

# Pakistan

## Democratic Forces and the Deep State

Musa Khan Jalalzai\*

Pakistan is wobbling on the brink. The scimitar of jihadist ideology of the country's miltablishment (military establishment) is trying its level best to destabilise the neighbouring countries of India and Afghanistan. The Army and intelligence agencies lack a clear and long-term national security approach. The country's domestic policy is in dire straits. Every month, the Corps Commanders' Conference ends with castigation and slander.<sup>1</sup> The spectrum of rogue and radicalised elements range from military officers to employees of the Strategic Planning Division and officers of the nuclear force. The patience of Baloch and Pashtun leaders to tolerate the search and stop policy of armed forces and the abduction of their children, women and tribal elders by intelligence agencies on a regular basis, has now dematerialised. The populace of these areas is also suffering from starvation and various diseases.<sup>2</sup>

\* The author is a Foreign and Strategic Affairs analyst.

1 "Pakistan army brass meets amid political turmoil", September 1, 2014, <https://www.rediff.com/news/report/pakistan-army-brass-meets-amid-political-turmoil/20140901.htm>

2 Musa Khan Jalalzai, Pakistan: Living with a Nuclear Monkey, Vij Books, Delhi, 2018, pp. 1, 2 and 3.

Broken-down ethnically, the garrison state is now tottering under the heavy burden of debt and poverty.<sup>3</sup> Prime Minister Imran Khan with his porringer in hand has been cruising across Asia, beseeching financial help to pay for the interest on debts since 2018. The whole financial system of the country is out of element to overcome this crisis.<sup>4</sup> The Prime Minister supplicated the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a bailout package to treat the wounds of his teetering-tottering state. By the end of June 2018, Pakistan had a current account deficit of USD 18 billion, nearly a 45 per cent increase from an account deficit of USD 12.4 billion in 2017.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, Balochistan, Sindh, and Waziristan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), are in turmoil. The Islamic State (IS/Daesh), Taliban and Jihadists have returned to the region and continue to target civilians and military installations. The nexus of Mullah and miltablishment is making the situation even worse. The deep state<sup>6</sup> is expanding its sphere of influence to all state institutions to gradually undermine democracy, and enrich its private criminal enterprise.<sup>7</sup>

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3 Ibid.

4 Daniel F. Runde and Richard Olson, “An Economic Crisis in Pakistan again: What is different this Time?”, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, October 31, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/economic-crisis-pakistan-again-whats-different-time>.

5 Ibid.

6 As stated by Michael Crowley in “The Deep State is Real”, Politico Magazine, September/October, 2017, “Political scientists and foreign policy experts have used the term deep state for years to describe individuals and institutions who exercise power independent of—and sometimes over—civilian political leaders. They applied it mainly to developing countries like Algeria, Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey, where generals and spies called the real shots in nominally democratic societies and replaced elected leaders when they saw fit. (Turkey and Egypt have recently moved to more overt security-state dictatorships, in which the deep state is the only state)”.

7 Musa Khan Jalalzai, 2018, op. cit., p. 5.

The nexus of jihadists, wealthy individuals and serving and retired bureaucrats, as well as opportunistic politicians, has lent its support to the invisible forces of disorder so that the deep state is able to preserve and continue a lucrative business enterprise.<sup>8</sup>

Pakistani intelligence agencies are undergoing a deep crisis of confidence, professional credibility and national security management. A contest of strength between the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB), and a misplaced sense of patriotism<sup>9</sup>; poor, politicised and sectarian organisational management; and an inefficient approach to national security, threaten the territorial integrity of this staggering state.<sup>10</sup> The uninterrupted militarisation of the public mind and thought, and the enfeebled operational mechanism of civilian intelligence in the country has resulted in a popular mindset where every movement, action and way of thinking of Pakistan's political leadership as well as the common people have become militarised, and accordingly seeks a military solution for every major or minor issue.<sup>11</sup>

Expanding the spectrum of their illegal business of torture and forced-disappearance to cover major foreign and domestic policy areas, the agencies have assumed a more

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8 Imad Zafar, "The corrosive influence of Pakistan's 'deep state'", *Asia Times*, March 28, 2018, <https://www.asiatimes.com/2018/03/opinion/red-line-needs-redefined-power-corridors/>.

