



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Counter-Terrorism Strategies in  
FATA and Swat from 2008-2013**

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<b>PAPER INFO</b>	<b>ABSTRACT</b>
<b>Received:</b> March 07, 2022 <b>Accepted:</b> June 19, 2022 <b>Online:</b> June 30, 2022	This paper focuses on the counter-terrorism policies of the Pakistan People Party (PPP), which came into power in 2008 through general election, after the death of its supreme leader, Benazir Bhutto on 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2007 at Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi during a political rally. Following the democratic political leader's assassination, public openly criticized the failure of President Pervez Musharraf's counter-terror approaches. In 2008, Pakistan was already middle of war against Taliban and Al-Qaeda. President Musharraf mixed policies of operations and peace negotiation failed terribly in countering the threat of terrorism in FATA and Khyber Pashtunkhwa (KPK). The Taliban were marching on Islamabad, already occupied Swat and Dir Vally of KPK. The suicide bombers were approaching VVIP places like Marriot Hotel Islamabad and Military General Headquarter (GHQ) Rawalpindi. The government did not have any clear plan in countering the threat. Pakistan's people Party won the election in February 2008 and established coalition government with Awami National Party (ANP). These two parties were clear on the subject of militancy and terrorism in the country and relationship with the United States. Pakistan is a security centric state.
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**Introduction**

Pakistan is a security centric state. It is neither located in Western Europe nor in East Asia to have people-centric and economy centric foreign and domestic policies. South Asia is a difficult political terrain, which does not allow states to focus on other issues at the expense of security, therefore, it is always been the top priority of all South Asian states, especially of Pakistan due to its profoundly dangerous relationship with India, which already converted East Pakistan into Bangladesh in December 1971. There are some experts and political analysts who are critical of Pakistan's foreign policy towards India and Afghanistan. They are of the opinion that Pakistan should focus on economy, poverty, unemployment and lawlessness instead of security (Haqqani 2005; Fair, 2009; Jones, 2012; Yaseen & Muzaffar, 2018). They do

not consider geo-strategic threats as real and India as actual enemy of Pakistan. They ignore the advice of neo-realists that International system is anarchic, states have to focus on their security to survive in an anarchic international system. Security threat from India has always been Pakistan's top priority, which has also affected various aspects of domestic politics that includes civil military balance and relationship with non-state actors (Muzaffar, et.a., 2019).

After the incident of 9/11, the US declared war against terrorism, specifically targeted Al Qaeda and the Taliban. Pakistan was one of the few countries immediately contacted by the United States for security cooperation and intelligence sharing due to its proximity with Afghanistan and close relationship with the Taliban. The US Secretary of State Mr. Colin Powell famous called President Musharraf to be "*either with us or against us*" ((Muzaffar, et.a., 2020). Musharraf, 2006). Pakistan forcefully decided to join the United States due to its geo-strategic, financial and domestic compulsions. It was considered a suitable option to fight terrorism together with US. It soon became the front line state in the US alliance against terrorism. Although, Musharraf's government faced heavy criticism from public in the form of street protests and agitations, but it continued to be an important partner of the US in the war against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda even at the cost of personal suicide attacks (Gerson, 2008).

This paper focuses on the counter-terrorism policies of the Pakistan People Party (PPP), which came into power in 2008 through general election, after the death of its supreme leader, Benazir Bhutto on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2007 at Liaquat Bagh, Rawalpindi during a political rally. Following the democratic political leader's assassination, public openly criticized the failure of President Pervez Musharraf's counter-terror approaches (Fareed, et. al., 2019). In 2008, Pakistan was already middle of war against Taliban and Al-Qaeda. President Musharraf mixed policies of operations and peace negotiation failed terribly in countering the threat of terrorism in FATA and Khyber Pashtunkhawa (KPK). The Taliban were marching on Islamabad, already occupied Swat and Dir Vally of KPK. The suicide bombers were approaching VVIP places like Marriot Hotel Islamabad and Military General Headquarter (GHQ) Rawalpindi. The government did not have any clear plan in countering the threat. Pakistan's people Party won the election in February 2008 and established coalition government with Awami National Party (ANP). These two parties were clear on the subject of militancy and terrorism in the country and relationship with the United States (Jones, 2009).

