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# War on terror: Pakistan's apprehensions

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After the 9/11, Pakistan has become a front line state in US "war on terror" even though quite reluctantly, but since becoming a partner it has played a crucial role in this war. However, it also has certain serious apprehensions in this process. There is a general feeling amongst the masses and also the decisions makers of Pakistan that once the US "war on terror" is over, Pakistan will again be left alone to deal with the after effects of the war. Pakistan will lose its status of front line state and also the interest of US towards this country. Unfortunately, the "war on terror" is no more limited to Afghanistan, it has now entered into Pakistan also, where in its tribal belt and FATA region (Federally Administered Tribal Areas), large number of militants had entered and taken refuge from Afghanistan due to the ongoing war over there. These militants have been creating serious security problems leading to military operations against them by the Pakistan military. The worrying aspect is that there are suicide attacks all over the country leaving the whole society terrorized. These militants comprising of Taliban and Al-Qaida, have now been joined by many local religious militant groups. They are together carrying out terrorist activities. Now after a decade, since the "war on terror" started, a large number of people believe that Pakistan is the net loser. This paper is an attempt to analyze the concerns of Pakistan and to look into the effects of "war on terror" on this country.

**Key words:** War on terror, Pakistan, Taliban, security, Afghanistan, terrorism.

## INTRODUCTION

The "war on terror" started in the right earnest after 9/11, although even in the preceding years tension had built up between US and Taliban regime of Afghanistan hosting Al-Qaida which was nibbling at American interest where ever possible throughout the world. There were sporadic missile attacks on Afghanistan targets by the US Navy stationed in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. Air space of Pakistan was used for these attacks. It was widely circulated and accepted in Pakistan that Taliban were being punished for not coming to terms with US oil conglomerates that planned to pipe out Central Asian oil via Afghanistan to the Western destinations. The 9/11 attacks badly hit the pride of the sole super power of the world whose main land was attacked for the first time in its history. The declaration of "war on terror" was prompt, decisive and forceful. It targeted at the elimination of Al-Qaeda and its main harbors the Taliban regime of Afghanistan.

### From failing state to front line state

Before the event of 9/11, Pakistan's status in the eyes of

US was that of a failing state. This was due to a number of reasons – economic, social and political, mainly because of terrorism and its related matters. Pakistan was one of the two countries supporting the Taliban regime in Afghanistan which was highly condemned internationally. Also, India was constantly blaming Pakistan for the growing infiltration of jihadis into Kashmir, who were taken as terrorists by India for creating serious security concerns for Indian held Kashmir. Another cause was that, Pakistan had a military ruler General Musharraf who had disposed off the democratic government of Nawaz Sharif in 1998. Lack of democracy also became a serious concern for the US. In 1999, Kargil war between India and Pakistan ended with the interference of US, and it openly blamed Pakistan for the initiation of the Kargil episode and was very unhappy for its irresponsible behavior. Internationally, also the image of Pakistan suffered a lot. Furthermore, the attainment of nuclear capability by Pakistan in 1998 was greatly disliked by the United States.

It had earlier been pressurizing Pakistan to forego its nuclear program. However, it received immense set back in its efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation after the

explosions by India and Pakistan. But the event of 9/11 turned the tables and Pakistan due to its geo-strategic location became the front line state for US as it decided to be partners with US in its "war on terror". 'South Asia is viewed as a key arena in the fight against militant religious extremism, most especially in Pakistan and as related to Afghan stability' (Kronstadt, 2007). 'Combating religious terrorism, therefore, is a central issue in Pakistan's relations with the United States of American and other leading players' (Murphy and Malik, 2009).

