

Pakistan Counterterrorism and National Security After 9 11

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Introduction:

Technological advancement and development have led to many positive things around the globe, such as increased communication and trade among different nations. However, one of the negative aspects of technological advancement is the increase in violence and use of weapons. The use of firearms can result in disharmony in society and increase the rate of violent activity. When violent operations are carried out at a more significant level or mass level, impacting countries and a large number of people, then this violence is termed terrorism. Terrorism is defined as

“abhorrent act of violence perceived as directed against society-whether it involves the activities of antigovernment dissident or government themselves, organized crime syndicates, common criminals, rioting mobs, people engaged in militant protest, individual psychotic, or lone extortionist.” ^[1]

There are several incidents of terrorism in history, such as Hiroshima & Nagasaki, the Nazi event, and the 9/11 conflict, etc. All of these attacks have impacted human life in several different ways and have been affecting it until today. This terrorist act has impacted people of different regions, religious or social communities and races. The September 11, 2001, attack, which is commonly known as the 9/11 attack, is one of the cruelest attacks in human history. The enormity and destruction of the 9/11 attack were beyond anything in the history of terrorism.^[2] The attack was huge in dimension, planning scope and coordination between the hijackers and their plan of destruction. The 19 aircraft hijackers were willing to take the lives of passengers, crew and four aircraft pilots, as well as 3000 people working in the World Trade Center, along with their own lives.^[3] Officially, the responsibility for the attack was on a terrorist organization, *Al-Qaida* group. The members of Al-Qaida, Afghan militants, had planned out the manual of their mission, known as the Jihad Manual was discovered by British police during the investigations of the criminals.

After the attack, terrorism became a global concern, and the United States, being a powerful country, changed the handling process of terrorism as a concern and started a new mission known as the *War on Terror*. Islam entered the media and the terrorism issue because of the involvement of Al-Qaida in the 9/11 attacks. The connection between terrorism and oil with other Muslim countries such as Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan was displayed in media. Therefore, for the layman people, Islam was linked with terror, fear, negativity, and control.^[4] The impact was so huge that the families of the victims are still in the recovery phase. However, the other main implications of the issue are in the Muslim world.

Pakistan was one of the Muslim countries that was impacted by the 9/11 attacks and, till now, is facing its aftereffects in the form of political instability and several terrorist attacks within the state. After the attacks of 9/11, the United States declared that Al-Qaida was a terrorist group, and according to America's perception, Al-Qaida was a creation of the US and Pakistani agencies.^[5] The war on terror started out, especially against the militant group Al-Qaida, but Pakistan was reluctant to be part of it because of its religious and national ties with Afghanistan. However, under the enormous pressure of the United States, Pakistan not only became a participant in the war on terrorism but also led from the front in the war. For this war, Pakistan helped financially and also provided military assistance to the United States and its NATO army to attack Afghanistan.^[6] However, because of the participation in the *War on Terror*, the peace of the country was significantly hampered as the impact of the terrorist activities happening in rotten areas started spreading throughout the whole country.

This not only impacted the peace of the country but also brought financial, political, social and security instability across the entire country. Considering the situation and terrorist activities across the country, the government of Pakistan started an operation against terrorists in Fata and Waziristan, which is known as Zarb-e-Azam. In other words, the 9/11 attacks impacted not only the country's policies but also strategic concerns and national security, as well as its impact on the development and economic condition of the nation. Pakistan changed its foreign policy as soon as the *war on terror* was announced, and after that policy change, the policy paradigm of Pakistan was incoherent, leading to several abrupt decisions. Pakistan's security concerns are also because of the political corruption, lack of accountability, social situations and sanctions of the United States in the name of the *war on terrorism*. Therefore, it is essential to understand the national perspective of Pakistan and what has led to security issues in Pakistan.

Problem Statement:

With the focus on terrorism in Pakistan post 9/11 attack, the security concerns have increased instead of decreasing. New policies have been devised to prevent terrorist activities in the country, but the impact has been somewhat negative about Pakistan. The policy framework was not well thought through, but the leaders were confident that the policy was in the best interest of Pakistan. So, what went wrong and wherein the policy framework of Pakistan after 9/11 to tackle the nuisance of terrorism? Was it a matter of inconsistencies, incoherencies or inadequacies in policies or a perceptual discrepancy between theoretical documentation and practice of countering terrorism that led to an inadequate pace of progress, thereby creating today's imbroglio of uncertain security environment with no practical insight?

Objective

The primary purpose of this is to carry out an in-depth analysis of Pakistan's National Security Policies regarding terrorism to identify inadequacies to proffering an effective multi-prong policy and

corresponding strategy to eradicate this menace from affecting the future of Pakistan.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is:

Pakistan's post-9/11 eccentric National Security Policy paradigm is an outcome of perceptual discrepancies between the theory and practice of terrorism/counter-terrorism and fissiparous political discourse that was woven more around personal than national interests.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be considered for this research study:

- How and why has terrorism perpetually impacted the security calculus of Pakistan in the last three decades?
- What are the identifiable voids in the Policy – Strategy Paradigm that drag on the equal rate of success against terrorism?
- What are viable, pragmatic and wholesome solutions, amalgamating all elements of national power for efficiently countering terrorism in the future?

Literature Review:

Pakistan has been changing its policies since the attacks of 9/11, and it has impacted the country's development and economic processes. There are several factors that influence the policy development, implementation and security issues related to that policy, and these factors are categorized into three categories: domestic, regional and global. Before 9/11, Pakistan was considered a failing state that was going through military dictatorship, corruption, poverty, social instability, and poverty. The image of Pakistan as a failing state was because of its external and internal policies and its relationship with other countries as well as its development progress.^[7] Also, Pakistan was the central hub for Jihad and other religious fights in the Muslim world. The negative image strengthened after the attacks of 9/11, and the policy shift further deteriorated the security perspective of Pakistan. Pakistan was one of the first Muslim nuclear-empowered states, and the image was coming across as a fundamentalist state run by military dictators. The image of Pakistan was destroyed because of its policies and supporting the Taliban as well as domestic political issues.

