

Implications of the Post 9/11 Afghan Insurgency for Pakistan: A Social and Political Perspective

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Abstract:

Afghanistan has been in crises since 1970s as a result of Soviet invasion, civil war and finally the invasion of the US with the allies .At the initial stage of war that was imposed on Afghanistan in 2001, America and its allies claimed to root out the insurgents and that the peace and stability would be soon achieved .But these claims ended in smoke as the situation in Afghanistan is getting worse with the every passing day. Insurgents are still an undaunted challenge to the Allied forces which have utterly failed to find out a way to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan. Afghan crises have negatively affected Pakistan's internal and external security. Pakistan had to bear the brunt of exceeding Afghan refugees which caused numerous social, political and economical problems. Escalating crime rate, spread of weapons of all sorts, rising militancy, sectarianism, extremism, spread of drugs, terrorism and poor economy are the problems faced by Pakistan because of the crises in Afghanistan. This research paper deals with the current Afghan insurgency and its impact on the Pakistani society in political, social and economic terms.

Key words: Insurgency, War on Terror, Extremism, Militancy, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Sectarianism, Cooperation, Social Problems.

Introduction

After the fateful events of 9/11, angered USA forcefully demanded that Usama Bin Laden be handed over to it which was stubbornly refused by Taliban regime in Kabul. Thereafter, operation enduring freedom was launched against Taliban by United States of America along with its Western allies to eliminate Taliban and Al-Qaeda and to destroy their network. In order to dismantle Al-Qaeda and Taliban, America, allies and anti-Taliban Northern Alliance embarked on a series of operations in October 2001 and within a short period of three months successfully achieved, their primary objectives. In the early period of 2002, Taliban had mostly vanished from the scene. And any prospect of insurgency was not on the horizon. But after 2002, the insurgent elements once again started a massive resistance against the allied forces and are gaining strength day by day.

The prolonged and protracted war exercised very negative effects on Pakistan which had to pay a heavy toll in shape of a monstrous number of casualties, shattered economy, frequent terrorist attacks and on ongoing war in tribal belt. Pakistani society has been metamorphosed into an intolerant, bigoted and narrow-minded body fragmented by sectarianism. In this study the focus of the researchers is to explore the various repercussions and unwanted by-products of Afghan war on Pakistani Society.

Literature Review

An insurgency fundamentally relates the internal and domestic affairs but can be possibly manipulated by foreign elements. McCormick says, “an insurgency is primarily a struggle for power (over a political space) between a states (or an occupying power) and one or more popularly based challengers.” (McCormick, Horton & Harrison 2007, 323) Raison d'être of insurgency is to grab power from incumbent authority or

dismember the state. History shows that once social fiber weakens, power vacuum naturally tends to fill leading to a possible result.

Roughly insurgencies are having two basic forms. These two forms include National and freedom oriented (Metz & Millen 2004, 2). In case of freedom insurgency, contenders are a legal government and insurgent. While freedom and liberation insurgencies are directed against governments supposedly promoting foreign agenda or protecting *outré* interests.

The Post 9/11 insurgency in Afghanistan, fundamentally an armed conflict between the Afghan government supported and endorsed by the US led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and an assemblage of various militant groups, is being fought to topple the incumbent Afghan government and to turf out foreign troops from Afghan territory. A multitude of insurgent groups, leading among those are the Taliban, Haqqani Network and Hezb-e-Islami having contacts in all neighborly states, have taken up arms against the government. Other than that, many tribal chieftains, resenting at the presence of foreign troops in their country and government inapt policies, have gone to war with the government and international troops. The chaos prevalent in Afghan society lately is identical to that of existing prior to Taliban (Sinon 2008, 255).

In spite of the fact that the composition of the Taliban forces includes the Pashtuns as 95 %, the main objective of their rebellion is to set up a state founded on the Islamic ideology, Deobandi ideology (Giustozzi 2007, 12-15). Some reports reveal that some non-Pashtun ethnicities provide back up to the Taliban. For instance, Hazaras in Ghazni province supported the Taliban (Giustozzi 2007, 48).