## EFFECTS OF WAR ON PAKISTAN

Pakistan which had been supporting Taliban regime of Afghanistan with a hope to find a stable and peaceful neighbor for strategic depth was given the rude impromptu choice of a friend or a foe. The dictatorial regime in Pakistan took a U-turn by abandoning its former allies in Afghanistan and by joining the coalition forces that were preparing for an attack on Afghanistan. US initially gave Pakistan the dual task of withdrawing support to Taliban government and crack down on the militant religious groups inside Pakistan. Regarding action against militant organizations, US is still not fully satisfied with Pakistan government's performance. The state of Pakistan which hitherto fore had formally recognized the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and was extending diplomatic and material support to this set up suddenly was forced to wage a war against its very close former allies. This volte-face which was a fate accompli in the changed scenario world over did not go very well with the right wing supporters of Taliban within Pakistan and resulted in a kind of armed uprising against the new policy of the government in quite a few pockets of the country. Later on, the "war on terror" which was mainly to be fought in Afghanistan drifted first towards the tribal belt of Pakistan and then to the main streets of Pakistan making the whole society and the government a hostage to the whimsical but regular strikes by the terrorist organizations.

'After the US-led intervention in Afghanistan, the ground zero of terrorism moved from Afghanistan to FATA, which is now the single most important base of operations, a place where leaders, trainers and planners are all located' (Gunaratna and Iqbal, 2011). 'Pakistan itself has fallen prey to so-called "Pakistani Taliban", trained in "madrasas" or religious schools in the country's tribal belt, these "home grown" Pakistani militants have expanded their presence and influence in the heartland' (Islam, 2008). Pakistan now is the major target of terrorism. No place or building is safe in this country any more, be it religious, education, medical or administrative or defense. Pakistan has dragged the war into its territory and cities when the former ruler of Pakistan General Pervaiz Musharraf under tremendous pressure from US decided to send its troops into South Waziristan and

other tribal agencies and to launch an operation clean-up over there. 'The violence spreads increasingly from the tribal areas bordering Afghanistan into the heartland of the country. It is more even than the rising frequency of attacks' (Insurgency in Pakistan, 2009).

Prior to that, Pakistan had done significantly well to control crossing over of militants from these areas into Afghanistan but the US in its so called superior wisdom thought it proper to permanently diffuse this threat of infiltration by pitching the would be attackers in Afghanistan against armed forces of Pakistan within Pakistan. This decision is the second turning point in Pakistan's relationship with Taliban. It had far reaching impact and led to the emergence of Pakistani Taliban – the splinter group of Taliban which had waged a holy war against the 'infidel' government of Pakistan. 'Al-Qaeda regrouped with the Taliban, Islamic parties of Pakistan and militant groups operating in Kashmir' (Karim, 2008). 'Besides providing militant groups in Pakistan with technical expertise and capabilities, al-Qaeda is also promoting cooperation among a variety of them' (Bajoria, 2010). They mustered great strength through joining in of extremist religious outfits of ultra right and found easy recruit in the unemployed, semi literate and under-privileged youth of the poor segment of the society. This rise was phenomenal and their strength ferocious. They gradually took control of the whole tribal area and this part of Pakistan was as good as lost to it.

A parallel government akin to the former Taliban regime of Afghanistan was established there and it did attract a large number of innocent and unsuspecting masses in the NWFP now Khyber Pakhtun Khwah. 'During the past eight years, Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan have moved strategically to gain increasing control of the frontier regions at both sides of the Pak-Afghan border' (Rana, 2010). Emboldened by their success and weak resistance by state forces, the Pakistani Taliban established a firm foot hold in the settled district of Swat and then making it a base camp launched a firm attack in the nearby district which could give them control of the Korakaram Highway and the crucial Tarbela Dam and the motor way to Islamabad. Their onslaught was halted by the Pakistan Army by the skin of its teeth and their ultimate flushing out from the settled district could be achieved through a heavy loss of men and material. The army is now weeding them out from their remaining pockets and has successfully infer the fight back to their home ground of tribal areas, where 'they have not gone away; they still enjoy grass roots support in some tribal areas and find safe havens in the country.

