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Civil-Military Relations in the Context of National Action Plan Implementation

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Abstract

The National Action Plan was initiated by the Government of Pakistan in December, 2014 in reaction to APS attack and with the objective to fight terrorism and extremism. The implementation offers the information on the relations between the civilian and the military in the Pakistan and a detailed picture for the formation of security architecture due to the historical rivalry and structure of the state. Based on the interest of this research, this study will centre on the military operational use of NA and civilian control policy implementation on NAP. It presents such challenges as trust factors, awareness of available resources, and confusion over which actor bears or shares the responsibility of developing a coherent counter terrorism strategy. Based on the secondary data, policy reviews, and professional opinions gathered within the scope of this paper, this paper provides a critical evaluation of how the military retains control over the implementation of NAP, the civilian attempts at regaining control, and the implications of the trends for the civil-military relationship. They include institutionalisation of capacity, new perception of roles, and desirable structures for the reinforcement of coordination. They become useful research findings to explain the type of civil-military relation in counter-

terrorism and to provide recommendations to improve governance particularly in the context of Pakistan's security.

Keywords: National Action Plan, counterterrorism, civil-military relations, governance, Pakistan

1. Introduction

The Rise of Terrorism and Extremism in Pakistan Since the Early 2000s

Pakistan has experienced terrorism and extremism over the period from early 2000s and depends with the regional, political and socio economic factors. Major violence, militancy and instability in Pakistan can be traced to the interplay of both external and internal factors: Foreign politics, role of Pakistani in the war against terrorism, nature of politics and ideational and growth of extremism.

Contribution of regional instability and the effects of the war against terror

The manifestations of terrorism in Pakistan during early 2000 have been attributed to the friendship that was chartered between this nation and America following the September 11 incidence in the United States of America. During the 9/11, Musharraf the president of Pakistan sold the American economic and military aid to win the American led war on terrorism. To be more precise, in the mountains, Pakistan provided assistance to the drilled American forces by providing logistic supplies to the US for military operations against the Taliban and al-Qaeda which is best explained by Fair (2010).

But this amalgamation although made certain that the American aid had some unpleasant consequences for Pakistan. As a consequence of the U.S presence in Afghanistan most of the Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters were pushed out of the area, many of them into Pakistan's FATA where the state had a weak capacity to apply physical power (Afzal, 2021). These regions defined by weak state institutiography and exposition to physical encapsulation offered different types of environment to various insurgent organisations including the Taliban, al-Qaeda and, subsequently, the TTP. Elevation of these militants in near the state border areas of Pakistan was not only a security threat inside the country but also turn over the region into a hub. These groups transgress the borders, recruit the fighters and launched a war against Pakistan's security forces—Rashid, 2008.

Withstanding the US invasion of Afghanistan and cooperating with it in the war on terror facilitated the militants to give them a resistance story which could have helped in mobilizing locals especially fringe groups in the peripheral region of the tribal areas. Some of these insurgent groups started campaigning co-ordinated attacks all the more across the country suggesting that insecurity was a more or less a permanent phenomenon especially in view of bases in FATA. Instead, the extremism in this country increased because of Middle Eastern conflict exports, which brought radicalism to Pakistan.

2. Internal Socio-Political Issues: The research investigating the issue of corporate governance failures that cause economic inequalities. Domestically also in Pakistan there was a series of social and political crises making situation in the country suitable for Terrorism and Extremism herewith. However, the state's failure to provide the services especially in the areas that are considered as 'backward' by the state; FATA, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP province) creates frustrations and marginalization. These states lacked adequate state capacity, rampant corruption, and what amounted to no minimal governance, which made them susceptible to extremism thereon.

Furthermore, it was proved that socio- economical status and poverty played a central role in the radicalisation of the youths. Once again poverty, high unemployment and poor living standards provided militants an opportunity to recruit dissatisfied staff from the economically less developed areas. Some religious schools, or madrassas or seminaries, ran with virtually no supervision and were said to be communicating a harsh and intolerant type of Islam that encouraged the use of violence for achieving political or diplomatic ends (Imtiaz, 2017). Ends these madrassas became nurseries to extremism and terrorism and increased the pace of its spread in the country.

