



МИР И БЕЗОПАСНОСТЬ PEACE AND SECURITY

DOI: 10.22363/2313-0660-2019-19-4-625-631

Research article

War on Terrorism in Pakistan: Challenges and Strategic Steps

Z.A. Malik¹, He Zhilong¹, M. Rafay²

¹School of History and Civilization, Shaanxi Normal University, Shaanxi, Xi'an, China

²University of Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan

Научная статья

Война с терроризмом в Пакистане: вызовы и стратегические шаги

З.А. Малик¹, Хе Джилонг¹, М. Рафай²

¹Школа истории и цивилизации, Университет Шэньси, Шэньси, Сиань, КНР

²Университет Саргодха, Пенджаб, Пакистан

Abstract. The incident of 9/11 is said to be a watershed event in the history of international relations. After this ferocious incident Pakistan was forced to join the Global War on Terrorism in September 2001 and since then it has faced a lot of challenges. After joining this war, the security situation has become worse within few years, and military forces had to start several operations to fight and eliminate the menace of terrorism. The War on Terror (WOT) has greatly affected the economic growth, political and social situation of the country. This paper discusses the reasons behind the terrorism, the ways it has affected the national security, education and economy, and the steps for its elimination. The general conclusion made by the author is that Pakistan like other countries cannot cure this menace alone by the use of force. The government should adopt a complex and wide strategy focusing in priority on the factors that are responsible for igniting terrorism, and by solving the problems being faced by the poor masses of the country.

Key words: security, terrorism, War on Terror (WOT), economic growth

For citation: Malik, Z.A., He Zhilong & Rafay, M. (2019). War on Terrorism in Pakistan: Challenges and Strategic Steps. *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations*, 19 (4), 625—631. DOI: 10.22363/2313-0660-2019-19-4-625-631

По мнению ряда исследователей, инцидент 11 сентября 2001 г. стал переломным моментом в истории международных отношений. После этого Пакистан был вынужден присоединиться к глобальной войне с терроризмом в сентябре 2001 г., с тех пор столкнувшись с множеством проблем. После вступления в эту войну ситуация с безопасностью ухудшилась в течение нескольких лет, и вооруженным силам пришлось начать несколько операций, чтобы бороться с угрозой терроризма и устра-

© Malik Z.A., He Zhilong, Rafay M., 2019



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

нить ее. Война с террором сильно повлияла на экономический рост, политическую и социальную ситуацию в стране. В статье обсуждаются причины терроризма, его влияние на национальную безопасность, образование и экономику, а также шаги по его ликвидации. Общий вывод, сделанный автором, заключается в том, что Пакистан, как и другие страны, не может искоренить эту угрозу в одиночку с помощью силы. Правительству следует принять сложную и широкую стратегию, в которой приоритетное внимание уделяется факторам, способствующим разжиганию терроризма, и решению проблем, с которыми сталкиваются бедные слои населения страны.

Ключевые слова: безопасность, терроризм, война с террором, экономический рост

Для цитирования: *Malik Z.A., He Zhilong, Rafay M. War on Terrorism in Pakistan: Challenges and Strategic Steps // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Международные отношения. 2019. Т. 19. № 4. С. 625—631. DOI: 10.22363/2313-0660-2019-19-4-625-631*

Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, many changes have taken place in the world politics and global diplomacy. The biggest threat faced by international community nowadays is terrorism which heavily affects the security, safety and confidence of people all over the world. However, this is not a new phenomenon, it has happened since ancient times. After the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001 the issue of terrorism came to limelight. Obviously, September 11, became a global dogmatic crisis that altered policies at the internal, territorial and worldwide level [Afzal, Iqbal, Inayay 2012]. The 9/11 incident pushed the international community to regard terrorism as a truly transnational security threat. This event is not only a turning point in the US foreign policy; as it has triggered the start of a new phase around the globe. Shortly after the attack the Bush administration identified Al-Qaeda behind the attack, declared war against terrorism, demanded the surrender of Osama bin Laden from Afghanistan or get ready to face terrible punishment. Pakistan, due to its geographical location, was forced to join this war.