Pakistan's western frontiers have always been a second home to the Taliban' (Karim: 146). It was a complete volte-face for a very large number of simple and unsuspecting people which led to a commotion, unrest and in some cases resistance and uprising in the religious segment involved in the Afghan Jihad of yester

years and who had become quite strong, organized and equipped by then. The next eight years have simply been a story of Pakistan's greater involvement, American insistence on still doing more and corresponding increase in resistance and later on uprising by these religious elements and their supporters within the polity of Pakistan. In this context, it is noteworthy that: The extent to which the danger of Islamic militancy has swelled in the country after the 9/11 attacks, can be well gauged from the fact that it is now spreading from the border to the urban areas of Pakistan – be it Peshawar, Quetta, Lahore, Karachi or Islamabad. After capturing much of the North West Frontier Province and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, the Taliban and al-Qaeda linked jihadis have brought their war to Pakistani cities. The steady erosion of the state control in the regions that the Taliban militia has taken over is ominous (Mir, 2009).

Pakistan has suffered a loss of over 40 billion \$ to its economy and infrastructure other than the heavy loss of lives both military and civilian. What Pakistan gets in return is a tightly conditioned Kerry Lugar assistance of \$ 1.2 billion per year, badly delayed and truncated payments of coalition support fund, virtually no transit fee for the maximum use of its roads and other infrastructure, flooding of its market with smuggled American goods from Afghanistan, more and more cuts on development budget to finance the ever increasing bill of operation in the tribal areas, yawning resource gaps and resultantly widening budget deficits and current account deficit and the only choice of going to IMF which always ask for increase in energy charges of all sorts to ensure their money is paid back; the piling of foreign debt to historic levels with no chance, promise hope or expectation of a write off from the main player which can invest nearly a trillion dollar to finance the follies of its speculators and realtors in the domestic market.

Net result is loss of value of rupee, increased energy price and spirals in inflation. The common person thus has serious concerns with regard to this net economic loss as well as the continued insecurity of his/her life either by suicide bomber and drone attacks. And then the way this committed and unwavering nation is treated is most pathetic. The western capitalist regimes very clearly treat Pakistani forces as mercenaries which are fighting against a service charge and who are being paid for their services sufficiently and regularly. Similarly, the Pakistani nationals have not only been continuously denied US visas; on several occasions, US officials have also humiliated Pakistanis at American airports through special search and screening, as is done in the case of suspected criminals. Furthermore, Pakistan is captioned as a failing state and maps are published showing a balkanization of this county. There are regular sessions of Pakistan bashing in the elected houses of US. To the great dismay of Pakistanis, this chorus is joined by India which appears to be the major gainer out of this whole episode. India has gained three major advantages, that

is:

- a) Labeling of movements for the right of self-determination in Kashmir as terrorist activity;
- b) Status of a nuclear state with access to all global supplies of civil nuclear energy; and,
- c) The increased role in Afghanistan.

Pakistan was clearly ditched in Afghanistan when US backed out from its promise of not giving a dominant role to Northern Alliance in the government after the fall of Taliban and now again US is trying its best to make a deal with Taliban at the back of Pakistan. Within the Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance, which is in a minority faction, has been given a dominant role by the US and India. This faction is an umbrella organization of various warlords and militias and they are anti-Pakistan and pro-Indian. This group has facilitated India to open dozens of consulates on the border regions of Pakistan. This situation has created further instability within the Pakistan. There are serious apprehensions in Pakistan that India is fermenting trouble in Pakistan through supporting insurgents in Balochistan and Taliban attacking Pakistani forces in tribal areas and other parts of the province of Khyber Pakhtun Khwah. India wants to bleed Pakistani forces and to thoroughly demoralize them.