9 Hassan Abbas, "Reform of Pakistan's Intelligence Services", Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, March 15, 2008, <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/reform-pakistans-intelligence-services>.

10 Musa Khan Jalalzai, "Pakistan: Reorganization of Intelligence infrastructure", *Daily Times*, March 24, 2014, <https://dailytimes.com.pk/105378/pakistan-reorganisation-of-intelligence-infrastructure/>.

11 Musa Khan Jalalzai, "Pakistan: fixing the intelligence machine", *Daily Times*, April 14, 2014, <https://dailytimes.com.pk/105114/pakistan-fixing-the-intelligence-machine/>.

controversial position than ever before. Normally, the prime task of intelligence agencies is to lead policy makers in the right direction, based on detailed and reality-based intelligence, but the case in Pakistan is different.<sup>12</sup> The agencies mislead the political leadership and policy makers, driving them into the wrong direction, and making alliances with radicalised elements in support of the miltabishment's business of forced disappearances and torture.<sup>13</sup> In all previous democratic governments of the country, even ministers of Cabinet rank never dared to question the secret agencies about their illegal prisons, and kidnapping for ransom.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, civilian and military intelligence agencies in Pakistan face numerous challenges, including widespread lack of civilian support, faith in themselves, sectarian and political affiliations, as well as the war in Waziristan and Balochistan, where the circle of intelligence information collection has contracted drastically.<sup>15</sup>

### **HOW THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES MORPHED**

Over the last two decades, the role and scale of Pakistan's intelligence agencies has grown over and above their prescribed functions, to the degree that their operations, often undercover and at odds even with each other, have earned them the repute of being a "State within a State".<sup>16</sup> In most parts of the country, intelligence information collection faces numerous difficulties since the Taliban and other militant groups control important

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12 Hassan Abbas, op. cit.

13 Musa Khan Jalalzai, "Pakistan: Reorganization of Intelligence infrastructure", op. cit.

14 Musa Khan Jalalzai, 2018, op. cit., pp. 172-173.

15 Ibid, p. 161.

16 Abbas Nasir, "Pakistan's Intelligence Agencies: The Inside Story", *Herald*, September 14, 2017, <https://herald.dawn.com/news/1153827>.

strategic locations. Having faced serious difficulties in dealing with insurgent forces in Balochistan and Waziristan, the agencies started translating their anger into the killing and kidnapping of innocent civilians with impunity.

The real journey of the ISI and IB began in the 1980s, when they tightened their belts to challenge the Soviet KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti) and other European intelligence networks in Afghanistan.<sup>17</sup> They learned intelligence operations in war zones, and tried to professionalise their rank and file. However, General Zia-ul-Haq's sectarian policies destroyed their hopes. The intelligence infrastructure, instead, became deeply radicalised, ethnicised and sectarianised, and its members started physically participating in the Afghan *jihad*. During Zia's military regime, the process of radicalization took root in military barracks and in the intelligence infrastructure. A major change occurred when Zia instructed military and intelligence units to take combatant mullahs with them to the frontline. Soldiers and officers were also required to attend Tablighi Jamaat classes. The purpose was to indoctrinate young officers.<sup>18</sup> All military, civilian and policing agencies participated regularly in Tablighi congregations to 'purify' their soul for the Afghan and Kashmir *jihad*.

As the Afghan War came to an end and the jihadists returned to Pakistan, a new wave of terrorism and radicalisation challenged the authority of the state. The ISI never sought to restrain their violent actions against civilian and military installations in Afghanistan. Even within Pakistan, the ISI's intransigence, remorselessness and refusal to cooperate with civilian intelligence agencies on national security issues,

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17 Musa Khan Jalalzai, 2018, op. cit. p. 162.