Extremism in Pakistan was also fueled by the political instabilities as well alongside with the religion hatred. When sovereignty crisis accompanied by political volatility coupled with political transitions and emerging incidence of corruption unsteadied authority in the state, militant groups found a footing. The centre lost the opportunity to dominate the rural and tribal areas that were let loose to precipitate fundamentalism (Raza, 2014). Furthermore, as the following sections of this paper will demonstrate, internal division and the failure to offer a coherent policy would provide the opportunities for terrorist organisations.

3. Research Gap

Indeed there is dearth of adequate literature on some of these relation between civilian and military powers in the elaboration as well as implementation of NAP. While much prior literature concerns the factors of counterterrorism operations supported by the military, little large scale research exists on the civil-military requirements for counterterrorism cooperation. There is a gap in the literature by way of analytical studies on military relations with civilian officials and their implementation capacity in the policy especially in the areas of madrassa reforms, counter-terrorism financing and hate speech (Fazal, 2015).

Trends are mostly reassuring given that they all focus on the security aspects and military dynamism; yet, few of these works touched on the systematic impediments to the cooperation between civilian government officials and the military planners. Because of the civilian reforms they control –Education polices and banning of extremism this gap should be narrowed to grasp the problems of NAP implementation adequately (Khan & Ahmed, 2015). This is despite the fact that Pakistani civilian institution play the pivotal role in the implementation of reform There is limited available literature in this context, especially when one considers the governance failure debate in Pakistan and the emerging security environment.

4. Objective and Structure

The rationale of this research is therefore to establish factors that may either facilitate or hinder civil-military collaboration in delivering NAP. To assess the enablers and barriers in the study, the research adopts a mixed-methods research approach to analyse the synchronised and coordinated interaction between the military operations and civil reforms concerning the 20-point agenda in the NAP. This research will also seek to provide information on how the various challenges pertaining to the coordination of ashes can be dealt with in order to enhance the best practices in governance.

Organizing the paper's structure will be reasonable so as to present the best analysis that will be required. The paper will then outline the research questions and objectives after which a brief historical background of civil-military relations shall be outlined with reference to Pakistan's political and security systems and thus put into context its framework for governance. The remaining sections of this paper will develop this understanding of NAP concerning what it aims

at, its prerequisites, military and civilian elements and the question of integration. The paper will conclude by outlining measures of how the framework seeks to enhance civil-military collaboration along with a number of measures that could be drawn from the analysis on NAP.

5. The Army Public School Attack and the Nuances for the National Action Plan (NAP)

This discussed fight of Pakistan against terrorism and also highlighted those operations could further divide in three major chapter; the first ending on 16 December 2014 with APS Peshawar tragedy. Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) – a wing of Pakistani Taliban – has perpetrated this school bloodbath and killed 141 people including 132 school children. This attack which is still counted among the most brutal acts of terrorisms in the history of Pakistan raised a jolt and a state of anger followed by sorrow across the nation (Fazal, 2015).

The APS event was not only a clear manifestation of the ruthlessness and scale of militancy of the TTP but also it was the provocative act of aggression on the Pakistan militarys elite. The school that was for the children of the military personnel also became one of the high profile soft targets . It was blamed on the TTP which justified the attack saying it was carried out in retaliation for military operations particularly Operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan against terrorists' havens. The brutality of the strike brought the nation to alert and brought into focus, a country-wide debate on the state's anti-terrorism measures.

After the APS attack and especially after that there appeared to emerge the realization among all the carious parties and groups that the war on terrorism in Pakistan could not be waged and won solely through the use of military might (Yaseen, 2018). The said attack led the way to the begin of National Action Plan (NAP that was developed in a full fledged manner in order to counteract the terrorism in every aspect of the military and civilian term. On December 24, 2014 the government of Pakistan the political and military leadership with the support of Internationally Recognized Political Parties announced 20 point agenda known as National Action Plan (NAP) which contained a range of Anti-terror initiated and counter-terrorism legal statutes, education reform in the religious seminaries a co-ordinate counter-terrorismcal military civilian Strategy and other.