India has already assumed the role of a regional super power and is now playing a cat and mouse game with Pakistan. It is supporting violence in Pakistan and threatens that in the event of any further act of terrorism in India it will resort to surgical strikes on pre-determined targets in Pakistan. Ironically whenever Pakistan intensifies its efforts against terrorist outfits and they retaliate by hitting the major cities when like the recent large scale bombing in Lahore, Indian leaders, even the Indian Prime Minister have the cheeks to say that Pakistan is not doing enough to destroy the terrorist net work. India has started a great water aggression through the construction of dams on river Chenab and Jhelum. This stratagem has the potential of decertifying of the main grain house of Pakistan, the province of Punjab. In Afghanistan, India has already brought about 39,000 soldiers and it appears that after the withdrawal of NATO forces starting in Dec. 2011, the Indian presence there would multiply. Unfortunately, the real trouble is that all these Indian overtures appear to be carrying the tacit approval of US, which has forged strategic alliance with India.

The overt and covert operation of Indian forces from Afghanistan cannot be without the knowledge and even the approval of the occupation forces. The apprehension is gaining currency that US and India are jointly interested in creating unrest in Pakistan of the level and type that will justify intervention of regional and international forces to safe the nuclear assets of Pakistan from falling in the hands of Al-Qaida. The recent revival of demand for signing of CTBT and capping or down

grading of nuclear program lends strength to these kinds of speculations. The true image of Pakistan as a predominantly moderate polity is under relentless stress from the cohorts of anti-Pakistan lobbyists in US and India. Although, the Pakistani nation has displayed it again and again that their vast and clear majority is neither a sympathizer or believer in extremism, sectarianism, and factionalism as they have always successfully distanced themselves from any such attempt to start civil conflict on these lines, yet the media in the West and neighboring India mostly paint Pakistani state and society as a nursery or breeding ground for terrorism and extremism.

## PAKISTAN'S CONCERNS

It is noteworthy that the 'US-Pakistani relations remain narrowly based on counter-terrorism and somewhat troubled, despite increasingly effective tactical cooperation against militants. Whatever the gains, Pakistanis also see a host of interrelated costs to lining up with the United States on counter terrorism. First, despite US assurances, Pakistanis fear that they are again tethered to the United States in a single-issue alliance, and will find themselves out in the cold when Washington's priorities change – as they did after the Soviets pulled out of Afghanistan' (Nayak, 2005). A number of other problems are being faced by Pakistan that include ethnic, sectarian hatreds, ineffective police, broken courts, widespread corruption, endemic poverty and a deepening financial crisis (Landay, 2009). One of the major causes of instability in Pakistan is due to the poor and deteriorating law and order situation where every other day there are bomb blasts or suicide attacks mostly on the security forces and installations but lately public places even mosques have become the target of terrorists. Unfortunately, this situation has led to a large number of casualties including innocent civilians, leaving the whole country terrorized. The terrorists who were earlier based in the province of Khyber Pakhtun Khwah region have now moved towards the settled areas and cities, mainly due to the ongoing operation in South Waziristan by the military forces against these out fits.

Sectarian and ethnic issues have become more critical and alarming. As various sectarian groups have joined hands with Taliban in order to attain patronage and more power, these militant sectarian groups are indulged in armed and terrorist activities against rival groups thus bringing fear and terror at various levels of society along with division and hatred amongst various sects. 'Militancy in FATA clearly poses a serious threat to regional security and Pakistan's own stability'. ('Pakistan's Tribal Areas: International Crisis Group, 2006). According to IPRI, an Islamabad based think tank: with the Army now having demonstrated its will and ability to inflict military damage on armed insurgent groups, specifically in

parts of Malakand and FATA, Pakistan will now be involved in a relatively prolonged counter insurgency effort. While Pakistan based sleepers and active allies of insurgents join with externally based ones, sections of Pakistan's forces will have to remain engaged in battling these groups. This would include regular fighting groups, Special Forces and various elements within the intelligence agencies. However, initial indicators are that both numerically and in scale, the insurgency threat is neither chronic, nor deep-rooted enough to turn into a long drawn out affair. Yet, factors like the terrain, weapons availability, its sporadic spread across the country and its ability to potentially win the hearts and minds of the people means that it's not a quick-win affair ('Malakand – post operation rehabilitation and reconstruction', 2009).