### **Extremism in Pakistan**

The alliance between Pakistan and the US against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan had cultivated the seed of religious extremism in Pakistan on the name of Jihad. Islamabad was consistently encouraged by Washington to train Islamic Mujahideen to counter the threat of communist ideology in Afghanistan. Pakistan did not only allow religious militants to establish training camps near Pak-Afghan border, but also encouraged them to establish Madaris in border areas to provide foot soldiers to the Afghan war. These training camps and religious Madaris had full-fledged support from the Pakistani establishment and International community especially the United States. They were projected as crusaders of the free world and flag-bearers of liberal values against the Soviet occupations and oppression. They played exactly the same role as Wagon Army is playing today in Ukraine but on

much larger scale for a greater period of time. These Mujahideen basically played fundamental role in defeating the Soviet in Afghanistan with the help of Pakistan's military and international community financial support (Muzaffar, et.a.l, 2021; (Muzaffar, et.a., 2021a; Abbas, 2007).

Once the Soviet Union was defeated and it withdrew from Kabul, all international forces including the United States, diverted their attentions and resources to other parts of the world without establishing any stable political regime in Afghanistan. The infrastructure of jihad that was established in Pakistan's northern areas was left without any proper plan of re-habilitation. The foot soldiers of the Afghan Jihad had different worldview. They wanted to establish an Islamic empire based in Kabul to spread to all parts of the world. The anarchy in Kabul, the foot soldiers of the Afghan war and Pakistan's strategic ambition in the region against India created the phenomenon of the Afghan Taliban, which has taken its own independent life now and emerged as independent entity after the defeat of the US forces in Afghanistan on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2021, after 20 years of insurgency.

Pakistan's military and intelligence cooperation with the United States was one of the biggest and longest military alliances instead of fundamental differences on the issue of the Afghan Taliban. The United States successfully defeated Al-Qaeda with the help of Pakistan's security establishment, which would not have been possible otherwise. Islamabad policies aggravated the Taliban and Al-Qaeda groups stationed in Pakistan. In response, militants embraced anti-Pakistan narratives by reconstituting the religious and sectarian extremism in FATA and Waziristan. Domestic terrorism started based upon the social and economic matters of people of FATA and Waziristan, migrated to NWFP (Nawab, et. al., 2021; Fair & Jones, 2010).

Counter-terrorism strategies of President Pervez Musharraf pushed back militants and terrorism to FATA and PATA region of KPK. It infuriated again in the regime of Pakistan Peoples' Party, when Pakistan aligned itself with the US for dismantling the militants from Pakistan. The continuation of military operations by Pakistan Peoples' Party has rejuvenated the Taliban and Al-Qaeda's extremism and militancy to target the civilians and security forces. Pakistan People's Party carried the anti-terrorist approaches to dismantle the apprising threats. It was endorsed by both political and military leadership to handle militants coercively in FATA and Swat. Government launched military operations by revisiting the military strategies. Following military operations were launched by Pakistan Peoples' Party in its tenure to fully eliminate the threat terrorism and extremism in Pakistan (Abbas, 2007).

### **Operation Rah-e-Haq in November 2007**

Swat became the hub of terrorism and extremism after military operations against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in FATA. Mullah Fazal Ullah emerged as leader of the Taliban in Swat. There were some influence of the Taliban in Swat and Lower Dir due to Sufi Muhammad religious activity, but it properly turned into militancy after military operation against Lal Mosque in Islamabad. There were reports that some of the female students, which were killed in Lal Mosque were from Swat and KPK. Mullah Fazallah stationed in Swat, started religious sermons in all local radio FM stations to get public affiliation. He emphasized to enforce the Islamic Shariah in his constituted areas. He had good relations with the head of Lal Mosque Ghazi Abdul Rashid; he intensified his militant activities in Swat after the government forces attacked on Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafa. He linked Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat

Muhammadi (TNSM), with Tahrik-e-Taliban Pakistan and got elected as the chief of Tehrik-Taliban Swat. His terror activities harmed the peace of Swat by supporting the militancy (Abid, 2009), (Khan 2016).