It was to ensure the arrest of militants and terrorists, enhance the capacity of LEA, and witnessed changes in the religious domain in India. It also highlighted the necessity of providing solutions to the problem of terrorism, such as eradicating extra judicial killings, hunger and illiteracy in the Arab countries and sectarianism. But there are various issues that have been observed by the strategists which hinders the implementation of NAP more especially the participation of civilians in counter terrorism strategy.

6. Challenges in NAP Implementation: Civil-Military Coordination

Conducted through NAP, positive impact on the security governance of Pakistan has been realized in which the military makes strong authoritative decisions for the nation. However, in counterterrorism measures continued and demonstrated that primarily focused on military implementation, civil-military cooperation are still insufficient, without them, NAP can not succeed. Armed forces have intervened in the NAP implementation about the structure, the use, and administration of the military and its courts dealing with terrorism cases. Hence these military courts can be viewed as efficient in regard to criminative procedure which is slow in Pakistan but has raised public issue in term of rights of individuals and predictable depletion of civil liberties (Bajwa, 2015).

However, the NAP also outlined the process of democratization of the civilian institutions such as the police, judiciary and the education system that are still of significant value for Pakistan's counter-terrorism strategy at the end user level. Tactically, it means non-state involvement in dealing with social political aspect of terrorisms while military remains decisive on security aspect. However, political instability, poor governance, the relationship between Legislature, Executive, and Judicial branches, and incompetent performance of civilian and military organizations in Pakistan have to an extent affected the 'proper' operation of NAP (Shah, 2017). Terrorism and extremisms in Pakistan since the early 2000, incidents can be linked with internal and external factors also. These are; The War on terror, regional instabilities, political instabilities, socio-economic disparities that continues to spur radical political radicalism and militants activities in the country. Terrorism in Pakistan reached an invisible level and saw its worst terror attack in Army Public School Peshawar in December 2014 and it altered the terrorism in Pakistan (Gillani, 2021). As several strategies in NAP indicate, military has been quite involved in the implementation process, nevertheless, the true value of the plan is reflected

in civil-military architecture systems whenever they are to be implemented hand in hand. This is only possible when the system is evolving in the dimension of good governance, better education system and effective policing to know the real facts about terrorism those are pertaining to Pakistan.

7. The overall importance of NAP (National Action Plan)

The National Action Plan (NAP) is a policy developed as a reactions of December 2014 APS attack by the Government of Pakistan after Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The incidence in which 141 people were killed out of which 132 were school children to create a coherent strategy for counter-terrorism, counter-extremism and counter-militancy (Zahid, 2016). NAP has been articulated in a form of twenty point agenda out of which it was aimed to fight terrorism from military aspect as well as civilian front.

Here therefore, is a brief of the 20-Point Agenda of NAP.

Below are some few broad strategies that have been put in place which is 18 out of the 20 point agenda of NAP, in tackling the menace of terrorism, extremism and militant ideologies. These point are to improve the legal, political and institutional environment and governance of the country. Key elements of the NAP include:

- 1. Terrorist Financing and Money Laundering:** Combating terrorism financing and furthering the laws against money laundering ending financial institutions with global anti-terrorism financing (Khan, 2015).
- 2. Countering Hate Speech and Extremist Ideology:** It comprised of; banning of hate speech, extreme obs objects and ideas, sectarianism and radicalism media ideology (Bajwa, 2015).
- 3. Madrassa Reforms:** Changing madrassas into a non-military constructed idea and pushing for the authorization of madrassas and the power for the regulation of these religious institutions (Imtiaz, 2017).
- 4. Strengthening Law Enforcement:** Outlawing of Militants and arming Police and Paramilitary forces to combat terror and fascism in particular enhancing the Counter terrorism wings in their respective departments (Khan & Ahmed, 2015).

5. Military Operations: Detection and neutralization of terrorist source and its subsequent continuation and enhancement of military operation primarily in the tribal areas to wipe out terrorism groups and their apparatus (Shah, 2017).

6. Judicial Reforms and Speedy Trials: Developing an exceptional military operation that attempt terrorism involved cases expeditiously with an aim of preventing large number of cases that had congested the civil courts (Fazal, 2015).