Since the 9/11 incident, terrorism in Pakistan has converted into a severe and highly damaging event. The number of deaths caused by terrorist attacks has risen from 38 in 2001 to 11,704 in 2009, 5496 in 2014 [Afridi, Yousufi, Khan 2014] and 691 in 2018. After the incident, the United States attacked Afghanistan, and Pakistan became the first ally of the United States. As president Pervez Musharraf pointed out in his book 'In the Line of Fire: A Memoir', United States clearly told Pakistan that if it would not join the global war on terrorism, then it should instead be prepared to be bombed back to Stone Age [Musharraf 2006]. The Pakistani government fully supported the United States, and the US used Pakistani territory to carry out its attacks.

Most of the people, religious groups, human rights organizations, etc. were dissatisfied with the following government's decision. In particular, religious parties and political groups began to strike and oppose it. As a result of joining this War on Terror, the country faced severe consequences. Terrorism in the country increased and due to this new wave of terrorism the armed forces were forced to launch operations in the tribal areas of the country against the terrorist organizations. Since then several operations have been fought which resulted in massive damage in terms of lives, infrastructure, etc. At times the security situation improved in the country, but from time to time the country becomes the target of these nefarious activities. It seems like the seeds of terrorism have taken a permanent abode in the roots of the country.

Terrorism: A Constant Threat to the Stability of Pakistan

Today, terrorism is the hottest and most controversial issue faced by the world. As majority of states are facing this threat, they had to revise their national security and foreign policy strategies and consequently adopt a series of practical measures to protect their nationals. This is not only about rather strict airport entry and exit inspection systems, but also about stricter visa rules and regulations. This policy is successful in the short term, but in the long run, success cannot be achieved in controlling and eliminating terrorism and its threats [Ali, Li 2016]. The government of Pakistan strongly tightened up its anti-terrorist policy after the attack on the Army Public School in the North-Western Pakistani city of Peshawar (2014) and introduced certain policies against terrorism which up to date are not fully implemented.

Reasons behind the Terrorism

Pakistan is facing serious threats from traditional and non-traditional violent extremism, sectarianism, terrorism and armed conflict. This has had a negative impact on economic stability and social harmony and continues to unsettle the general public. Subversive activities and the modalities of terrorist and non-governmental armed groups targeting national security organizations and key facilities complicate the whole situation. The terrorist network lurks in the shadows and thrives on invisibility and ambiguity. Terrorism not only affects the socio-cultural environment, but also undermines existing scarce infrastructure in Pakistan through frequent attacks on educational institutions, medical facilities, communications networks and the country's energy supply [Chishti 2014]. The geographical location of Pakistan, sectarian issue, involvement of state actors, political instability, Pak—Indo and Pak—US conflicts and negative role of media form key reasons behind the terrorism.

Geographical Location

Pakistan is surrounded by India, Afghanistan, Iran and China, which all hold quite important place in world geopolitics. Traditionally, Pakistan has very unstable relations with India, Kashmir being a bone of contention between them. Pakistan and Afghanistan share the similar culture, religion and history, but the rise of terrorist attacks has ruined the friendly character of interaction. After the end of the Cold War, the relations of Pakistan with Afghanistan deteriorated. When the United States attacked Afghanistan to seize the Taliban regime, this danger was multiplied several times. Pakistan was forced to participate in the war which resulted in the conversion of the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA) into the land of terrorists due to the low security at the Pakistani border, resulting in enlarged aggressiveness in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) [Shah, Ayaz 2015]. Pakistan enjoys very good relations with China. Bilateral interaction with Iran is very unhealthy because of pressure from Saudi Arabia and the United States. So, geographical location of Pakistan is quite a serious hurdle in assuring security. If Pakistan wants to improve its security situation for decreasing the terrorism incidents, it should improve its relations with neighboring countries and contribute to its foreign policy. Moreover, it should also increase the security of its borders,

especially those with Afghanistan and India, as the main influx of terrorists is taking place from there.