Mullah Fazalullah and his followers launched anti-state processions and started torturing people to avoid female education. TNSM also attempted to kill Nobel Laureate and girls' education activist Malala Yusufzai by shooting her in head when she was returning from school. Local FM radio stations were hearing Mullah Fazallah vitriolic speeches in Pashto across the clock. Local administration and officials were extremely scared of his brutality and viciousness. The only figure that fought bravely against the Taliban in Swat was Afzal Lala; he was local leader against the Taliban and militancy in Swat. Taliban killed several of his family members by suicide attacks. Federal government and provincial government made peace agreements with Mullah Fazalullah, but soon those agreements were violated by attacking the security forces and suicide attacks on public. They destroyed 17 girls' educational institutions (Abid, 2009).

Pakistan launched military Operation Rah-e-Haq in November 2007. This operation consisted of three phases; the first phase was led by police. They mainly carried out cordon and search activities. They police were assisted by the paramilitary forces. Despite the government's strong exertions against terror groups, attacks on the security forces were continued, targeted public and demolished state infrastructure. Resultantly Pakistan made peace agreement with Mullah Fazalullah in May 2008, to end confrontation. Tension emerged again when militants' leader Mullah Fazalullah denied lying down their arms and ending their terror activities in Swat. They demanded that the government should withdraw security forces from Swat as a pre-condition for honoring the peace agreement held on May 2008 (Dawn, 2007).

When the peace talk between the forces and NSMP head Moulana Fazal Ullah did not succeed and the latter refused to lay down arms and start demanding implementation of Sharia through use of force, the government started second phase of the operation Rah-e-Haq in July 2008, which proceeded the whole year (Abid, 2009). In this phase of the operation, the government used different kinds of forces consisted of two complete divisions, five brigade, 17 infantry battalions and five artillery regiments along with aviation assets. The government, as in other parts of FATA, first used heavy weaponry to destroy support base of the Taliban and their sanctuaries. This heavy machinery badly damaged the infrastructure of the Taliban in Swat, which caused high casualties and largest number of internally displaced people. Pakistan army had been using low intensity conflict manual for fighting the Taliban, rather than counter-insurgency as the American did it in Helmand and Kandahar under the Command of General McCrystal, which is considered the father of modern counter-insurgency tactics along with General David Petraeus (Almeida, 2010). The final phase of the Rah-e-Haq operation started in January 2009, when curfew was imposed in Mingora and shoot on site orders were given to the forces. The fight finally ended with the Malakand Peace Agreement, which was widely criticized nationally and international for accepting the Taliban demand to implement vague kind of tribal shariat. The Taliban initially accepted the agreement and promised to lay down their arms and end insurgency in the Malakand region, but soon started their terrorist activities in April 2009 by occupying markets, destroying schools and kidnapping security personnel. They did not only set up

private check posts in Swat, but also moved to Buner district of KPK, which is just 70 KM from Islamabad. This move of the Taliban was the crossing of final red line, which triggered another massive military operation in Swat.

### **Operation Rah-e-Rast in May 2009 in Swat:**

In May 2009, Pakistan People's Party with the help of ANP and Pakistan military launched Operation Rah-e-Rast (Path of Righteousness). The objective was to clear areas in Swat and capture or kill key militants. There were three separate components of the Operation Rah-e-Rast. It was the first operation which was fought in the street of Mingora. It was a proper street fight between terrorists and Pakistan's Special Forces (Fair, 2009). They fought in different nock and corner of the Mingora city. Therefore, it caused the largest number of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) since the genocide in Rawanda in 1994. The second component of the operation was the popular support (Fair, 2007). When the Taliban refused to honour the Malakand agreement instead of strong criticism on the PPP government, it helped the government to expose the real motive the Taliban, which aimed at capturing the power, rather than resolving people's problem in Malakand. The third component was the executing of the plan. The army first allowed people to move to other places, so they could move freely against the Taliban in Mingora. Once the Taliban were defeated and removed from the city then they re-habilitated all displaced people successfully without causing any major humanitarian crisis (Fair & Jones, 2010).