7. Combating Sectarianism: Suggesting political and legal themes against sectarian terrorism, defining the legal ban of sectarian groups (owing to terrorism) as the principal action (Raza, 2014).

8. Implementation of Anti-Terrorism Laws: The anti-terrorism laws should be strengthened and ensure that they can be applied fully (Rashid, 2008).

NAP is an umbrella term of a structure which also encompasses the policies that are designed to browse the extremism and terrorism in Pakistan. Despite requiring distinctive warfare solutions, it acknowledges the legislative, educational and social solutions that are indeed existent. But it is based on civil military interaction between the civil and the military institutions (Zaidi, 2012).

8. Coordination Between Civilian and Military Institutions

One of the most critical components that make NAP successful is the question of coordination of civil and military players. Earlier, Pakistan faced challenges in Civil-Military Relations, and so hence, there is the blurring of a state strategy of both governance and security (Zalman, 2021). Here, people of political authority, military leaders, police and other security organisations and the citizenry are duty bound to adopt this complex doctrine of NAP to fight terrorism. The Pakistani military has been assigned a major part in the military operations and other civilian personalities are supposed to concentrate on socio economic issues like madarsa reform, legal proceedings and crusades (Khan, 2015). It is a combined approach that has to involve the cooperation and therefore the trust between the two sectors that more often is uneasy due to either rivalry of interests or tenets of sectoral autonomy (Shah, 2017).

9. An Insight into Pakistan's Civil Military Relations

Thus, the relations between civil and military institutions in Pakistan can be described quite often as spells of dominance by the latter. The military has directly governed Pakistan in all but 24

years of its existence: It was the military governments under Ayub Khan between 1958 and 1969, Zia ul Haq between 1977 and 1988 and Musharraf between 1999 and 2008 which further entrenched the military's political and bureaucratic incipient appendages (Jaffrelot, 2002).

This research will also undertake a historical overview of civil-military relations in order to understand the context in which the contemporary issues arose:

The military forces of course have had a passionate blow in the political structure of the country and the armed forces have time and again used the threat analysis as a pretext for meddling in politics. Military dictators have always ruled Pakistan since the time Pakistan got independence in 1947 with the extremists of the military taking over coups of the civilians and power over the civil governments in the political as well as in the administrative control (Macdonald, 2021). On one hand it safeguarded external threats and to a greater extent it incubate intrinsic threats as well, but in doing so it remained authoritarian, which in turn overwhelms and distort the democratic structures and organizations of the country.

In military regime sense institutional transformation has taken place in favor of the military. For example in which during General Zia-ul-Haq's regime, Pakistan started a process of Islamization of its legal and education systems and changes that impacts on the country's civil Military relations where only manifested in the late 2000s (Rashid, 2008). In fact, Pakistan's civilian institutions formally at least were still relatively muted but far from powerless and many important changes took place at precisely this time. And time and again the democratically elected governments came into power but the military supremacy was still there.

10. Trust Deficit and Implications for NAP

But there has always been a trust deficit in dealings between the civilian and military institutions in Pakistan in particular. That has remained the case because although civilian governments struggle to exercise political power over the military, the converse remains true; the military dominates power over security and defense, foreign policy and diplomacy. This has precipitated absence of co-ordination and full implementation of integrated national policies. Specifically in NAP the importance of the military in counter-terrorism operations with concurrent civilian Government control of reforms has raised some questions about such matters as duplication of role and primacy. The lack of trust can therefore compromise core areas of interventions such as

madrassa reforms, judicial reforms counter – extremism measures among others if they are not well coordinated (Shah, 2017).

The engagement of armed forces in counter-terrorism cannot be overemphasized; especially with operations like Zarb-e-Azb in the tribal areas. However, based on the fundamental causes of radicalism, civil bodies cannot shy away from accepting the responsibility on issues to do with poverty, illiteracy, social injustice among other vices (Fair, 2010). In this paper's view, therefore, achieving these objectives is the ultimate success of NAP, and it can only be realised by addressing these historical civil millennium challenges to partnerships so that civil and military entities can help and support their counterparts.

