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## AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF COUNTERING TERRORISM STRATEGIES IN PAKISTAN (2000-2008)

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### Abstract

The effects of terrorism on Pakistan have been severe, resulting in a deteriorating economy, shifting regional dynamics, and a rise in terrorist attacks. The root causes of terrorism must be tackled since the country has suffered billions of dollars in financial losses and thousands of fatalities. This study examines the Musharraf regime's counterterrorism strategies and the difficulties it faced from 2000 to 2008. The core objectives of this study are to assess the success of Pakistan's counterterrorism initiatives and to look into the difficulties Pakistan faces in fighting terrorism. This qualitative study uses primary and secondary material from books, journals, and newspapers. The results show that weak legal structures, poor international collaboration, and inefficient counterterrorism tactics are the main reasons why terrorism has continued. Addressing the underlying causes of terrorism requires a multifaceted strategy that includes social changes, economic growth, and military intervention. To lessen the effect of terrorism on Pakistan's stability and development, counterterrorism legislation must be strengthened, and international cooperation must be improved.

**Keywords:** War on Terror, counter-terrorism, strategies, Military, Operations

### Introduction

Following 9/11, Pakistan had difficulties keeping its unity, avoiding US hostility, and stopping Indian incursions into Afghanistan. Because of its location and the history of Afghan jihad, Pakistan could not avoid the attack, even if the culprits were connected to Osama bin Laden stationed in Afghanistan. Bush pledged to use all available resources to

support the law enforcement and intelligence organizations in their efforts to find the terrorists and anyone who provided them with sanctuary (Record, 2003).

President Musharraf acknowledged Pakistan's dire circumstances and underlined US requests for assistance in their war on terror in order to overthrow the Taliban government and capture Osama bin Laden for the 9/11 attacks. According to Pervez Musharraf, the US government was requesting help in three areas: logistical support, air space support, and intelligence. Under Musharraf's leadership, Pakistan was able to strike a compromise between its renewed emphasis on terrorism and its crucial national interests in Jammu and Kashmir. The Indian lobby in the United States had been portraying the Kashmiri independence movement as sponsored terrorism by Pakistan. President Musharraf emphasized in 2004 the dangers of terrorism and clash of civilizations, as well as the intricate changes in the world order following the Cold War. He kept the Palestinian and Kashmiri issues out of the purview of terrorism since they pertain to the right to self-determination. In his 2006 60-minute interview, Musharraf revealed that then-Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage had threatened to bomb and go back to the Stone Age, highlighting the gravity of the situation and the prospect of US aggression in the wake of 9/11 (Musharraf, 2006).

President Musharraf defended his choice to support the United States in October 2011 in an article titled "I Stand by My Decision," which was published in the local English newspaper. In order to protect Pakistan's strategic interests and prevent severe US retaliation, he invoked the Indian factor. Musharraf maintained that Pakistan's strategic interests, nuclear capabilities, and Kashmir cause would have been irreversibly jeopardized, and that India would have been pleased with a US reaction that hurt Pakistan's fundamental national security interests. He also mentioned the obvious ultimatum that General Colin Powell had given the next morning.

Musharraf explained Pakistan's participation in the war on terror and the nation's status as a victim rather than the offender in an interview with Stanford political science professor Scott Sagan in January 2009. He emphasized that rather than addressing ancillary problems, the core causes of terrorism must be addressed. He emphasized the US's involvement in the aftermath of the 1979 Afghan jihad and defended Pakistan's track record in fighting terrorism. periodically changing patterns of strategic collaboration between Washington and Islamabad caused anti-Americanism and friendship betrayal syndrome in Pakistan.

Increased hostility along the line of control and regular bombings of civilians in Pakistan are the results of the South Asian security calculus shifting in India's favor. This has diverted the Pakistani military's efforts to eradicate terrorists who are hiding in FATA. Since 2005, the Indo-US strategic relationship has resulted in significant Indian influence in the region, and her encroachment in Afghanistan has caused instability in the area, particularly in Pakistan. The Bush Administration had applauded the Musharraf government until the US interest in Afghanistan was met. Following incidents like Raymond Davis killing Pakistanis in Lahore, the US bombing on Pakistani posts close to the Afghan border in 2011 strained relations between the two nations. Nonetheless, both nations were able to keep up their working relationships, and their military and intelligence services worked together to combat terrorism in the area that borders Afghanistan and Pakistan (Gorlick, 2009).