Sectarian Issue in Pakistan

Background of the sectarian divide in Pakistan and the confessional differentiation between the Sunni and the Shite communities affect the country and society; religious radicalism and intolerance lead to sectarian issue in Pakistan, which failed to eliminate sectarian conflicts and social polarization. The feelings of hatred among different religious groups are mostly fueled by foreign forces which provide funding of different religious schools. People in the backward areas cannot afford the school fees whereas the madrassas provide free education, shelter and food. The religious education greatly affects the minds of small children and shapes their thinking according to the particular religious school approach. These sectarian differences are somehow acting as proxy war instrument between different schools. So, strategies should be developed to address the challenges of sectarian violence in Pakistan [Ahmar 2007].

Involvement of State-Actors in Pakistan

State actors are basically involved to a great extent in deteriorating the security situation. The menace of terrorism is spread by the state actors which are funded by foreign states with the purpose of destabilization of peace and internal dynamics. Attacks on so far above-ground targets in Pakistan as President, Prime Minister, Marriott Hotel, Sri Lankan Cricket Team, Army GHQ, PNS Mehran base, police stations, drone strikes and FC training centers etc. are mainly done by the state actors. Their final goal is to spread fear among the masses. These actions are part of an immensely colossal game of new regional players, trying to damage the image of Pakistan on the international level and make it a failed state [Javaid, Haq 2016].

Political Instability in Pakistan

The main cause of terrorism in Pakistan is a weak governance and political instability. Political turbulences and excessive dependency on military resolutions have led to the higher level of radicalism. Al Qaeda troops and their allies are still active in Pakistan. This link between Al Qaeda and the Pakistani Taliban serves a founding cause of uncertainty, which results in suicide bombings and bomb attacks throughout Pakistan [Sahill 2017].

Pak—US Conflict

The United States believes that Pakistan is a terrorist base and supports the terrorists operating in India, Kashmir and Afghanistan [Zeb 2006]. This served as a reason for the drone strikes inside the territory of Pakistan. The US government do drone strikes inside the territory of Pakistan without taking an official permission of the government, which resulted in high death toll in Pakistan. These drone attacks killed civilians more than extremists in the tribal areas. These drone attacks not only violated the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan but also violated the human rights charter of the United Nations, international laws and humanitarian laws [Anwar, Rafique 2012].

When the United States military killed Usama bin Laden inside the territory of Pakistan in 2011, there emerged a clash between Pakistan and the United States and the international community. The murder of Osama bin Laden led many to speculate that the Pakistani intelligence services are either accomplices or incompetent. The various conflicts in Pakistan and the Taliban violence in the country are still killing thousands of lives. Economic growth is still not enough to provide job opportunities for the growing population. Civilian and military leaders seem hesitant to carry out structural economic reforms in order to claim important international development assistance [Fair 2012].

Pak—India Conflict

Pakistan and India, the two immediate neighbors are having conflict with each other from the very beginning of their creation. Pakistan is a peaceful country and opts for a peaceful international order. It adheres firmly to the provisions of the UN Charter and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. It upholds the principle that any violent access to its territories is totally unacceptable. Up till now both the countries have fought four wars. Kashmir is the main bone of contention between the two countries. Shortly after partition in 1947 both the countries fought war over Kashmir. The 1965 war also dealt with the Kashmir issue. The third war was an armed confrontation between India and Pakistan which occurred during the partition of West Pakistan with East Pakistan in 1971. The fourth war was fought in 1999 in Kargil. Pakistan wants to solve all the conflicts with India but India time and again accuses Pakistan of having relations with militants in Kashmir.

Negative Role of Pakistani Media

Media plays a vital role as it is used to inform people about the problems and anti-plans of the country. Unfortunately, the current coverage of the internal situation in mass media does not take into account the possible effects on the public. The media must use more responsible reporting in the area of national interests, rather than representing its direct business interests. A well-organized media job can easily eliminate the very modest role of the public, leading to atrocities committed by combatants [Malik, He Zhilong 2018]. One should recognize that media has portrayed quite negative image of Pakistan on the international level. Pakistan is a country having gigantic natural assets and beautiful places. The negative image portrayed by media has resulted in the damage of tourism industry, as foreign tourists have stopped visiting Pakistan. No one is willing to invest in Pakistan because of the worse law and order situation portrayed by the media.