The military operation by security forces in FATA region has led to lot of resentment by the locals and many local tribes, who feel that for the first time military forces are carrying out operation in the semi-autonomous region where, the tribes have been very powerful, reclusive influential and autonomous. A large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the affected areas have led to several of economic, social and ethnic problems. The poor economy of Pakistan now has to cater the large number of IDPs. This issue has put extra burden on the already deteriorating economy of the country. Earlier, it was taken as that Pakistan is fighting a war of US but now with the infiltration of major Taliban elements into Pakistan, it is believed that this has become a war of Pakistan in which Pakistan military is fully involved in operation against the terrorists on its soil. Moreover, the drone attacks by NATO forces in Pakistan have become another concern. According to the daily Dawn, 'around 115 missile strikes have been launched this year (2010) – more than doubling last year's total. Nearly all have landed in North Waziristan, a region that allegedly hosts several militant groups battling the US and NATO troops in Afghanistan' (Dawn, 2010).

Pakistan needs to be taken on board whenever US forces strike drones on the Pakistani territory. These drone attacks targeting the terrorists also kill several innocent people including women and children, leading to condemnation and hatred towards US drone strikes from all sections of society. It is generally felt that this is an open attack on sovereignty of Pakistan. Some believe that killing of majority innocent people in such attack is a clear attempt of igniting uprising against the state of Pakistan specially in the North Waziristan where for most of reasons the Pakistan Army is not willing for an early start of operation, the US is attempting to take the tempers of both sides so high as to result in an automatic and spontaneous conflict between army and the tribes men. Pakistan is in the grip of deep energy crisis. The "war on terror" and its tremendous burden on the exchequer have seriously impaired its ability to pay the circular debts to the fuel and power comparison. The net

result is a perennial issue in electricity charges and the load shedding. The other major source of power generation the natural gas is also facing severe cuts. Collectively the cost of production and cost of living is issues on there account, and the common man and the industrial productivity is getting severely hit yet the main partner in "war on terror" will not let Pakistan get cheap and secure gas supplies from Iran and will make India get out of the deal to reach the costs prohibition for Pakistan.

The logic of power and oppression is not letting the Indian understand that South Asia will never attain stability without honorable solution of the issue of Kashmir. The analogy can be easily drawn from the Middle East in case of Pakistan. And, here the contending forces are not that uneven as to guarantee a permanent domination by one party to the conflict. Early and peaceful solution of Kashmir is in the interest of every body and it should not be pushed under the carpet to please an emerging regional power at the cost of a critical partner in the war against terror. The insurgency in the province of Balochistan is increasingly becoming a cause of concern to Pakistan and certain section of Pakistani society feel that US other than India also has a secret hand in troubles there as it is trying to destabilize Iran through creating a net work in Pakistan's Balochistan but that has serious long term implications for Pakistan. 'Rather than threats, Washington should employ a strategy of enhanced cooperation and structured inducements, in which the United States designs its assistance to bring US and Pakistani officials closer together and provide Pakistan with the specific tools required to confront the threats posed by militancy, terrorism, and extremism' (Markey, 2008).