### **Musharraf's legal reforms to counter-terrorism**

Since October 1999, the counterterrorism legal framework has been a combination of continuity and change. As the political and strategic environment at the national, regional, and international levels changed, the Anti-terrorism Act, 1997 (ATA) was revised and updated. The national, regional, and global perspectives on the issue of terrorism have interacted since the September 11 terrorist attacks. Accepting the changes to the anti-terror legal framework is also overshadowed by strategic political problems and disagreements, as previously mentioned. The goal is the prompt settlement of disputes between political adversaries; the Nawaz Sharif issue was resolved by using the revised ATA as a model. The definition of terrorism and the jurisdiction of Pakistan's anti-terrorist courts were broadened by the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance IV of 1999, which was amended on December 2, 1999. Sections 109, 120, 120 B, 121, 121 A, 122, 123, 365, abduction, and 402 were all part of the first amendment and are now under the courts' enlarged authority. Aiding and abetting crimes are included in Section 109, concealing preparations to commit crimes is covered in Section 120, criminal conspiracies are covered in Section 120 B, waging war against Pakistan is covered in Section 121, obtaining weapons is covered in Section 122, and kidnapping is covered in Section 365 (Shabana, 2008).

Two new special courts, one at the Karachi High Court and one at the Lahore High Court, were created by the Anti-Terrorism (Second Amendment) Ordinance XIII of 1999 to act as

Appellate Tribunals for the Anti-Terrorism (ATC) s. This law gave the federal government the authority to outlaw any organization that actively promotes religious hate in Pakistan, supports or encourages terrorism, plans terrorist attacks on Pakistani soil, or engages in terrorist activities. Additionally, the amendment granted the government the power to confiscate assets from anybody suspected of aiding terrorism or terrorist activities in Pakistan. The number of ATC Judges was increased to three by the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance VI of 2002, with military personnel serving as the third member. The amendment, which remained in effect until November 30 or may be extended, said that all terrorism trials would be moved to new courts. Anyone found guilty of aiding terrorists might be executed. However, because it would endanger the nation's judicial system, Pakistani judges were not happy with the addition of a third member a military man to the court. In order to expedite the trial of ongoing cases, the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Ordinance CXXV of 2002 established a one-month term. The Act created the Fourth Schedule, improved police counterterrorism capabilities, and permitted law enforcement to hold individuals for a year without incurring legal repercussions. Six other terrorist organizations were outlawed by the government by the end of 2002: Tehrik-e-Jafria Pakistan (TJP), Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammad, and Tehreek-e-Islami (Ex TJP). Additional changes to the ATA were made in November 2004 that increased the maximum penalty for terrorists' sympathizers from 14 years to life in prison. Subsections 4-A and 4-B of Section 25 of the ATA of 1997 were added, enabling victims and their heirs to contest an accused person's acquittal before an anti-terrorist court (Kennedy, 2002).

The Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997 was significantly amended by the Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Act 2004 (Act II of 2005), which increased the minimum and maximum punishments for terrorist actions. Additionally, it made it feasible for terrorist cases to be transferred between provinces, permitted the creation of Special Benches with at least two judges to hear appeals, and restricted the court's power to postpone cases for speedy trials. The Act gave the courts more power to try matters involving kidnapping, kidnapping for ransom, and the use and finding of explosives in courtrooms and places of worship, but only in Anti-terrorism Courts. These laws were utilized by the Musharraf dictatorship to repress its political opponents, especially the former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. On

December 2, 1999, the ATA of 1997 underwent two changes, and Sharif was charged with breaking the newly added ATA provisions. On April 6, 2000, ATC Karachi ruled Sharif guilty of planning to hijack the PIA aircraft and sentenced him to life in prison, circumventing the traditional judicial system. But Sharif's family and the government came to a deal, and the life sentence was never implemented (Shabana, 2008).

Pakistan worked to fulfill its U.N. membership responsibilities, ensure that U.N. Resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1624 (2005) were implemented, and submit reports to the U.N. Security Council's Counterterrorism Committee (CTC) on a regular basis. With the creation of the Special Investigation Group (SIG) in 2003 and the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance in 2002, the scope of counterterrorism has grown beyond a national effort to adhere to U.N. standards (Kundi, 2016).