How Terrorism Has Effected Pakistan

Pakistan with the help of the United States produced Taliban during the Cold War, but these very Taliban turned against Pakistan in 2001 when United States attacked Afghanistan with the help of Pakistan. The Taliban started attacking the government institutions and its masses after the incident and has produced a culture of terrorism in Pakistan. Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) attacked religious, political and civil society, scholars and doctors, schools and NGO offices, suicide bombings in universities, mosques and other important places increased to an unimaginable extent. More than 85,000 Pakistanis have been killed in various terrorist attacks, including 10,000 armed men there were 2,113 sectarian attacks, resulting in 2,913 deaths and 5,824 injuries [Syed, Javed 2017]. The main goal of the Taliban is to dwindle state power, hurt the morale of the armed forces, and avenge FATA's military operations. The Taliban launched suicide attacks in various parts of Pakistan, especially in Punjab, KPK and Islamabad, in FATA and Swat. Their main purpose is to hit the security forces [Fair 2015]. The main objective is to create fear, create massive victims, and destabilize the whole situation. Terrorism has deeply affected the education, economy and security of Pakistan.

Effect of Terrorism on Education

Education in Pakistan has also been affected by the war on terror. As a result of operations in contradiction of the Taliban and Al Qaeda, these rebels and radicals have ruined more than 190 schools in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Pakistan has the highest illiteracy rate. The Taliban prohibits the education of women in tribal areas. In addition, 42% of the boys educational institutes were demolished. Almost 150,000 students were underprivileged of education and 8,000 teachers were unemployed. Illiteracy is also a big issue for Pakistan. This has dire consequences for the constancy of the government and the future of education [Hoffman 2017].

Effect of Terrorism on the Security

After September 11, slowly and gradually, terrorism and radicalism increase and the security situation became dreadful. Thousands of people were killed in terrorist attacks and many more injured. The situation across the country was alarming, but in FATA and KPK, the security situation was even worst. In this awful situation, Pakistan needed domestic support and solidarity. In general, the security condition in Pakistan got deteriorated and the military forces were compelled to start military operation against the terrorists residing in North Western part of the country [Malik 2009]. Poverty in FATA is on the increase, leading to militancy and a feeble legal and regulatory form in Pakistan. This state was misused by the Taliban and Al Qaeda. They engaged these underprivileged youths and used them in their interests in contradiction of the country to weaken the protection of the country [Rabbi 2012].

Effect of Terrorism on the Economy

According to the World reports Pakistan is among the top ten countries which have been greatly affected by terrorism [Global Terrorism Index 2018]. Pakistan is the most important frontline country against the “war on terror”, the loss of the Pakistan’s economy is an obvious outcome. The Pakistani economy is affected at almost all economic fronts, including foreign, industrial, agricultural, commercial and service industries. The continued increase in terrorist activity has also affected the self-confidence of foreign investors, who have stopped foreign direct investment [Gul, Hussain, Bangash, Khattak 2010]. The effect of terrorism was felt to unpredictable

degrees in all economic sectors. The most prominent regions include tourism, hotels, manufacturing, trade, etc. These industries are interlinked with each other. Different factors such as Afghan immigrants, especially the influx of the Taliban, porous Pakistan-Afghanistan border; political turmoil, conspiracy from outside, population weaknesses and geographic attractiveness have exacerbated the terrorist process in Pakistan. All these factors are related to the “war on terror” and have worsened the overall economic situation in Pakistan [Khan 2018]. Terrorism has negatively affected the economy and the economic growth of Pakistan. One percent increase in terrorist incidents results in decreasing the per capita GDP growth to 0.39%. So the terrorists incidents have significantly affected the economy of the country [Hyder, Akram, Padda 2015].

