

## **ARMY SPONSORED TERRORISM IN SOUTH ASIA: A CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN**

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***“Terrorism is a tool of states, a vehicle of expression for organizations and even a way of life for individuals. We can expect the terrorists to continue to seek out vulnerabilities and attack. Terrorists normally prey on the weak.”***

A dictionary definition of terrorism is: ***The calculated use of violence (or the threat of violence) against civilians in order to attain goals that are political or religious or ideological in nature; this is done through intimidation or coercion or instilling fear.***

*State-sponsored terrorism - terrorism practiced by a government against its own people or in support of international terrorism.*

21st century witnessed the rise of global terrorism. Though most of the terrorists have been aided by certain organizations and groups, but when a state started sponsoring terrorism in order to get its aim fulfilled, it really leads to a real fiasco. One can witness the biggest example of the state sponsored terrorism in East Pakistan (Bangladesh), Baluchistan, Afghanistan and Kashmir. Behind all these lies a single entity, Pakistan and to be more concise “An army with a nation”. Though Pakistan was born on 14 August 1947 as a role model to other Islamic states, but it miserably fails to embrace the basic tenets of Islam. Questions have still been raised and that too within the intelligentsia of Pakistan that whether the birth of Pakistan is Islamic or not? Shortly after its birth, democracy was curbed and the nation fell in the arms of military dictators who have used every possible method to curb the voice of innocent millions in Bangladesh, Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The army aided financially by some Middle East countries under the pretext of waging jihad against India and occupying army of Soviet Union gives birth to militancy in Kashmir and Afghanistan respectively. Terrorist camps openly operated in Pakistan and seminaries were ordered to preach hatred against the fellow Muslims as well as non-Muslims.

This study is going to reveal how the Pakistani army has performed terrorism against foreign as well as its own nation in order to achieve its political goals. Militant rulers of Pakistan have always used militancy to curb the voice of their rivals and the Pakistani people who were struggling for autonomy and rights. The examples are residents of Bangladesh, Baluchistan, and Pakhtunkhwa.

In 2009, Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari admitted at a conference in Islamabad that Pakistan had, in the past created terrorist groups as a tool for its geostrategic agenda. Pakistan denied involvement in militant activities in Kashmir, though President Asif Ali Zardari admitted in July 2010 that militants had been "deliberately created and nurtured" by past governments "as a policy to achieve some short-term tactical objectives" stating that they were "heroes" until 9/11. In October 2010, former Pakistan President and former head of the Pakistan Army, Pervez Musharraf revealed that Pakistani armed forces trained militant groups to fight Indian forces in Kashmir. Many of the terrorist organizations are banned by the UN, but continue to operate

under different names. Even the normally reticent United Nations Organization (UNO) has also publicly increased pressure on Pakistan on its inability to control its Afghanistan border and not restricting the activities of Taliban leaders who have been declared by the UN as terrorists. Besides, no one can deny the fact that how the Pakistan army was instrumental in carrying genocide of about 3 million Bengalis in erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). Still the army is operating via terrorist activities in Baluchistan.

Many consider that Pakistan has been playing both sides in the US "War on Terror". Ahmed Rashid, a noted Pakistani journalist, has accused Pakistan's ISI of providing help to the Taliban.

**The case of Balochistan: Balochistan**, is one of the four provinces of Pakistan. It is the largest province by area, constituting approximately 44% of Pakistan's total land mass, and the smallest in terms of population. Balochistan is bordered by Afghanistan to the north and north-west, Iran to the south-west, the Arabian Sea to the south, Punjab and Sindh to the east, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Federally Administered Tribal Areas to the north-east. Quetta is the capital and largest city of Baluchistan.

The main ethnic groups in the province are Baloch, Pashtuns and Brahuis, and there are relatively smaller communities of Iranians, Hazarajats, Kurds, Sindhis and other settlers, including Punjabis, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Sikhs and Hindus. The name Balochistan means the "*land of the Baloch*" in many regional languages.

The Baluchistan conflict is an ongoing conflict between Baloch nationalists and the Government of Pakistan over Baluchistan, the country's largest province. Baloch nationalists demanding greater political rights, autonomy and control over their natural resources, have led four insurgencies - in 1948, 1958-59, 1962-63 and 1973-77 - which have been brutally suppressed by the Pakistani army. Current insurgency started in 2004 by Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti and Mir Balach Marri, both killed in army operations. Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies are indulging in "enforced disappearances" of individuals in the restive Baluchistan, which the civilian government has not been able to stop, Human Rights Watch has said in a scathing attack. There are more than 5,000 cases of 'forced disappearances' in Baluchistan.