11. Role of Military in NAP Implementation

Overview of Military-led Operations (e.g., Zarb-e-Azb, Radd-ul-Fasaad)

It may so happen that military in case of counter terrorism zone, is in driving seat for Pakistan since commencement of National Action Plan (NAP). It's role mainly concerns direction of direct military operations against the terror groups/militant organizations. NAP also include two key scale military operations Zarb-e-Azb initiated in 2014 and Radd-ul-Fasaad in 2017.

Zarb-e-Azb

Begun in June 2014, Zarb-e-Azb was the new fresh multi faceted operation primarily aimed at absorbing the terrorist network in North Waziristan which for long has been known to be the hospitality of multiple groups the Taliban, al-Qaeda and other insurgent factions. They testified as to the operational effectiveness of this operation in the sense that most militant control areas were secured, significant aspects of terrorism significantly limited and position of many militants known changed. The operation was launched in response to a noticeable rise in the terrorist activities especial the APS, attack in Peshawar in 2014. This was severally directed towards TTP as well as the foreign militants which signaled a shift in attitude to the fight against terrorism (Shah 2017).

Radd-ul-Fasaad

Although Operation Raddul Fasaad, that started in February 2017, appeared similar to Zarb-e-Azb, yet it was not a regional operation but a country wide zarb plus brought the army into cities. This operation was concerned with eliminating such dormant cells; weapons; hideouts and other supporters of such groups in Pakistan. Radd-ul-Fasaad was even larger in its mandate than Operation Zhob: it was for combating sectarian murder, enhancing security in threatened areas, and, by enhancing policing and borders, limiting the growth of militancy. The strategic application of force and espionage, border security and sensitization were among the activities that were part of the large and complex strategies of NAP operations that call for the use of force with espionage and other security measures (Hassan, 2018).

Both operations demonstrate that within Pakistan military has an important role in protection of boundaries and internal peace. These operations have being very helpful in reducing the movements of militants in the country most especially in the tribal zone.

12. Creation of the Military Courts and Its Function Regarding the Provision of Fast-track Justice

Among the clear features of NAP was its provision of establishing military courts to try the offenders of terrorism related crimes expeditiously. And after APS attack the government of Pakistan feels the weakness and laziness of the civil judiciary system and its unable to handle the Militants and terrorists that's why the government established the military courts to fasten the trials of Militants and terrorists.

Role of Military Courts

Treason and terrorism control cases were tried by military courts Moreover, the judiciary transparency enhanced the speed and efficiency of the judicial. These courts were given special laws, was empowered the military to try cases and deliver its judgement instead of being tangled up in the slow moving civil courts. Some of them fumed at the government over the establishment of military courts on the grounds that it deems the civilian judiciary, human rights as well as due process irrelevant. But, it was argued that the was necessary to solve other acts of terrorism related offences, as where delays in the justice system lead to acquittal or no conviction (Rashid, 2018).

If military courts demonstrated some improvement in raising the conviction rates they were also criticised for being non-transparent and non-responsible entities. There was also concern from some people that they could be used for political gains, that could make the entire judicial system have its cash flow depending on the President (Siddiqui, 2016). Further, this development extended the civil-military divide in a state where military had a primacy over the core security affairs.

13. Cooperation and Surveillance Methods

Another primary sector in the implementation of NAP by the military has been in Intelligence and surveillance due to efficacy in tracking the terrorists cells. Security forces of Pakistan like Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), Military Intelligence (MI) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) also contribute as part of the military efforts to eliminate the above stated terrorist organizations.

The Pakistan military has received defence aid along with investment for acquiring new technologies for enhancing surveillance as motorized aircrafts otherwise called as unmanned aerial vehicles UAVs especially surveillance drones, satellite imagery along with intelligence capturing equipment; communication interception system. Through improved on accurate and efficient systems, it has made it easier for the military to eliminate the terrorist structures much easier (Amin, 2017).

But there have been concerns for some deficiency in the flow of intelligence between the civilian and military organizations. In cases where a country has civilian police made up of police and provincial intelligence agents these are often provided with less intelligence informations than the armed forces; this is a set back to the efforts of the law enforcing bodies in counter terrorism. This weakness of the inter-agency aids to creation of voids within the general counterterrorism plan (Raza, 2014).