Basic Interests of Pakistan

Pakistan is facing many challenges, but the issue of security is one which cannot be compromised. In order to fight terrorism Pakistan should review its national security policy and adapt it to the current conditions in order to protect its core values and national interests. The national purpose is democratic Pakistan based on the principles of Islamic social justice and sovereignty. The government of Pakistan should improve the national security by introducing reforms. The main policy goals of the internal and external security of Pakistan should be based on the following principles:

1. The government should emphasize on the state sovereignty and territorial integrity. This should include not only the four provinces of Pakistan but also Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit — Baltistan.

2. National unity should be determinant in the security assuring. Patriotic spirit should be inculcated through mass media, national days should be celebrated with full zeal and devotion. The nation should be united against all threats to the state integrity.

3. The menace of terrorism, extremism and radicalism are the biggest threats to the security which should be eliminated by introducing true reforms. Strict punishment should be given to those spreading these evils. Special emphasis should be given on improving the educational system. Madrassas which are spreading hatred in the society should be banned.

4. Good governance plays a crucial role in the internal development, reaching social and economic

prosperity and obtaining general stability. The government with the help of judiciary, military and bureaucracy must play a leading role in achieving these goals.

5. The biggest threat to a country is the evil of corruption that should be eliminated as soon as possible because it is a big hurdle in development process.

6. Appropriate planning for response to natural disasters, including environmental protection, population planning, tourism development and cultural and sports promotion is necessary to solve the basic challenges. A comprehensive national strategy should be the next step to ensure the fulfillment of goals in the mid and long term [Khan 2013].

There are two important developments that can determine the historical process. The first is that Pakistan has addressed the paradigm shift of jihadists through a comprehensive war on terrorism code-named Zarb-e-Azb, and has announced the development of National Action Plan (NAP) to combat terrorism in order to eradicate extremists as a national policy. The current president of Pakistan, Ashraf Ghani also wants to promote this change in Pakistan-Afghan politics. After winning the elections in 2014 he can be considered as the right candidate at the right time. Recent events have shown that Pakistan and Afghanistan are finally aware that their economic development depends on regional peace and mutual cooperation. In connection with India's strengthening

of the security infrastructure in Afghanistan, Pakistan's military operations on the western border have attracted Pakistan's security forces. However, the new Afghan government has removed this view by building a more friendly relationship with Pakistan, thereby reducing its geographical and historical burden [Syed, Saeed, Martin 2015].

Conclusion

No doubt, Pakistan cannot cure the menace of terrorism by force. To bring prosperity in Pakistan the government should adopt an appropriate strategy in order to win the hearts and mind of its citizens. It should provide loans to the masses on easy basis. Presently the government is spending just 2% of its GDP on education. It should increase this amount to 4% and try to eradicate poverty by giving jobs to the people especially in the tribal areas. It should also bring an end to the madrassa culture in Pakistan. The main reason behind the terrorism in terms of creating special culture and traditions is madrassas which get funds from international enemy states of Pakistan. The national media should also play a vital role to educate and inform people. The purpose of terrorist is to frighten society and to destroy peace. The government should also improve its relations with neighboring countries and the US. This would lead to stabilization of security situation and hence will bring prosperity to the country.