Brad Adams, Asia director at Human Rights Watch said that Pakistan's government should immediately act to end the epidemic of killings of suspected Baloch militants and opposition activists by the military, intelligence agencies, and the paramilitary Frontier Corps in the southwestern province of Balochistan. Across Balochistan since January 2011, at least 150 people have been abducted and killed and their bodies abandoned - acts widely referred to as "kill and dump" operations, in which Pakistani security forces engaged in counterinsurgency operations may be responsible. Assailants have also carried out targeted killings of opposition leaders and activists. Human Rights Watch has extensively documented enforced disappearances by Pakistan's security forces in Balochistan, including several cases in which those "disappeared" have been found dead.

"The surge in unlawful killings of suspected militants and opposition figures in Balochistan has taken the brutality in the province to an unprecedented level," said Brad Adams, Asia director at

Human Rights Watch. "The government should investigate all those responsible, especially in the military and Frontier Corps, and hold them accountable."

While Baloch nationalist leaders and activists have long been targeted by the Pakistani security forces, since the beginning of 2011, human rights activists and academics critical of the military have also been killed, Human Rights Watch said. Siddique Eido, a coordinator for the highly regarded nongovernmental organization Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), was abducted with another man by men in security forces uniforms on December 21, 2010 from the town of Pasni in Gwadar district.

The bodies of both men, bearing marks of torture, were found in Ormara, Gwadar district, on April 28, 2011. HRCP said that "the degree of official inaction and callousness" in response to Eido's death amounted to "collusion" in his killing. Earlier, on March 1, an HRCP coordinator for the city of Khuzdar, Naeem Sabir district, was shot and killed by unknown assailants.

On June 1, 2011 Saba Dashtiyari, a professor at the University of Balochistan and an acclaimed Baloch writer and poet, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen in the provincial capital, Quetta. Dashtiyari had publicly backed the cause of an independent Balochistan.

**The case of East Pakistan (Bangladesh):** The violent crackdown by West Pakistan forces led to Awami League leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declaring East Pakistan's independence as the state of Bangladesh on 26 March 1971. Pakistani President Agha Mohammed Yahya ordered the Pakistani military to restore the Pakistani government's authority, beginning the civil war. The war led to a sea of refugees (estimated at the time to be about 10 million) flooding into the eastern provinces of India. Facing a mounting humanitarian and economic crisis, India started actively aiding and organizing the Bangladeshi resistance army known as the Mukti Bahini.

A planned military pacification carried out by the Pakistan Army – codenamed *Operation Searchlight* – started on 25 March 1971 to curb the Bengali nationalist movement by taking control of the major cities on 26 March, and then eliminating all opposition, political or military, within one month. *Before the beginning of the operation, all foreign journalists were systematically deported from East Pakistan.*

The main phase of Operation Searchlight ended with the fall of the last major town in Bengali hands in mid-May. The operation also began the 1971 Bangladesh atrocities. These systematic killings served only to enrage the Bengalis, which ultimately resulted in the secession of East Pakistan later in the same year. The international media and reference books in English have published casualty figures which vary greatly, from 5,000–35,000 in Dhaka, and 200,000–3,000,000 for Bangladesh as a whole, and the atrocities have been referred to as acts of genocide.

According to the *Asia Times*,

***"At a meeting of the military top brass, Yahya Khan declared: "Kill 3 million of them and the rest will eat out of our hands." Accordingly, on the night of 25 March, the Pakistani Army***

*launched Operation Searchlight to "crush" Bengali resistance in which Bengali members of military services were disarmed and killed, students and the intelligentsia systematically liquidated and able-bodied Bengali males just picked up and gunned down."*

*So, hence we can witness the army which is itself using terror to subdue its citizens. Bangladesh emerged as the best and the most vital example of Army sponsored terrorism, in the entire world.*

**The case of Pashtunistan:** There are several arguments from the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan regarding the Pashtunistan issue. These arguments sometimes overlap but can be distinctively defined. The British influence in the region of Afghanistan and Pakistan was most prominent during the late 19th century and early portion of the 20th century, when the British sought to reestablish efforts at colonization in the East India Company during Britain's imperial century. This British experiment was known as The Great Game, and was a subversive attempt at establishing Afghanistan as a buffer region between British-India and the Tsardom of Russia. By seeking to accord certain terrain international legitimacy based upon British failures to assert control over the fiercely independent Pashtun people and tribes in the region, the establishment of a border that would separate British interests from tribal interests was extremely important to British foreign policy.