14. Functioning Outcome and Perception of Military Functions

Basically, in regard to the operational achievement of expanding contributing to NAP, military has been relatively good. Operations Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasaad also eliminative the

terrorist organizations and also they also brought about the physical control of areas where militant had full control over and hence, there is a drastic improvement in security and terrorist activities have decreased in several theatres.

However, the militarization of counter-terrorism has also affected the audience in the following ways, anytime this process is operationalized. On the one hand the military is perceived as a positiveness that has bolstered order and control of terrorisms areas. The military employs two interfaces that are, the political and governance interfaces which have given rise to over militarization according to Sherazi (2014). Raza (2015) opines that while increase military role in security could be counterproductive to democracy, so also is civilian control of security policies.

15. Criticisms of Military Overreach and Lack of Civilian Oversight

The problem of military overstretch in Pakistan has been identified from a relatively early era. On the one hand, the military plays significant roles in the fight of terrorism and in protection of national security on the other hand its interventions within the political as well as the judiciary domains erode democracy. If it is agreed that it is appropriate that the military has a wide participation in implementing NAPs, then the broad participation may be perceived as the desire to take over governance roles and responsibilities from civilians within critical governance areas (Shah, 2017).

Also, there is no denial of civilians in directing the military as well as the judiciary still remains another issue. Although military courts were conceptualised and operationalize given efficiency for delivering justice on terrorism related crimes, there are issues with regard to its Judicial independence and media coverage (Rashid , 2018).

The role of the military in the implementation of NAP has been quite significant not only in enhancing the security macro environment of Pakistan. The military operations are Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasaad for the destruction of terrorists and their outfits, along the establishment of the military-court system to provide justice on time. Nevertheless, a rising involvement of the military in the political, judicial and security frameworks is regarded as potential threat and centrifugal to democracy. The challenge now going forward will be to ensure we put in place the

right protective measures in equal measure while at the same time ensuring that the civilians enjoy their dominion in the political structures.

16. Conclusion

This research examines the dynamics of civil-military relation particularly in Pakistan focusing on how this relation influenced state's approach in implementing the National Action Plan (NAP) launched in 2014 which is a counter terrorism and extremism strategy. So from its formulation the NAP was a political document supported by all the political parties and military establishment signifying the need for collective approach to manage internal security threats within Pakistan. Nevertheless, the degree of NAP's implementation has remained variable depending on these power dynamics between the civilian premier league and the military leadership intended in Pakistan. Although in the past, the military has been the main actor of the Pakistan security policy, it is evident through the NAP that it requires military civil collaboration in order to confront the issue of terrorism, extremism and militancy. It is most conspicuously evidenced in counter terrorism, policing and intelligence gathering and sharing responsibilities where military continues to play a large role. However, the extent to which the civilian government has been able to influence and take charge of policy making as well as; implementation has continued to elicit concern. The civilian governments lack capacity and sometimes political will to implement the NAP in its entirety leading to poor compliance and or implementation on the ground. Civilian and military considerations also pose challenges in proving the sustainability of counterterrorism into the future. Operations like Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasaad that are under the military's control seem to have been effective in destabilizing militant formations, whereas civilian-led projects in the state such as legalwing refinancing, countering the ideologies, and overhauling the education system are plagued by political insecurity and administrative paralysis. Further, the constant incorporation of the military in security affairs raises fears on the sidelining of democracy as well as the civil control of the military which is important in checking and balancing the army in a democratic nation. Therefore, putting into practice the National Action Plan in Pakistan has exposed a volatile and a conflicting interplay between civil and military leaderships. The author noted that for the NAP to be effective in the long run, there must be enhanced focus and possibly a more complemented

structure of civilian and military efforts but under a focused institutional civil-military framework with democratic teeth. The capacity of civilian government of Pakistan to set the direction of its military in the matters of national security and at the same time to ensure efficient enforcement of the NAP will definitely determine the future course of counter terrorism strategy in Pakistan. The strategy should be based on improving the civil-military relations to achieve better cooperation not just because military is powerful, but because democracy should be the key normative framework.

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