Moreover, in 2006 the Taliban Regime was provided support by a clergy network that was ethnically comprehensive, as the revolt of the Taliban was openly given approval by a majority of the Mullahs in the mosques in many areas of

Afghanistan, even in those provinces where non-Pashtoon ethnicities constitute the majority (Giustozzi 2007, 45-46). In addition, the Taliban are also getting support from the Uzbek warlords in the Northern provinces as well as near the Pakistan border. Jones (2008) is of the view that the Taliban are fighting for fundamentalist ideological change and there is no manifestation that their objective is to revive a pure Pashtun state, or ethnic dominance (9).

The rebellion against the Soviet forces helped in the growth of ethnic consciousness among the insurgent groups (Maley 2002, 158). During the civil war of the 1990s, the ethnic fragmentation was enhanced among the rebel groups. The groups used the ethnic demarcation as an instrument to gain resources and power. Put differently, the nationalistic liberation ideology was superseded by the new identity politics. Regardless of the ethnic homogeneousness of the Taliban insurgents, the current insurgency is an ideological rebellion the purpose of which is to reestablish the Islamic state. Although, few incidents of skirmishes among the tribal and ethnic groups have occurred during the current Taliban insurgency but they are not important enough to discredit the ideological track of the insurgency (Giustozzi 2007, 48).

Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan is aimed at a unified, untroubled and friendly Afghanistan as a next door neighbouring state. Any turmoil and tribulation in Afghanistan could endanger Pakistan's security, was the basis of Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan. Accordingly, even during Taliban regime Pakistan was desirous of a broad-based Government comprising of all Afghan groups. Pakistan even looked for United Nations to play its role in negotiating peace among all key players there (Akhtar 2008, 59). Its diplomats strove hard to broker peace between Taliban and Northern alliance (Akhtar 2008, 59). Additionally, to promote consensus, it tried to foregather a conference of regional countries. But this task involved numerous overwhelming obstacles for Pakistan in

shape of opposition from neighbouring Muslim states of Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. These countries disapproved of Pakistan's support extended to Taliban. Iran was irate and cross as it doubted that Saudi Arabia and US funded and supported Taliban movement while Pakistan performed the role of go-between (Akhtar 2008, 59).

So, as the domain of foreign policy is concerned, patronizing Taliban did create complications for Pakistan. Friction and enmity snowballed with Iran and central Asian states. Access to Central Asian States was not gained. Pakistan failed to exercise its influence on Taliban on any issue which invited censure and disapproval on the part of international community including some all weather friends like China. In spite of all these difficulties, it was not possible for Pakistan to take a U-turn on its Afghan policy. Then the fateful event of 9/11 took place and Pakistan being the main supporter of Taliban had to bear the brunt of American rage. World politics went through a whole process of metamorphosis and remodeling.

Pakistan was pushed into a blind alley by the historic terrorist attacks on America. There was no safe option left for Pakistan. Outraged America put Pakistan in an unpredictable and precarious position having two options, either to remain a supporter of Taliban or to join America against Taliban. Availability of a neutral course was out in the market. Humiliated and disgraced American pride was in the way of Islamabad to maneuver. General Pervez Musharraf deemed it right to surrender to American demand. So, willy-nilly Pakistan became a part of war campaign launched against his erstwhile ally Taliban (Ahmed 2012, 214-215). Within the span of a couple of decades Pakistan was once again selected to play the role of a front line state in the war against terrorism. Pakistan provided allied forces with support in terms of providing air bases, intelligence sharing, and supply routes to target Taliban and Al-Qaeda bases in Afghanistan (Ahmed 2012, 215).

Research Methodology

The methodology pursued during the course of research has been the analytical and descriptive. All the issues related to the subject have been thoroughly analyzed to evaluate and assess the problem. In order to fulfill this purpose both primary and secondary sources have been consulted. This has covered books, journals, relevant web sites and articles published in daily newspapers.

