fought with several thousand forces, jets and helicopters, the militants relied on a few thousand men and guerilla technique. However, the support and sympathy of the people remained with the militants. While the conventional warfare techniques' use against the tribal extremists and foreign *Mujahideens* enforced among them the feeling about government and military as an enemy, the collective punishment against them rekindled and reinforced among them the ties of unity despite the traditional inter-tribe rivalry. However, when the force would not seem to deter the militants, the regime would come on the back foot and sign a peace deal in the hope of buying peace. The deal, however, would be treated by the militants as surrender of the government and acceptance of superiority of the militants' strength. All this made a pattern of the behavior and action of the government which the militants could use of very cleverly. The government moves became so predictable that analysts would start writing about upcoming peace deals which was not yet signed. By the year 2007, Musharraf had lost support of his people on many fronts. The society within was not trusting him enough as to support his tough measures in Lal Masjid operations [Operation Silence]; the militants were taking his operations as the one launched under pressures from America. The sectarian war turf was going out of his control and MMA - his political support - was making his troubles multiplied to secure their own Islamic turfs.



## CONCLUSION

Musharraf's 'War on Terror' was taken by his people as the American war imposed by Americans on the Pakistanis via Musharraf as conduit. As the years went on, his disassociation with his countrymen went on to increase. The situation worsened even more as Musharraf could not leave behind the 'strategic depth' theory of Pakistan. The 'good' Vs the 'bad' Taliban were set to blast upon his regime as the years passed by which was evidently clear by the rising tide of sectarian violence. The survival issues in political situation were added burden upon him which kept on weighing more year by year and as a consequence the trap of Islamists was fastened well enough around his regime to be pierced to any significant depth. His policies after 9/11 incidence were doomed for failure to the extent of proving disaster for the Pakistani society.

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