During this military operation, Mullah Fazalullah fled to Afghanistan. Pakistan continued to attack on militants to destroy their strongholds. The army bombarded Taliban sites, using substantial artillery, jets and helicopters. After weakening their positions, the military moved with ground forces to conduct search operation. Pakistan Army declared victory in July 2009 by cleaning Swat from terrorists. Operation Rah-e-Rast was the most effective operation to date against militants in the sense that it effectively dislodged them from Swat, ensuring the return of displaced people back to their homes. Resultantly, in this operation 2635 militants were killed and 254 arrested by security forces. Pakistan lost its 168 security personnel in this operation (Hamza, Febraury 19,2017).

### **Operation Sherdil**

Operation Sherdil was launched by the Pakistan army on September 2008 in Khar, headquarter of Bajuar agency. This operation is considered the largest held in Bajuar Agency, engulfed by Taliban and Al-Qaeda, conducted militant activities in public places, targeted security forces and demolished the schools and healthcare centers. Objectives of this operation were to clear Bajuar Agency from militants and to disconnect links of foreign fighters. Militancy deteriorated when militant conducted a suicide attack on a bus carrying ISI members on September 2007. Furthermore, suicide attacks targeted military establishment in Rawalpindi. They continued to harbor tribal forces recruited on Checkpoints and destroyed almost 72 security checkpoints in Bajuar ( Dawn, 2007).

The instable environment of Bajuar led almost 500, 000 people of to take refuge in peaceful areas of NWFP. The operation Sherdil was launched by the army to retreat Taliban and Al-Qaeda groups, from their strong hideouts in Bajuar agency and FATA. This operation contained heavy tanks and aerial bombing rolled through Bajuar agency. Militants were supported by fighters from FATA and Afghanistan.

Operation Sherdil targeted 2744 militants including 321 foreigners and 1400 injured. Ever since militants of diverse nationalities began using Bajaur as a safe haven, they have altered the region into a well secured stronghold, building tunnel systems and trenches across the Agency. Network of tunnels have been exposed in the Taliban strongholds of Tankkhata, Rashakai and Loyesam. Militants would fire on forces from their stationed houses and then escaped by tunnels after Army's strong retaliation. According to the report, "foreign militants resided on roadside by paying the rent for their houses to attack the security forces".

Operation Sherdil weaken the terrorist strong nexus in Bajaur, this operation was carried to continue it in North Waziristan as number of militants migrated from Bajaur to North Waziristan to take anti-states measure. The continuation of Operation Sherdil in North Waziristan was appreciated by NATO to eliminate the strong holds of militants (Khan, 2010).

### **Operation Zalzala**

During military operations, peace agreements were signed with militants to minimize the militancy. Pakistan abided the peace deals held in tribal areas. Peace deal was signed by the governor of NWFP, Lt-Gen (retd) Ali Muhammad Jan Orakzai with tribal Jirga of Miranshah, North Waziristan on September 2006 (Dawn, 2007). This peace agreement promised militants to stop the targeted killings of tribal and attacks on government infrastructure. Militants not fully abided the peace deals signed with Pakistan, controlling tribal areas, kidnapping, murders and increasing power in North Waziristan. The same uncertainty was seen South Waziristan, controlled by Baitullah Mehsud. For limiting the militants territorial control, Pakistan army launched Operation Zalzala, which was one of the Tri-Star (three operations) launched in South Waziristan in 2008. This operation was launched, when security personnel were targeted by Bait-ul-llah Mehsud and his followers, capturing the forte of Sararogha in South Waziristan.