On 15th September 2001, upon extension of full support to the United States mission to fight against terrorism, Pakistan's foreign policy was suddenly changed after the 9/11 attacks under the administration of ruling president General Pervez Musharraf.^[8] As a result of the

policy, the underlying assumption of the Afghan policy was that Afghanistan was in the best interest of Pakistan. However, the United States government also ensured the ruling President Musharraf solved the issue of Kashmir and also supported Pakistan economically. During the support of Pakistan, Pakistan was in a very crucial position economically, security and politically. According to Musharraf, he said:

“The choice is between saving Pakistan or the Taliban, and I am opting for Pakistan. Pakistan comes first. Everything else comes later. Pakistan’s situation is extremely hazardous and holds potential dangers to Pakistan’s strategic assets. Never had the country seen such a perilous time since 1971. One wrong move at this stage can jeopardize the very survival of Pakistan, and allowing the fortress of Islam to come to harm would be a disservice to Islam. I call upon the nation to show complete unity and solidarity for any decision which his government may take regarding hunt Osama operation” ^[9]

The speech was delivered in 2001, right after the 9/11 attack, and when the United States announced the *war on terror*, Pakistan had to be part of it. After the speech, the state was on high alert, and it changed the relationship between Pakistan and other countries. The decision of General Musharraf was made in a severe, chaotic situation to maintain progress in Pakistan. He was the one who decided to break ties with the Taliban, Jaish-e-Muhammad, and Lashkar-e-Taiba, as well as several other groups, banning their work and their offices and arresting their leaders.^[10] Because of this policy change, the relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan was lost. The impact of 9/11 was also on relations between Pakistan and India, where India took the benefit and portrayed Pakistan as a terrorist and the state that is supporting Jihad.^[11] After the 9/11 attacks, policymakers were also reconsidering the economic policy of Pakistan. The financial market and trade were adversely impacted by 9/11.

Corruption is another component that hinders Pakistan’s effort to prevent and reduce terrorist acts. Corruption of any magnitude impacts good governance in any country, but for the past two decades, Pakistan has been facing several domestic gaps to prevent corruption in the government sector and in politics.^[12] The dishonesty of the political leader will lead to flawed policies of national security and defense, impacting the nation overall. National security is an important decision that has several stakeholders and is a reflection of people, trends of society, economic conditions and political situations. Policymakers are the primary stakeholders and play a significant role in developing the security structure. Pakistan’s security structure is a reflection of its political status over the last 80 years.^[13] The national action plan was devised to potentially stabilize the security situation of Pakistan and change the culture of safety in Pakistan.

The instability in the political position, current terrorism activities in the northern region and weak policies have posed severe security challenges for Pakistan.^[14] The social sector remains indifferent in these types of situations and leaves it up to the government to tackle security issues and threats to the nation. Then, it is up to the government to tackle the issues and change the policies according to the situation. The national action plan was operationalized in the year 2015[15], but terrorism is still disturbing the security of the country. Pakistan’s current strategic culture, which includes an

extension to resources for defense, pluralist power advocacy, diplomatic relations with other nations, and focus on external security, shapes the policies and security options.^[16] The influence of policies and strategies can be global, regional and domestic, and if there is a contradiction with the implication of the strategies, then the implementation and pragmatics can be significantly complex.

The Significance Of The Study:

It is evident that terrorism and the war on terrorism have led to much-distorted decisions on policymakers and policies. It has also affected the peace and security of Pakistan. Successful policies are essential for the national security of Pakistan, and since 9/11, Pakistan has lacked sufficient comprehensive policies. In its policies, Pakistan has always put the US upfront, ignoring its relations with other countries. The events of 9/11 put Pakistan in a difficult situation to adopt a policy that would minimize the repercussions of 9/11. There have been several studies carried out to understand the changes made in foreign policy and how those policies have impacted the economic development of the country. However, very few studies have been carried out to understand the impact of terrorist activities on Pakistan and how it has affected policy development, as well as what gaps are there in policy and strategy for the fight against terrorism.

Theoretical Framework:

Security and safety remain the primary concerns in this rapidly progressing world, and terrorism has deployed the peace among nations, leading to more violence. The emergence of terrorism has changed the geopolitical and socio-economic situation of the countries. The history of terrorism and the impact of the 9/11 attack have been quite long for Pakistan's political and economic situation. Pakistan's relation to the war on terror has been one of the major concerns as it plays a role in facilitating the war on terrorism. However, the policies and political decisions are the ones that are impacting the development of the country. Corruption at several levels in Pakistan has reduced the power of the Pakistani government and its efforts to prevent terrorism. Also there are several gaps in the pragmatic policy framework which are important to understand the national security perspective of Pakistan. It is essential to understand the impact of two decades of terrorism and gaps in the policy-strategy paradigm to combat the policy issues and national security perspective. The national security policy is important to understand the gaps between implementations and plans that are posing the problems faced by Pakistan.

Methodology:

The research will be evidence-based research carried out on different evidence and policy frameworks, which will be available in the official documentation of the government. The evidence can be comprised of documentaries, official documents, official addresses by politicians and

policymakers, as well as some opinions by the general public. The government documents will be obtained from the website of the government and other official places accessible to the public. New papers will be used to draw up the discussions and opinions of experts and policymakers.

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