Repercussions on Pakistan

A long intense and lethal war in Afghanistan took a heavy toll not from Afghanistan but from its neighboring states as well. This long and complicated situation left lasting effects on Pakistan being the front line state on both occasions against the expansionism of communisms and war against terrorism in the wake of-9/11 attacks.

The impacts of the Afghan crisis can be categorized as follows:

Condoning Military Rule and Going Nuclear by Pakistan

When war broke out in Afghanistan in 1979 Pakistan was being ruled by a military dictator General Zia ul Haq. Pakistan was not in the good book of the US government because of having keen interest in attaining the nuclear capability and being ruled by a military dictator. But the war in Afghanistan changed the scenario dramatically making General Zia ul Haq a blue-eyed boy of the west. Pakistan willingly played an instrumental role in defeating Soviet Union and confining the influence of Communism (Hilali 2002, 2-3). Pakistan also exploited and manipulated the situation and successfully accomplished the procurement of nukes to deter its arch-rival India (Hilali 2002, 4).

As a partner of the US, in the Afghan jihad against the

Soviet invasion, Pakistan was provided with aid and military assistance and was also given exemption from Symington and Glenn amendments for six years. But in 1990, Pakistan faced infliction of sanctions by Pressler amendment. In May 1998, when Pakistan detonated its six nuclear devices in reaction to the Indian nuclear explosions, the American administration again inflicted tight sanctions on Pakistan by Glenn and Symington amendments. Pakistan again faced democracy sanctions imposed by the US administration in response to the military coup of October 1999 by General Pervez Musharraf (Akhter 2012, 206).

Musharraf's military regime was facing an international isolation, as it overturned the democratic government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, and was being pressurized by the international community to reinstate democracy in Pakistan. However, General Musharraf's assurance of cooperation in the global war on terror reduced the international isolation of the country to an extra ordinary extent. All sanctions on Pakistan were removed and it was provided with huge economic assistance by the US. The dictatorship of General Pervez Musharraf was legitimized and the US administration abstained from criticizing Musharraf to reinstate democracy in Pakistan and Pakistan was considered as a key ally in the war against terrorism (Kronstadt 2005, 4).

Arrival of Afghan Refugees in Pakistan

As a result of sour revolution of 1979 and soviet attack in 1979 a multitude of war stricken Afghans rushed to Pakistan. To accumulate about four million Afghan migrant 386 camps emerged in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtoon Khwa (Hilali 2002, 8).The post 9/11 war gave continuation to the inflow of refugees from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Theses Afghan refugees made Pakistan pay heavy price in shape of innumerable social economical and environmental problems. Cross-border smuggling swelled. Afghan labor force spread widely in major

cities of Pakistan (Begum 2010, 115-116). Security problems and law and order situation worsened throughout the country. Border Cities faced ethno-demographic polarity.

Weapon Culture in Pakistan

In order to strengthen Afghan Mujahideen the US distributed huge amount of weapons among them .Lethal weapons like AK 47 and small fire arms were easily and readily available in Pakistan at cheap rates as Afghan Mujahideen smuggled them to Pakistan. Additionally, Pakistani's indigenous arsenal and world's largest illegal arm's market Darra market with its about 2600 and 3000 technicians began producing and engineering all types of modern fire-arms at a stretch round the clock (Hilali 2002, 13). Even today weapons like rapid fire guns, missiles, rapid fire guns (RPGs) and anti-tank ammos are smuggled, spread and sold in Pakistan. Indeed this wide-spread weaponization is the root cause of recent terrorism, militancy, sectarian clashes and rifts, and growing insurgency in tribal areas and Balochistan.