Operational activities enhanced by Pakistan forces, when militants abducted 200 security forces in South Waziristan. In response Pakistan supported Taliban commander Mullah Nazir, who was considered the anti-Uzbek militants in South Waziristan. Pakistan continued covert support of Mullah Nazir to dismantle Baitullah Mehsud's strong control in South Waziristan. This operation was aimed to evacuate the areas controlled by Bait Ullah Mehsud and to detain the writ of the state. The resistant position of security forces controlled number of villages, towns and Spinkai the stronghold of Bait Ullah Mehsud. Pakistan security forces assumed that the militants were having strong network and communication during direct confrontation with them. However, this operation was influential to demolish the militants' network in South Waziristan (Abbasi, 2018).

### **Operation Rah-e-Nijaat**

The failure of Operation Zalzala in South Waziristan became increasingly apparent as Baitullah Mehsud and his TTP network escalated violence across Pakistan in 2008 and 2009 from their base in South Waziristan. There were 2,148 terrorist, insurgent, and sectarian attacks in 2008 in Pakistan – a 746-percent increase from 2005. Apparently, the operation Zalzala had not successfully limited the rising threats of terrorism based in South Waziristan carried out by the TTP, headed by

Baith Ullah Mehsud, who had a strong support based in Mehsud area especially among the Alizai tribe of Mehsud (Hussain, 2007).

In that situation, when the trend of violence started escalating in different parts of the country, spreading from South Waziristan, the government decided to launch another military operation with the name of Rah-e-Nijat. The aims of operation this time were to target Baithullah Mehsud support base in South Waziristan among Mehsud tribe; the largest tribe in South Waziristan, which turned into headquarter of violence and epicenter of terrorism in the country, destroy infrastructure of the TTP in South Waziristan and protect key Lines of Communications (LOC) in frontier regions. General Kiyani wrote a special letter to Chiefs of Mehsud tribes to disassociate themselves from the TTP and resist their operations in local areas. Operation Rahi-e-Nijat started with air bombing keys areas of the TTP in South Waziristan. Pakistan's army was also assisted by the CIA and American forces on border by sharing information for targets. On 5<sup>th</sup> August 2009, American drone killed Baithullah Mehsud in a drone strike by the CIA. He was replaced by the Hakimullah Mehsud, who was also killed in January 2010 (Hussain, 2009).

The TTP had intensified its terrorist attacks throughout the country by attacking army and police in different parts of the country. On 5<sup>th</sup> October, the Taliban targeted the officers of World Food Program through suicide attack in paramilitary uniform under the suspicion of spying for the US and Pakistani forces. In another attack in Peshawar 50 people were vanished on 9<sup>th</sup> October. The biggest attack was orchestrated on 10<sup>th</sup> October by entering the GHQ in army uniform and taking the 40 people as hostage and killing several people. It was in the background of these events that government decided under intense pressure from the public after the attack on GHQ and massive public killing in Peshawar through suicide attacks to launch a decisive military operation in South Waziristan (The Herald, November 2009). The operation was led by the 11<sup>th</sup> Corps of Pakistan's army based in Peshawar. Three divisions 7<sup>th</sup> in Miramshah, 9<sup>th</sup> in Wana, and 14<sup>th</sup> in Jandola participated in the military operation of Rah-e-Nijat (Abbas, 2007). It was the first time that special brigades were shifted from the eastern border with India to South Waiziristan to meet the threat of TTP, which shows the intensity of operation and seriousness of threat (Fair & Jones, 2010, p.72). The objective of the military operation was to clear three major towns of South Waziristan; Ladha, Makin and Sararogha from the TTP and hit the strong Mehsud base of Baith-ullah Mehsud by targeting those tribes that were supporting him. The army faced some resistance at the beginning of operation, but this time, it was a different business and military was totally committed to eliminate the threat of the Taliban from these areas, which were turning it Headquarters of violence and epicenters of terrorism in the rest of the country as discussed above. These operations were also appreciated in the western capitals, especially in the Washington, which was skeptical of the Pakistan's intension by targeting the TTP and sparing the pro-government and anti-NATO elements like Moulvi Nazir, Hafiz Gul Bahadur, and Haqqani Network (ICG, 2006).