One of Pakistan's most important pieces of legislation to fight money laundering and associated financial crimes was the Anti-Money Laundering Ordinance of 2007. It sought to ensure adherence to international standards while strengthening the nation's ability to prevent, detect, and prosecute money laundering offenses. The law gave a thorough definition of money laundering, required stringent customer due diligence, and created the Financial Monitoring Unit. This law's legacy serves as a reminder of the significance of continuous changes and international cooperation in the fight against money laundering and terrorism funding (Ali I. , 2023).

To address the escalating cybercrime issue in Pakistan, the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2007 (PECA) was created. In addition to outlining processes for investigating, prosecuting, and trying such acts, it forbade unlawful conduct pertaining to information systems and offered a thorough legal framework to protect people and companies from cyber dangers. PECA 2007 emphasized the necessity of ongoing legislative reforms and capacity building to manage the constantly evolving nature of cyber risks and guarantee cyberspace safety, notwithstanding implementation difficulties and privacy and enforcement issues. Prior to this rule, the FIA was in charge of looking into and preventing legally defined cybercrimes.

### **Reforms to the Police under Musharraf**

By passing two laws, the Local Government Ordinance 2001 and the Police Order 2002, the previous military dictatorship made local governments and the police federal issues even though they are provincial ones. The Musharraf administration reorganized and supervised the police force with the creation of the Police Order of 2002. With the exception of the federal capital area, the whole country was governed by the legislation. First, the Police Order 2002 replaced the Police Act of 1861, a colonial-era statute that had governed police operations since independence, as part of the military government's devolution agenda.

Police Order 2002, Musharraf's first reform program, sought to create a capable, responsible, and politically neutral police force in Pakistan. Power abuse, arbitrary authority, political interference, delays in public service, misbehavior, corruption, and inadequate command and control were among the concerns that were addressed by the decree. Following the UK model, it substituted district, provincial, and federal public safety commission institutions for democratic institutional control over political authority. To keep the police force accountable, independent complaints authorities (PCAs) were set up in the capital of each province. To provide police operations more autonomy, the terms of federal and provincial police officers were established at three years.

To properly battle terrorism, the police must have access to cutting-edge technology, contemporary weapons, and protected vehicles. But even now, these transformations remain unattainable. One workable way to combat terrorism may be by proactive police participation and community mobilization. Nonetheless, a gap that must be filled is the public's lack of support for efficient law enforcement. Musharraf and the political parties he backed drastically altered the Order's structure in 2004 by eliminating any progressive policies. Provinces abolished independent PCAs and the three-year fixed tenure for police chiefs, and the composition of the Public Safety Commission was changed to favor the ruling party. The main objective of the reform, which was to create a fully autonomous, highly responsible, and politically impartial police force, was undermined by this. The following factors hinder the police's ability to combat terrorism effectively:

### **Countering Terrorism through Military operations under Musharraf Regime**

To counter the threat of terrorism, the Pakistani government used diplomatic, military, and judicial strategies. The Pakistani military conducted a number of operations, some of which

were bigger than others. Only the massive military operations conducted by the Pakistan Army during General Musharraf's rule will be included in this paper. During the Musharraf administration, Pakistan conducted the following military actions to combat terrorism:

- Operation Enduring Freedom (2001–2002).
- Operation Al Mizan (2002–2006)
- Operation Zalzal (2008)
- Operations Rah-e-Haq, and Rah-e-Rast (2007–2009)

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom with the goal of overthrowing the Taliban government in Afghanistan and capturing the most powerful member of Al Qaeda. Two key components of this operation were Pakistan's deployment of more than 100,000 security forces along the Afghanistan border and its sharing of intelligence information, ports, and airbases with the United States. The primary objective of toppling the Taliban government was only partially achieved, though, as neither Pakistan nor the United States was able to kill or apprehend Osama Bin Laden or Ayman al Zawahiri. Since numerous of al Qaeda's senior fighters landed in Pakistan after the Taliban rule fell, this operation made the country's problems worse (Musharraf, 2006).