Drugs Culture

Poppy plant is widely cultivated in Afghanistan as a source of opium, a substance having tranquillizing effect. A research reveals that about 90% of opium in the world is cultivated and obtained from Afghanistan (Hilali 2002, 13). Poppy farming grew vigorously in Afghanistan during the war of the Afghans against the Soviets by the Afghan war lords to meet war expenses. Even today Afghanistan is the main supplier and producer of drugs like opium and heroin in the world. Consequently, arms and drug mafia emerged in tribal areas of Pakistan. Drugs undermined Pakistani society as their availability was not a big deal. About 45000 Pakistanis fell a prey to drugs till 1986 in addition to about five thousand heroin addicts (Hilali 2002, 13). According to an estimation, by the year 2006 the number of drug addicts in Pakistan has increased

up to 628,000, including about 482,000 as heroin users (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Pakistan (UNODCP) 2008, 15).

Mounting Crime Rate

Weaponization in Pakistani society worsened the law and order situation and escalated crime rate throughout the country. Car lifting, kidnapping and street crimes snowballed without any check, political and religions assassinations became rampant. Which paved the way of keeping personal armies of guards; a metamorphic wave hit the society and divided it on ethnic and religions bases. Exercise of power and militancy gained popularity in Pakistani social fabric.

Talibanization and Increase in Insurgency:

Taliban are Students from religious seminaries from Pakistan and Afghanistan who emerged in the context of civil war and lawlessness which prevailed in Afghanistan during Russian aggression and even went on after the culmination of soviet war (Begum 2010, 200). Till 1995, Taliban had captured Kabul and enforced strictest Sharia Law. They maintained law and order effectively, thus gained acceptance and popularity among Afghans (Mcgeary 2001, 1-2.). Initially Taliban got recognition by Pakistan, Saudi-Arabia and UAE.

Taliban regime spanned from 1995 to 2001 mostly occupied by internal war against Northern Alliance. Usama bin Laden settled in Afghanistan during Russian -Afghan war era and later on lavishly provided financial assistance to Taliban. Al-Qaeda established its training camps on Afghan soil and catered for man power to Taliban from Middle East and Arab world.

Then the fateful mishap of 9/11 occurred in America whose blame was promptly leveled against Usama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda. USA urged Taliban to hand over Usama and other leadership of Al-Qaeda to which Taliban declined

demanding substantial evidence against Usama. This refusal invited American rage and eventually America along with NATO launched offensive against Taliban on 7 October 2001. Taliban discreetly retreated and dispersed in Afghanistan and tribal areas of Pakistan (Hussain 2007, 143). In these circumstances, Pakistan had to launch military operation in tribal areas against Al-Qaeda and other foreign insurgents entrenched there. This was for the first time that Pakistan army trod through tribal areas since partition. But tribal people took it as an attempt to curtail their freedom and subjugate them. Soon resentment arose which led to the creation of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) under the leadership of Baitullah Mahsood (Abbas 2008, 2).

During that period some grave and tragic incidents took place including October 2006 Strike against a Mudrasah run by Tahreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat, Red mosque episode and more so the drone attacks launched by CIA in tribal areas which created an ideal situation for Pakistani Society to get talibanized. TTP in collaboration with other outfits involved in anti-state building, garrisons. Female schools and security personnel's Pakistani society experienced militancy, religious intolerance ethnic polarization, insecurity, violent attacks against minorities and extremism in a never ending streak.

Terrorism Prevalence in Pakistan

Soon after its inception, TTP along with its ilk promoted terrorism, anarchy and a growing sense of insecurity by targeting government buildings, infrastructure and assassinating leading political, social and religious figures. About forty thousand Pakistani Nationals lost their life besides five thousand security personnel. Alone in 2010 more than two thousand terrorist attacks engulfed about three thousand lives and leaving about six thousand injured (Rana 2011, 2).

This growing discontent and chaos compelled the educated class to migrate and secure a better future for their

coming generation (Askari 2008). Pakistan had to suffer a massive brain drain in shape of roughly six million educated Pakistanis fleeing the country and settling in developed western countries (Askari 2008). This turmoil also exercised a negative influence on foreign investors and they showed unwillingness to invest their capital in war-stricken Pakistan. Simultaneously local investors and industrialists shifted their capital to foreign countries. In the years 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009 the Pakistan economy suffered a loss of 260 billion, 301 billion, 361 billion, 484 billion and 669 billion Pakistani rupees respectively (The Nation, 2008). Pakistan is now desperately struggling against the unleashed monster of terrorism. From 2008 to 2011, the Security Forces have apprehended 3143 alleged terrorists in different areas of Pakistan (South Asia Terrorism Portal 2012).