In order to isolate Mehsud tribes that were supporting the Taliban, Pakistan attempted to broker deals with neighboring militant organizations, such as Mullah Nazir's group in South Waziristan by taking advantage of tribal rivalries between Mehsud and Wazir. The government sought help of the Moulvi Nazir's group to stop providing shelter, support and safe passage to Afghanistan. In return the government promised to provide aid and other assistance if other groups poses any threat to them.

The Nazir group is the only militant group in South Waziristan, based in Wana, which is not Mehsud, but Wazir. Hafiz Gul Bahadur is also Wazir, but he is from North Waziristan. There are established rivalries between Mehsuds and Wazirs' in Waziristan. The TTP was from the beginning under the influence of the Mehsud's tribe, whereas, security forces have had good relationship with the Wazirs'. This divide continued throughout the last two decades (Hussain, November 18, 2009). The security forces completed military operation in the short period of two months, because they did not face any major resistance from the TTP due to change in the strategy of later to reserve their human and material resources for guerilla war once the government establish its control over the area to make holding the territory extremely expensive for the government. Most of the TTP high command fled to the Paktia province of Afghanistan and other agencies like Khurram, Orakzai and North Waziristan (Nawaz, 2009).

This operation successfully regained the militants' occupied areas of Ladha, Makin, and Sararogha of South Waziristan and dismantled the TTP's strong holds. During this operation almost eleven thousand families were internally displaced to different camps (Shapiro & Fair, 2010). The TTP never enjoyed the same level of immunity in South Waziristan as before operation Rah-e-Nijat. It was the first time, Pakistan's army shifted fighting brigade from eastern border with India to South Waziristan to fight against the Taliban, which was itself a strategic shift in thinking. It achieved all the above three objectives; by reducing the Taliban support in Mehsud areas, destroying their control and command in three key areas of South Waziristan and securing key line of communication in this region. If these operations were followed by non-kinetic means like re-habilitation of the displaced families, reconstruction and development in the affected areas, governance reforms, it would have achieved far greater objective than just eliminating the threat of TTP. It was a good opportunity for the government of Pakistan to penetrate deeply in Mehsud society of South Waziristan and develop model cities and villages to change the fate of region forever, but unfortunately this opportunity was missed.

Local support started increasing for the Taliban for three major reasons; they projected Pakistan's army as supporter of the American forces in Afghanistan by killing their fellow Muslims especially Pashtuns for the sake of money and other luxury. Maulana Abdul Khaliq Haqqani, patron-in-chief of the madrassa Gulshan-i-Uloom in Miramshah, responded that he would meet Pakistani or U.S. operations with force: "We will hit them with suicide bombers and remote-controlled bombs." Furthermore, he noted that U.S. "attacks were carried out in the presence of the Pakistan Army; we cannot ignore our army's cooperation with foreign forces in actions that kill innocent people." (Rand, 2010, p.70). Secondly, there was clear shift of balance in power towards the Taliban in South Waziristan. They were ruthlessly attacking any individual or tribes that were assisting the government. The best example is killing tribal elders of the Salarzai tribe, who announced to raise a Lashkar against the Taliban. They killed more than 50 people by attacking a Jirga through suicide car, which created widespread fear in the area. On the other hand, these tribes were also not happy with government's policy of operation and negotiation. The Taliban were usually targeting the tribal heads after peace truce with the government. The security forces, unfortunately, did not take attack on tribal elders as serious as attack on the security post. This policy of government reduced support for military operation and did not help the forces to hold clear areas for longer period



of time. If the government had linear policy, it would have got support at the cross root level. The third factor was use of the Taliban to settle their personal disputes. In tribal society of FATA, the writ of state is weak and government does not have omnipotent hegemony over the use of force. The biggest actor at that time was the Taliban, which helped different tribes in settling their disputes either through negotiation or use of force. The process may not have met the standard of justice, but helped in conflict resolution in South Waziristan. The Taliban were not only running a parallel government in South Waziristan, where officials were restricted to official buildings, but also were very effective and ruthless in implementing their biased decisions, which were result of their personal likes and dislikes rather than a proper system of delivering justice (Nawaz, 2009).