The ever increasing pressure of CIA in Pakistan is a genuine cause of concern for a common citizen of this country. The clandestine operation and activities of so called security organizations like Black Water are raising many eye brows in Pakistan and the Pakistanis perceive an increasing strangle hold into their internal affairs. Pakistan has to protect now itself from east and west flanks, and thus has to deploy forces on its western side which is tough job, as it is a lengthy and porous border. Due to anti-American feelings amongst the masses in these areas, the people generally are highly critical towards the government for being partner of US, as they feel that "war on terror" is actually turning into a war on Islam. During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1980s, Pakistan became the front line state of United States to fight out Soviets from Afghanistan. But once Soviet withdrew, Pakistan was left nowhere. Remembering that time, the most crucial and serious concern of Pakistan is that once US troops leave Afghanistan, Pakistan may once again be left alone to deal with the after affects of its close involvement in US led "war on terror". It is generally believed that the situation will be crucial when the "war on terror" will be over and US priorities will also change accordingly. In

that situation, the US will find India, a more favorable strategic partner than Pakistan and its tilt towards India will definitely make a difference in the South Asian region.

Compensation for the losses sustained in the "war on terror" is no where in sight. What to talk of compensation even the funds as coalition partner are badly delayed, over audited and drastically reduced on various pretexts. Pakistanis have a general perception that Pakistan other than suffering the loss of human lives and vital infrastructure is fueling the whole bill of "war on terror" all by itself. The economy is creaking and wailing under this awesome burden and the galloping inflation is primarily being attributed to this campaign. Very soon, the people are likely to demand en-mass to get out of this venture purely on economic reason as well. Pakistan in an utter state of despair realizes that while it is very actively engaged in "war on terror", neighbor India has gained much on its back and at its costs. India has been given civil nuclear deals by the United States and other western powers, and due recognition as nuclear power by the west and the nuclear suppliers group. India has during this period rather stabbed Pakistan in the back by constructing dams on River Chenab and Jhelum and stifling the water supply and the partners of Pakistan in "war on terror" have not winked an eye lid on these critical blows to the survival of Pakistan economy. India has been emboldened towards these acts of devastation by the West's tacit acceptance of Indian attempts at branding the Kashmir freedom movement as a campaign of terrorism.

Pakistan loses support on its Kashmir policy from its friends, as well as loses its water from Chenab and Jhelum, is discriminated against in the grant of a nuclear power status in spite of better command structure and safety records, loses innumerable lives, limbs, buildings, bridges, roads, schools, commercial venture, constantly lives under a state of terror, uncertainty, poverty, deprivations, loans, mortgages and financial crunch, and what it gets in return - distrust and mistrust by partners in the "war on terror". Pakistan as the next door neighbor and with strong ethnic, cultural and economic inter-linkages suffered the most due to the ongoing turmoil in Afghanistan in the last three decades or more. The loss has so many dimensions and so great a magnitude that it beggars description. The society, politics, security environment and economic structure rather the whole ethos of the society has undergone a metamorphic change for the worse. Yet in the wake of this tremendous loss what Pakistan gets in Afghanistan from its partners in "war on terror" is a complete disregard of its strategic and vital national interest when it is over ruled and a Northern Alliance dominated government is installed in Kabul, where India is allowed to open over thirty consulates and missions alongside the border of Pakistan and when attempts are made to push Pakistan out of the dialogue process with Taliban.

The worst apprehension that a common Pakistani has is that the United States is arm-twisting Pakistan through various means to force it to launch an operation in North Waziristan, the consequence of which may not be bearable for the state of Pakistan. As US itself claims that the outfits operating from there are more lethal and resourceful. The state of Pakistan which has not been able to fully cope with the fall out of entry and operation in South Waziristan will be ripped to the bones to sustain any such adventure in view of the financial tight leash being applied by the United States, NATO and IFIS. In nut shell, Pakistanis have come to believe that the NATO alliance headed by the United States is not giving a fair treatment to this country. Its interest, concerns and dangers are not being appreciated or even understood and it is being unilaterally pushed into yet deeper hot waters in the war against terror. Pakistan therefore needs to re-evaluate in clear terms whether its concerns on these following accounts have a real chance of getting addressed.