Ethnic and Political Discord

Society consists of people belonging to different ethnic groups, having diverse and divergent political and religious views, speaking different languages and sharing cultural diversity. Equality, justice, equal opportunities to make progress, harmonious and amicable approach to tolerate others are the binding components of any society. If these essential elements are absent the society is bound to rack and ruin. Ethnic and chauvinist approach of sub-nationalist faction in Pakistan is a by-product of Afghan mess leading Pakistan towards social polarization.

A tiny and ordinary mishap took place in Karachi in 1985 in which an Urdu speaking girl was run over by a Pashto speaking driver (Begum 2010, 171). Though trifling and insignificant in nature, this incident exercised long-lasting effects on ethnic division of Karachi. Hatred and animosity sowed by this fateful mishap still haunt this city. In order to wipe out internal terrorist networks Pakistan army launched massive offensive in swat and Waziristan which added to the

problems of the population residing these areas and a large chunk of inhabitants was forced to leave the area. A number of IDPs belonging to Pashtoon community settled in Karachi. This shift further deteriorated ethnic division and consequently resulted in worsening of law and order situation in the cosmopolitan mega-city.

Sectarian Extremism:

Pakistan's neighbouring states have always been playing a clandestine role in fanning sectarianism in Pakistan. Sectarianism existed in Pakistani society for a long time but some fateful events played a decisive role in furthering sectarianism i.e. Iranian revolution in 1979 and Afghan- Soviet war. Iran kept on supporting Shia community while General Zia ul Haq strengthened Sunny Islam in Pakistan.

Pakistan emerged as a Sunni dominated state after going through Islamization process initiated by General Zia ul Haq. Tehrik-Nifaz-e-Fiqah Jafaria (TNFT) a political organization was established by Shia community of Pakistan to counter Zia's Islamization which was deemed discriminatory by Shia community (Abou-Zahab 2002, 117). At the same time Saudi Arabia supported Sunnis in Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) while Iranians majority belonged to Shia school of thought. Consequently their mutual and bilateral relations did not remain warm and touched the lowest ebb. Moreover Saudi-Arabia extended maximum support to Sunni Clerks to establish Anjuman Sipaha-Sahaba to counter Tehrik-Nifaz-e-Fiqah Jafaria (TNFT) in 1985 (Begum 2010, 152). Since then, there erupted a long and protracted war between them which has claimed thousands of lives including religious scholar's doctors and prominent figures belonging to these communities. Though Pakistani Government has officially banned their activities yet their backstairs activities are still in progress.

Baluchistan Unrest:

Balochistan being the largest province of Pakistan in terms of area (about 43% of gross area of Pakistan) holds a unique and specific importance owing to its significant geo-strategic position in the region. Though having fair amount of mineral wealth, a major chunk of population in Balochistan is virtually living in Stone Age.

This backwardness and underdevelopment is the root cause of the gulf between Balochs and Islamabad. This gulf is widening with the passage of time providing conducive atmosphere for the sub-nationalist elements to exploit anti-state sentiments. Some portentous events that took place including Soviet Afghan war, Iran-Iraq war and 9/11 tragedy further stabilized and boosted the momentum of secession movement of Balochistan. In addition establishment of Gawader Port and presence of huge amount of minerals built up the attraction of major world-economic players towards this region. It's a common perception that, CIA, Mossad, Raw and Afghan intelligence have taken the task of training financing and equipping the anti-state elements of Balochistan (Sajjad, 2011). With foreign connivance, collaboration and financial assistance, there are a number of separatist outfits functioning in Balochistan. Most important of them are Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), Balochistan Republican Army (BRA), Lashkar-e-Balochistan and Baloch Musala Difa Tanzeem (Rana 2011, 25). Government of Pakistan is trying hard to counter these anti-state elements and curb the separatist movement.