### **The United States Drone Strikes**

Operation Enduring Freedom launched by the United States in Afghanistan, targeted the hideouts of Taliban and Al-Qaeda. In result, number of militants was forced to move to Pakistan. The cross-border movement of Taliban and Al-Qaeda devastated stability in Northern areas of Pakistan. To contain these security threats, Pakistan launched major operations in the regime of President Pervez Musharraf and Pakistan Peoples' Party. These military operations overdrawn the strong connectivity of militants', located in FATA and South Waziristan. Pakistan government adopted coercive measures to crash the increasing militancy in Northern areas.

President George W. Bush rekindled the US drone program which has its roots in the late 1990s. After 9/11, the US actively adopted the counter-terror strategies to target Al-Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan. The US provided military support to Pakistan to act against militants who sought refuge in FATA and North Waziristan since 9/11. President George W. Bush unilaterally ordered to launch drone strikes in Pakistan against Al-Qaeda and Taliban in 2009. Initially, drone strikes targeted influential leader of Pakistan Taliban Baitullah Mehsud, along with his wife in South Waziristan. Another drone strike attacked later, in May 2010, killed Mustafa Abu al Yazide a founding member of Al-Qaeda along with his wife and several of their children. President Bush Administration continued the drone strikes until his tenure and conducted 44 air strikes in Northern areas of Pakistan (Tiedemann, The Effects of the U.S. Drone Program in Pakistan August 2011).

President Barak Obama also accelerated his predecessor's drone strikes program against militants in Pakistan. It has been estimated that during President Bush regime 60 percent militants were targeted by drone strikes, whereas, Obama administration targeted 85 percent militants (Jones, 2009). In these drone strikes, the US government claimed that 30 civilians lost their lives, whereas, 1000 militants were killed. Drone strikes victimized the civilians, as all public shown resistance against drone strikes which affected local businesses and limited the mass movement. The Military leadership of General Ashfaq Kiyani did not like the US launched drone strikes in Northern areas. He condemned these drone strikes by violating Pakistan's territorial sovereignty ( Pakistan Security Report 2009).

On the other hand, the ruling party of President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani supported the drone strikes in Northern areas of Pakistan, undermining the peoples' protest against the drone strikes. President Asif Ali Zardari commented on the drone strikes program by saying, "Collateral damages worries you Americans, it does not worry me'. Islamabad cooperated with the US on

drone strikes to assault the militants' strong nexus and weaken their morale against anti-states activities. Asif Ali Zardari sought the drone technology for Pakistan's army from the Obama administration to target the militants in order to decrease its opposition in tribal areas (Tiedemann August 2011).

## **Conclusion**

The event of 9/11 changed the strategic landscape of Pakistan. Pakistan had been the frontline state of the United States in the War against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in 1980s, which was won with the help of Islamic militants and Mujahideen. The evolution of these militant organizations into independent groups, the change in the United States priorities from Afghanistan to other issues, the anarchy in Kabul, the infrastructure of militancy in Pakistan's border areas provided the perfect recipe and strategic ambition of Islamabad against New-Delhi had created a different kind of geo-strategic and geo-political realities in the region. Terrorism and use of force by non-state actors for strategic purposes became the routine practice in South Asia and Middle East. The implication of these developments finally reached the United States, which was the biggest beneficiary of this phenomenon in the region against the Soviet, in the form of twin attacks on World Trade Center and Pentagon. Pakistan, which was at the center of these developments, was immediately contacted by the United States and threatened to immediately destroy the infrastructure of militancy, terrorism and extremism.

This paper has illustrated in detail that how the government of Pakistan People's Party had effectively fought the threat of TTP in FATA and Swat by launching a series of successful military operations. If the PPP government had not done those military operations at massive cost to its political capital, human resource, differences with establishment, raise in violence, killing of its own party leaders and workers, bleeding of economy, and blame of governance problems, Pakistan would not have been standing in the present condition, where the threat of TTP has been reduced to the level of non-existence. The current TTP is not the shadow of its former self, when it was practically running all tribal areas and had complete control over Swat. The army even could not move freely in those areas in 2008 and 2009. The credit for the Pakistan's successful counter-terrorism policy goes to the PPP.

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