Received / Поступила в редакцию: 08.08.2019

Accepted / Принята к публикации: 16.10.2019

References / Библиографический список

- Afridi, M.K., Yousufi, M. & Khan, M. (2014). Military Operation as a Response to Terrorism : A Case Study of Malakand Division Pakistan. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science*, 5 (20), 2000—2006.
- Afzal, S., Iqbal, H. & Inayay, M. (2012). Terrorism and Extremism as a Non-Traditional Security Threat Post 9/11: Implications for Pakistan's Security. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3 (24), 194—203.
- Ahmar, M. (2007). Sectarian Conflicts in Pakistan. *Pakistan Vision*, 9 (1), 1—19.
- Ali, G. & Li, Z. (2016). Role of Economic Factors in Terrorism in Pakistan. *Quality & Quantity*, 50 (5), 2237—2250. DOI: 10.1007/s11135-015-0260-7
- Anwar, M.A. & Rafique, Z. (2012). Defense Spending and National Security of Pakistan : A Policy Perspective. *Democracy and Security*, 8 (4), 374—399. DOI:10.1080/17419166.2012.739551
- Chishti, N.A. (2014). Pakistan's National Security: An Analytical Study. *Journal of Asian Developmental Studies*, 3 (3), 94—98.
- Fair, C.C. (2012). Pakistan in 2011: Ten Years of the War on Terror. *Asian Survey*, 52 (1), 100—113.
- Fair, C.C. (2015). Explaining Support for Sectarian Terrorism in Pakistan: Piety, Maslak and Sharia. *Religions*, 6 (4), 1137—1167.
- Gul, T.G., Hussain, A.H., Bangash, S.B. & Khattak, S.W. (2010). Impact of Terrorism on Financial Markets of Pakistan. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 18 (1), 98—108.
- Hoffman, B. (2017). Rethinking Terrorism and Counterterrorism Since 9/11. *Journal of Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 25 (5), 303—316.

- Hyder, S., Akram, N. & Padda, I.U.H. (2015). Impact of Terrorism on Economic Development in Pakistan. *Pakistan Business Review*, 1 (1), 704—722.
- Global Terrorism Index. (2018). *Global Terrorism Index 2018: Measuring and Understanding the Impact of Terrorism*. Institute for Economics & Peace.
- Javaid, U. & Haq, M.A.U. (2016). Political Challenges and Security Issues in FATA and Its Impact on Economic Development. *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, 31 (1), 367—380.
- Khan, H. (2013). Pakistan's Contribution to Global War On Terror After 9/11. *IPRI*, XIII (1), 37—56.
- Khan, I.A. (2018). Understanding Pakistan's Pro-Taliban Afghan Policy. *Pakistan Horizon*, 60 (2), 141—157.
- Malik, S. (2009). Security Sector Reforms in Pakistan: Challenges and Future Prospects. *South Asian Survey*, 16 (2), 273—289. DOI: 10.1177/097152310901600207
- Malik, Z.U.A. & He Zhilong. (2018). Present Scenario of Central Asia with Respect to Pakistan and Afghanistan in the Light of Security Challenges. *International Journal of Political Science*, 4 (1—4). DOI: 10.20431/2454-9452.0403001
- Musharraf, P. (2006). *In the Line of Fire: A Memoir*. Free Press.
- Rabbi, F. (2012). War against Terrorism and its Repercussions for Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, XXXIII (2), 72—90.
- Sahill, P.H. (2017). The Terror Speaks: Inside Pakistan's Terrorism Discourse and National Action Plan. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 41 (4), 319—337. DOI: 10.1080/1057610x.2017.1284448
- Shah, S.A.A. & Ayaz. (2015). International Security Assistance Force Drawdown from Afghanistan: Challenges and Opportunities. *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 9 (1), 1—8.
- Syed, F.Z. & Javed, S. (2017). Deterrence : A Security Strategy against Non Traditional Security Threats to Pakistan. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Management*, 4 (4), 267—274.
- Syed, S.H., Saeed, L. & Martin, R.P. (2015). Causes and Incentives for Terrorism in Pakistan. *Journal of Applied Security Research*, 10 (2), 181—206.
- Zeb, R. (2006). Cross Border Terrorism Issues Plaguing Pakistan — Afghanistan Relations. *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 4 (2), 69—74.

About the authors: *Malik Zain Ul Abiden* — PhD Scholar, School of History and Civilization, Shaanxi Normal University, Shaanxi, China (e-mail: zainulabiden@snnu.edu.cn).

He Zhilong — Professor, School of History and Civilization, Shaanxi Normal University, Shaanxi, China.

Rafay Mubeen — Masters in International Relations, University of Sargodha, Pakistan.

Сведения об авторах: *Малик Зайн уль-Абиден* — соискатель степени PhD, Школа истории и цивилизации, Шэньсийский педагогический университет, Шэньси, Китай.

Хе Джилонг — профессор Школы истории и цивилизации, Шэньсийский педагогический университет, Шэньси, Китай.

Рафай Мабин — магистр международных отношений, Университет Саргодха, Пакистан.