



## Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS)

Forum for National Security Studies (FNSS)

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### **Title: State Responses to Tehrik-E-Taliban Pakistan**

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- While discussing the counterterrorism strategy of Pakistan, the presenter divided it into Military options and non-military options. The military option is further divided into two phases: Phase One (2002-2008) and Phase Two (2009-present).

#### **Phase One (2002-2008)**

- Phase One starts with Operation Enduring Freedom (2001-02) which was conducted by the U.S.-NATO forces in Afghanistan and was successful in bringing down the Afghan Taliban and targeted Al-Qaeda members.
- It was primarily the U.S. operation, and Pakistan played only a supporting role.
- Due to Operation Enduring Freedom, Pakistan's tribal areas bordering Afghanistan saw the exodus of the remnants of the Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban.
- The March 2004 Kalusha operation concentrated on a 50-sq. Km. area near Wana (South Waziristan's district headquarters) around the villages of Shin Warsak, Daza Gundai, Kalusha, Ghaw Khawa, and Kari Kot.

- The operation backfired, as local and foreign militants ambushed troops, inflicting heavy losses and taking officials hostage. Apart from the religious card played by militants, the operations suffered due to lack of proper military strategy as well.
- The operation ended in a peace deal called Shakai Agreement in March 2004. However, this agreement failed due to disagreements over registration of foreigners with the authorities.
- Successive peace deals such as Saroragha Peace Deal and Miranshah Peace Accord also broke down due to the increased cases of kidnapping, killing, and attacks on military and government personnel.
- Phase One was not successful in eliminating militancy, and the primary reason for that was the guiding strategy of distinguishing between 'foreign fighters and miscreants' where the local tribes were not seen as a major threat and simply 'misguided people'.
- There was very little human intelligence available due to the general unpopularity of the Pakistani forces present in the area. Their scorched earth tactics angered the locals and inflamed public opinion.
- The other issues that made Phase One unsuccessful were: performance of the Frontier Corps, poor strategy planning, poorly constructed peace deals, and poor leadership.

### **Phase Two (2009-present)**

- Despite a persistent counter-terrorism policy followed by the military, the number of terrorist attacks went up in 2009. Suicide attacks in Islamabad and Lahore, particularly on security apparatus and establishments, were notable highlights of that year.
- In May 2009, the military decided to launch a large-scale decisive security operation, the Rah-e-Rast to flush out the Swat militants.
- In mid-October 2009, the security forces launched Rah-e-Nijat against Hakimullah-led TTP faction and foreign terrorists in South Waziristan.

- As the military continued its efforts, the year 2012 saw a downward trend in the number of overall incidents of violence and casualties, which had started in 2010 and continued through 2011 and 2012.
- The year 2013 was festured with sectarian, ethnopolitical and terrorist violence. In the background of the national elections, TTP attacked all secular and left-wing parties in Pakistan to bring the right-wing parties (which support their cause and do not attack them) to power.
- Forging an alliance with numerous militant groups and commanders, TTP proved lethal in 2013 as it carried out 645 terrorist attacks in 50 districts across the country.
- In June 2014, the Pakistan Army took the lead in conducting Operation Zarb-e-Azb in North Waziristan; the paramilitary Frontier Corps functioned in an auxiliary role supporting the army.
- Estimates of force strength in North Waziristan varied widely, from 20,000-30,000 on the low side to as many as 80,000.
- Troops, mainly commandos from the Special Services Group (SSG), also relied heavily on helicopters for transport, infiltration and exfiltration. The Pakistan Army operates some Mi-17 "Hip" helicopters for rotary-wing transport needs.
- The operation succeeded in reducing the number of attacks in the country and severely damaged the operational capability of the militants. However, the TTP has been able to conduct attacks across Pakistan's four provinces and change their tactics.

As one of the most crucial aspects of eliminating insurgency, the role played by the judiciary, and the civilian government was analysed in the "non-military options."

- Combating terrorism in the parts of Pakistan other than FATA is the responsibility of law enforcement agencies for which some special laws have been enacted.
- The basic law is the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 (ATA), and as of February 2015, the law has been amended seventeen times to adapt to the changing nature of the terrorist threat.

- Other laws such as the Investigation for Fair Trial Act, 2013, and Protection of Pakistan Act, 2014 were enacted to respond to some of the other areas of the terrorist threat not covered by ATA.
- Since coming to power in May 2013, the incumbent government has introduced the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) announced in February 2014. The policy focused at length on developing programs to de-radicalise, reconcile and re-integrate.
- In 2010, the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) was created by the civilian government. It was given the mandate to formulate and monitor the implementation of the national counter-terrorism strategy headed by the Prime Minister.
- The Federal Intelligence Agency (FIA) has sole jurisdiction over money laundering cases. However, this is a profoundly flawed system due to weak institutional structures and inadequate capacity.
- On January 6<sup>th</sup> 2015, Pakistan empowered military courts to try civilians for terrorism-related offences as part of its 20 points 'National Action Plan' (NAP) against terrorism that was adopted by the government following the horrific attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar which killed 144 people.
- In the three years of the military courts being active, the volume of convictions was considerably high but most convictions were not necessarily for terrorism. At the same time, the decision to use 'military system of justice' put Pakistan in clear violation of its legal obligations and political commitments.
- Since February 2015, a total of 274 individuals have been convicted in military courts. So far, the army has sentenced 161 individuals to death, 12 of whom have been executed, and 169 have been given jail terms (mostly life sentences).
- Pakistan's first de-radicalisation programme was launched in September 2009, after completion of operation *Raah-e-Raast* (The Righteous Path) against Pakistani Taliban in Swat.
- A similar de-radicalisation programme was launched in Punjab and is designed and modelled on the pattern of Swat's *Sabaon* centre. It started by incorporating 350 militants in the first phase to de-radicalise the de-tracked and brainwashed youth.

- In conclusion, until Pakistan does not stop using jihadi groups as a strategic tool it cannot wholly eliminate terrorist groups and their infrastructure within its borders.
  - Regarding non-military options, the military courts were necessarily a quick fix to a more significant problem that engulfs Pakistan and its judicial system.
  - Most of Pakistan's legislatures and actions are reactive and not pro-active. They are all small term solutions to 'avenge the attacks'. The National Action Plan fails to bring change in the society in long run because it ignored issues such as education and madrassa reforms.
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