**Operation Al Mizan (2002–2006):** Following the Taliban's defeat in Afghanistan, the Pakistani government initiated Operation Al Mizan. At the time of this operation, the Pakistani government had 70,000 to 80,000 troops in FATA. The Army conducted a massive search and cordon operation for 13 days across a 36-kilometer region west of Wana that was purportedly under the hands of several Pakistani terrorists. Pakistan brought in the Frontier Corps and XI Corps to support the operation; the latter was commanded by Lieutenant-General Muhammad Safdar Hussain and had its headquarters in Peshawar. The Swat religious militancy led by Sufi Muhammad began in November 2007 with the start of Operation Rah-e-Haq (2008). The organization requested that Islamic laws be applied, that the legal system be changed, and that Sharia be put into effect. The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an umbrella organization made up of several Taliban factions around Pakistan, was founded in December 2007 by local Taliban terrorist organizations under the original leadership of Baitullah Mehsud (Amin, 2007).

Pakistan dispatched over 2,500 paramilitary forces in October 2007 as part of a military campaign known as campaign Rah-e-Haq, which began in November 2007. To eradicate terrorists based in the Swat Valley, local police conducted cordon-and-search operations during the first phase of Operation Rah-e-Haq. But over time, the terrorists re-entered large cities, and the Pakistani Army was fighting well-armed insurgents. In the 2007 Swat conflict, about two hundred police and military personnel were killed (Lloyd, 2008).

The second phase of Operation Rah-e-Haq began in July 2008 and continued throughout the year. Fighting was initially most intense in the valley's northern and southern sections, where militants said that the government was not removing soldiers from the region in accordance with the provisions of the peace agreement. Conflicts with militants turned Swat into a battlefield, and in the five years before to 2008, the Taliban destroyed almost 100 girls' schools (Ali, 2008).

**Operation Silence on Lal Masjid (2007):** The military operation was started by President Musharraf after the Lal Masjid in Islamabad had been besieged for almost six months. Musharraf accused individuals of acting immorally and allowing terrorists to thrive. The mosque has been seized since January 2006 by Islamic militants led by the two brothers Abdul Aziz and Abdul Rashid, who pushed for the overthrow of the Pakistani government and the application of Sharia rule (Abbas, 2007).

Following a number of incidents, such as terrorist assaults on Army Rangers positioned to defend the Ministry of Environment building and the kidnapping of Chinese healthcare workers, the military stepped in. The military response was prompted by both diplomatic pressure from China and local pressure. Pro-Taliban guerrillas near the Afghan border canceled a peace agreement with the Pakistani government as a result of the operation, which killed 154 individuals and led to the arrest of 50 militants. More than 3,000 people were killed in 2008 as a result of the militancy and violence that this episode inspired (Ali, 2008).

On August 17, 2007, the Pakistani Supreme Court addressed the matter of extrajudicial killings at the Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa complex in response to a suo motu notice. The court ordered the immediate release of 22 innocent persons and condemned the Islamabad administration's performance for acting too slowly. Nonetheless, it is imperative to recognize the growing gap between the Pakistan Supreme Court, presided over by Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry, and President Musharraf's government.



**Operation Zalzalā (2008):** The Pakistan Army began Operation Zalzalā in January 2008 as a military campaign against the TTP in South Waziristan. The goal of the military operation was to destroy Baitullah Mehsud's bases. Mehsud was the TTP leader who carried out several terrorist operations throughout Pakistan. The Mehsud tribal regions had been firmly taken over by the terrorists, who used them as bases from which to target both civilians and Pakistani security personnel. Operation Zalzalā began when the government and military decided to carry out a decisive operation to overthrow these terrorists.

A large military deployment, comprising thousands of Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps soldiers, started up the operation. The armed forces launched ground and aerial attacks, focusing especially on Spinkai and Raghzain areas, a significant insurgent stronghold. The attack briefly interrupted TTP operations and caused heavy terrorist deaths. The military effectively seized regions that had previously been occupied by terrorists, and several terrorist hideouts were destroyed. Nevertheless, Baitullah Mehsud and other senior TTP officials were able to flee, allowing the Tehrik to subsequently regroup and carry on with its operations, even if many lower-level terrorists were killed. Operation Zalzalā was successful in reducing the TTP's power at first, but it was unable to entirely eliminate terrorism in the area. The terrorists swiftly reorganized and launched new attacks, demonstrating that the operation's effects were short-lived. The attack also resulted in a large-scale human displacement, as thousands of locals were compelled to leave their homes because of the fierce fighting. Following the TTP's comeback, Pakistan conducted more extensive and successful military operations to combat terrorism, including Operation Rah-e-Nijat (2009) and Operation Zarb-e-Azb (2014) (Ali Z. , 2008).