Agreements cited by the Afghan government as proof of their claim over the Pashtun tribes include Article 11 of the Anglo–Afghan Treaty of 1921, which states: "The two contracting parties, being mutually satisfied themselves each regarding the goodwill of the other and especially regarding their benevolent intentions towards the tribes residing close to their respective boundaries, hereby undertake to inform each other of any future military operations which may appear necessary for the maintenance of order among the frontier tribes residing within their respective spheres before the commencement of such operations. A supplementary letter to the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of 1921 reads: "As the conditions of the Frontier tribes of the two governments are of interest to the Government of Afghanistan. I inform you that the British government entertains feelings of goodwill towards all the Frontier tribes and has every intention of treating them generously, provided they abstain from outrages against the people of India."

Besides, ISI and other intelligence agencies have curbed pashtun nationalists' voice since 1960s. Many of the prominent Pakhtun leaders were either assassinated via target killing or being put in jail. Prominent 20th century proponents of the Pashtunistan cause have included Khan Abdul Wali Khan and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan. Ghaffar Khan stated in the Pakistan Constituent Assembly in 1948 that he simply wanted "the renaming of his province as Pakhtunistan. Like Sindh, Punjab, etc." **Khan Shaheed Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai** was repeatedly imprisoned by Pakistan army for asking a homeland for the pashtuns.

**The case of Iran:** In the recent years, a number of terrorist attacks have affected Sistan and Balochistan province of Iran which has 900 kilometers of joint border with Pakistan. These terrorist attacks have left hundreds of casualties. In most serial terrorist attacks, terrorist crossed the Pakistan border into Iran and after their operations have gone back to their bases in Pakistan territory. On December 14, 2010, two suicide bombers, blew themselves up in the crowded Muslim mourning procession in Southeastern Iranian coastal city of Chabahar .The bombing resulted in killing at least 38 people. The Chabahar port near the border of Pakistan is an economic project of Iran from the point of shipment and transit into Afghanistan and middle Asian countries .Chabahr is also interested by India for its economic relations with Afghanistan and middle Asian countries. This port is a rival to the port of Gowadar of Pakistan. Pakistan has the same economic objectives for Gowadar port as Iran has for Chabahar. Evidences convey that some agents within the Pakistan army or intelligence services are supporting anti-Iran terrorists. It is impossible that such terrorist have bases in Pakistan while Pakistani security forces do not know about their where about. Although Iran has asked Pakistani officials to take action against the terrorist groups but so far no serious action is done by them. This is another example of Army-sponsored terrorism of Pakistan against its neighboring countries. Worse than that, it has transferred the culture of terrorism into the peaceful but vulnerable province of Sistan and Baluchistan of Iran.

**Conclusion:-**In a nut shell, we can see that Pakistan army and its government have sponsored terrorism since its birth. The first case was Kashmir when tribal militia armed by Pakistani Army was sent to annex Kashmir for Pakistan. Next, the army was also known for rigging polls in Pakistan and continuously throwing democratically elected representatives of the citizens. The biggest example of Army sponsored terrorism is in Bangladesh where 3 millions Bengalis were massacred by Pak army. Not even this, ISI is regularly involved in killing Baluch nationals as well as Bloch leaders. The no. of Baloch killed by Pak army in recent decade exceeds 5000. More than this are either languishing in prisons or abducted. Similar treatments have been meted to pashtuns whop demand for a sovereign Pashtun state. The Army's recent meddling is in the province of Sistan and Balochestan of Iran with giving bases to anti-Iran terrorists in Pakistan land. The entire world knows that the biggest terrorist Osama Bin Laden was found in Abbotabad and that too near Kakul Military Academy. So, it can be deduced that army was shielding Bin laden. It is supposed that Pak army must utilize its energies in positive and constructive ways and not support terrorist elements. This is because due to this terrorism infested ideology, minorities and the neighbors like Afghanistan, India, and Iran are suffering. But finally ultimate loss will be of Pakistan. To support terrorism and hence produce terrorists is not the solution to the existing problem. What matters is the right ideology. Otherwise it will only give rise to inter-regional hatred and hence the region can never progress.

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