- a) Compensation for the losses suffered in the “war on terror”.
- b) License to India to launch surgical strikes Pakistan in the event of another attack on Indian soil.
- c) Indian control and re-channeling of water of Chenab and Jhelum rivers.
- d) Pakistan’s acceptance as a nuclear state and safety of its nuclear assets.
- e) Writing off its loans.
- f) Honorable solution of Kashmir issue.
- g) Addressing of energy problems of Pakistan.
- h) Safeguarding of Pakistan’s vital interest in Afghanistan and not letting it pass into India’s zone of influence.
- i) Finding true sympathizers in the west.
- j) Restoration of the honor of state, the nation and the society of Pakistan.

## CONCLUSION

Here, with reference to the context, it is appropriate to mention that the Ex-President Musharraf writes in his memoir that:

“Then came 9/11 and its aftermath - the whole world changed. The world powers focused new attention on five areas of special concern: counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation, democracy, human rights, and narcotics. Pakistan sits at the center of each, and the external pressures are diametrically opposed to domestic sentiment. It is not that the majority of our public supports terror, or drugs, much less nuclear proliferation. Small factions support the first two, and even fewer people have been greedy enough to pursue the third. But a majority of Pakistanis do oppose our cooperation with the West in the “war on terror” (Musharraf, 2006).

‘Pakistan began as a reluctant entrant into the global “war on terrorism”’; it has since become an active participant in the struggle’ (Trivedi, 2009). ‘Pakistan paid dearly for its commitment towards fighting terrorism, both domestically and internationally. In the war against terrorism, Pakistan became not only the front line fighter, but also the front line target of the terrorists’ (Gunaratna and Iqbal, 2011). The apprehensions of Pakistan regarding the “war on terror” need to be seriously addressed not only by United States but also by the world at large. Being a partner of US in its war against terrorism, Pakistan has suffered the most. In this process, Pakistan itself has become a victim of terrorism. It is nowadays facing terrorism in all forms thus that is seriously damaging not only its internal but also external security. The affects of “war on terror” are grave for Pakistan, which is already facing other multiple problems of poor economy, inflation, unemployment, corruption, extremism, bad governance, sectarianism, and the ever growing menace of terrorism leaving the whole nation in a state of fear and terror.

The present pathetic situation of Pakistan calls for a sympathetic treatment by the US along with others, Pakistan no doubt is paying a heavy price due to its decision in joining the US “war on terror”. Pakistan concerns are serious and need to be taken seriously - as a stable and strong Pakistan will be in the interest of all. As Pakistan is a key player in this process, it needs to be helped out in getting out of the problems it is facing. Needless to say that a democratic and stable Pakistan will be in the interest of region as well as the world. For a world free of tension, Pakistan no doubt can be an important player, thus proper recognition of its efforts need to be acknowledged. ‘Effective counter – insurgency operations require time and patience, especially when the insurgents are battle hardened, well armed, well financed, enjoy the advantage of a friendly population and have mastery over the terrain. The tribal areas of Pakistan, which are the most affected by extremism and terrorism, might need five to ten years to

be pacified through economic development, administrative reforms and militant actions’ (Gunaratna and Iqbal, 2011).

Pakistan is in a dire need of encouragement and support of the world community to fully understand its current situation and also help in overcoming the multiple problems it is facing. ‘The US should understand that Pakistan’s competition for influence in the region and its domestic political interests outweigh the country’s interest in the US led ‘war on terrorism’ (Wirsing, 2008). ‘Pakistan has repeatedly accused the different tribes in FATA of harboring al-Qaeda members who are also fighting US-led coalition forces in Afghanistan. Widespread sympathy in the area for the Taliban complicates the issue further’ (Bokhari, 2006). The critical and complicated situation of Pakistan calls for a neutral and unbiased analysis by the international and regional players. By calculating the gains and losses, it can be found out that how much

Pakistan has lost as compared to its gains by being a partner of US in its “war on terrorism” (Nayak, 2005). Therefore, a stage is not far off where the public opinion will be as unanimous on the negative net gains as to make the government get out of this thankless and fruitless effort.

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