### **Findings**

- Musharraf joined the US in the War on Terror as a frontline ally. The United States began to share intelligence and provide military assistance, but it also caused internal instability in Pakistan.
- Musharraf carried out major combat operations in FATA between 2004 and 2007 to eradicate Taliban and Al-Qaeda shelters. However, these measures exacerbated local unrest and helped to create TTP in 2007.

- Musharraf's administration banned many terrorist organizations, including SSP, JeM, and LeT, to tackle extremism. However, some of these organizations resurfaced and continue their activities under different names.
- The military raid on Islamabad's Lal Masjid, which targeted extremist clerics and their armed supporters, ended the siege but sparked widespread resentment and a rise in terrorist assaults on government installations.
- Musharraf's administration collaborated with Pakistan's intelligence services (ISI) to apprehend prominent Al-Qaeda figures, such as Abu Zubaydah and 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed.
- Musharraf made an effort to combat extremist ideology by implementing changes at madrassas, or religious institutions. However, fundamentalist religious organizations strongly rejected these initiatives, which limited their efficacy.
- Suicide assaults and terrorist activity in Pakistan escalated following the Lal Masjid raid and military operations in FATA, earning Pakistan the title of most dangerous country in the world.
- To handle trials involving terrorists, special courts were set up. Human rights organizations, however, denounced the Musharraf administration for its extrajudicial operations and enforced disappearances.
- Musharraf's counterterrorism tactics sparked a fresh surge of militants even as it weakened certain terrorist organizations. Due to political unrest caused by his policies that alienated certain societal groups, he ultimately resigned in 2008.

## **Conclusion**

In reaction to terrorism in FATA and the surrounding areas, Musharraf's administration in Pakistan gave priority to using force to eradicate militants. The Taliban, Jihadis fighting in Kashmir, and international al-Qaida were the three divisions into which the administration separated Islamist terrorists. This approach ignored logistical and ideological difficulties and produced a counterterrorism strategy that was reactive, short-lived, and frequently incoherent. General Musharraf's attempts to fight terrorism have been hampered by his appeasement approach with religious political groupings, which has made it easier for him to exercise dictatorial control through deals with both mainstream and religious parties.

Reformatory actions to address human issues and the root causes of militancy should be a part of any holistic solution to security concerns. Pakistan's counterterrorism laws have been amended repeatedly, yet terrorism has escalated. In July 2007 and into 2008, terrorists attacked political personalities, security officers, and gatherings. Terrorists severely disrupted the 2008 election campaigns, and Benazir Bhutto, the head of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), was killed not long after he spoke.

Another dictator's reign came to an end in August 2008 when he resigned. He was accused of -murder by a court in 2013 for failing to provide enough security to prevent Bhutto's killing. When the PPP's recently appointed leader, Yousaf Raza Gilani, became prime minister of Pakistan in 2008, he declared that the new administration will employ the same counterterrorism tactics as Pervez Musharraf's administration.

### **Recommendations**

- To identify and destroy terrorist networks before they launch an attack, intelligence services (ISI, MI, and CTDs) should better coordinate.
- To combat new terrorist threats, spend money on cutting-edge surveillance technologies like drones, cyber intelligence, and data analytics.
- To prevent the rise of radicalization, implement schemes for economic growth in areas that are prone to violence, such as FATA, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- To stop young people from entering terrorist organizations, offers them job possibilities and technical education in regions afflicted by terrorism.
- Introduce mathematical, physical, and civic education in addition to theology to upgrade and govern the madrassa curriculum.
- To maintain consistency and stop extreme teachings, a national madrassa supervision authority should be established.
- Offer counseling, vocational training, and rehabilitation programs to convicted terrorists.
- Launch community outreach initiatives that promote peace and dispel extremist misconceptions.

- Boost border protection with Iran and Afghanistan to stop the flow of weapons and terrorists.
- To combat cross-border terrorist activities, strengthen regional collaboration with Afghanistan and international allies.
- To effectively convict terrorists, establish anti-terrorist courts that operate quickly and provide impartial trials.
- By implementing stringent financial rules and keeping an eye on questionable transactions, legislation against the funding of terrorism can be strengthened.
- Develop counter-narratives against extremism using social media, digital platforms, and community influencers.
- Monitor and block online recruitment networks of terrorist groups to prevent radicalization.

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