Government's Response

To handle the monster of terrorism, Taliban issue, to root out Al-Qaeda and ilk and to put down root- and branch secession movement in Balochistan, government of Pakistan has taken some solid measures as:

- Operating militarily in different regions.

- Mounting local Lashkars/Militias against the extremists.
- Strategy of clearing, holding and building.
- Strategy of incentives and relief packages.
- Banning terrorist cohesive units out, etc.

Security of the state of Pakistan has been jeopardized and imperiled by insurgency launched by Taliban movement in tribal areas after 9/11 and growing activities to undermine the state by secession movement of sub-nationalists in Balochistan. Pakistan was left with no option but to unleash its military power to wipe out Separatist and terrorist elements from its soil major military operations embarked on by Pakistani Government involved Operation Sherdil, Operation Rahe-rast, Operation Rahe-nijat and Operation Daraghlum and Bia Daraghlum, etc. in Malakand, Swat, South Waziristan region and in Khyber Agency region respectively.

Recently, there does not exist any NGA (no go area) in Pakistan as a result of military operations carried out by military and Para military forces in collaboration with local Lashkars (tribal militias) in which more than five thousand soldiers and officers sacrificed their lives while seven hundred Taliban and Al-Qaeda Operatives were arrested. Thousands of Taliban and other extremists were put to death. The government has started social and economic development reforms in FATA and Balochistan after wiping out the strongholds of Taliban insurgents and Baloch separatists. Construction of infra-structures schools, hospitals and bridges is underway in the affected areas. In addition to this some mega projects have also been introduced there to alleviate the grievances of local people. Political rights have been given to the inhabitants of FATA. To provide honorable living to the youth in Balochistan about 3900 people have been given employment in accordance with Balochistan Package (Rana 2011, 25). About 8339 Balochs have been recruited in armed forces as an exceptional proposition (Rana 2011, 25). Quota for

FATA and Balochistan students in educational institution has been increased to the maximum. To curb terrorism all bands and organizations involved in terrorist and anti-stat activities have been banned. Their accounts have been frozen and they are disallowed to raise and collect funds publicly.

Conclusion

Afghanistan current problems can be solved by comprehensive planning based on long-term priorities involving international co-operation and consent of all local and regional main stakeholders. Current stick and carrot policy applied by western powers has clearly proved unsuccessful. American-led operation to secure Afghanistan lacks credibility and is generally considered a hasty scheme to quit rather flee from this graveyard of empires. The scheme to evolve co-ordination and equivalency among stakeholders with different political interests in an ever-changing situation like Afghanistan holds little prospects and last 12 years have witnessed it. Unless and until local capacity is not enhanced and the concept of common vision is not promoted, a respectable and lasting solution is not possible.

The war in Afghanistan has put Pakistan's internal and external security at stake by weakening the writ of state in some certain areas. Taliban militancy and separatist movements got bumped up, Pakistani society got unionized which triggered the state of all types of crimes. The post 9/11 insurgency in Afghanistan has exercised very negative effects on Pakistan which had to pay a heavy toll in shape of a monstrous number of casualties, shattered economy, frequent terrorist attacks and on ongoing war in tribal belt. Pakistani society has been metamorphosed into an intolerant, bigoted and narrow-minded body fragmented by sectarianism. Pakistan has lost about 35000 lives and has endured immense losses of more than US \$ 67.93 billion in the war against terrorism from the

year 2002 onward (Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Finance 2010, 219-220). Recently, keeping in view the dire consequences the Government of Pakistan has adopted a comprehensive and elaborate multi-dimensional policy to establish the writ of government in war stricken areas. This policy consists of social, economic reforms and relief packages to restore peace and tranquility in backward areas. These steps indeed are taken timely and in the right direction which will exercise positive influence in the days to come.

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