18 Musa Khan Jalalzai, "Pakistan: Reorganization of Intelligence infrastructure", op. cit.

often prompted internal tugs-of-war. The ISI never extended a hand of cooperation to civilian intelligence agencies, or even considered IB as an older civilian brother, over the past four decades. The unending resultant tussle forced former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to restructure the IB and make it more effective to counter ISI's influence in political institutions. The Prime Minister allocated huge funds to the IB to recruit and employ more agents to meet the country's internal and external challenges.<sup>19</sup> The greatest challenge Nawaz Sharif faced was on the national security front. The miltabishment was not happy with his national security approach.<sup>20</sup>

The Intelligence Bureau is the country's main civilian intelligence agency, and functions under the direct control of the Prime Minister, tackling terrorism, insurgency and extremism. The way military intelligence has operated over the past decades is not a traditional or cultural pattern. Instead of tackling national security challenges, the ISI, along with Military Intelligence (MI) and other units, have mostly concentrated on countering democratic forces within the country.<sup>21</sup> When the intelligence war among military and civilian agencies intensified, the blame-game became the main focus of literary debates in newspapers and electronic media, and the theme adopted was that these jihadists were making things worse. Democratic forces stood behind civilian intelligence agencies, while pro-establishment agencies supported the ISI and its undemocratic business.

A secret war goes on between the ISI, IB and MI. It is known that the officials from the military's ISI agency had

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19 Musa Khan Jalalzai, *The Prospect of Nuclear Jihad in Pakistan*, Algora Publishing, New York, 2015, p.184.

20 Musa Khan Jalalzai, "Pakistan: Reorganization of Intelligence infrastructure", op. cit.

21 Musa Khan Jalalzai, 2018, op. cit. p. 174.

their phone calls eavesdropped at the height of civil-military tension in 2014, following an attempt on the life of the *Geo TV* anchor Hamid Mir, who said he suspected ISI involvement. The rivalry between the IB and ISI boiled over in June 2017 when a Joint Investigation Team (JIT) probing alleged money-laundering by the Sharif family made a written complaint to the Supreme Court that the IB was wiretapping JIT members, including ISI and military intelligence personnel. The JIT further reported that the IB was hampering its inquiries, adding that military-led intelligence agencies were not on “good terms” with the IB. It said that IB had collected intelligence on members of the JIT from the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and presented it to Nawaz Sharif for use against them.<sup>22</sup> In the present situation, it is not clear what roles are being allocated to the three major agencies. The crucial question that still needs to be addressed is whether these agencies function under the watchful eyes of an elected government, or are they still so sturdy that they are themselves instrumental in installing or toppling such governments.<sup>23</sup>

### A QUESTION OF CREDIBILITY

All civilian and military agencies have a specific mindset. Their sectarian affiliation and dearth of electronically trained manpower, lack of professional surveillance approach, and the absence of a proper intelligence sharing culture raised serious questions about their credibility, and seed a weak national security approach.<sup>24</sup> These and other things also caused the failure of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA)

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22 F. M. Shakil, “The growing ‘tug of war’ between Pakistan’s Spy Agencies”, *Asia Times*, October 4, 2017, <http://www.atimes.com/article/growing-tug-war-pakistans-spy-agencies/>.

23 Abbas Nasir, “Pakistan’s Intelligence Agencies: The Inside Story”, op. cit.

24 Hassan Abbas, op. cit.

to effectively counter the exponential growth of radicalisation and extremism within Pakistan.<sup>25</sup>

Military and civilian intelligence agencies did not cooperate with NACTA in its war against radicalised forces. As a matter of fact, NACTA established a Joint Intelligence Directorate (JID) with officers from ISI, MI, IB, and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs). The JID's goal was to manage and pool effective intelligence works undertaken by both civilian and military intelligence agencies of the country, and to increase intelligence sharing with Police Departments, Provincial and Federal LEAs.<sup>26</sup> The JID was to help the democratic government in dealing with extremism and Talibanisation in four provinces, but the government didn't pay long-term attention, nor did it receive sufficient financial support. The military establishment, moreover, failed to help train its operational managers.

Under the NACTA Act, the agency was entrusted to the Board of Governors (BOG). The Prime Minister was the Chairman, and its members included defense, finance, foreign and law ministers, members of the Senate and National Assembly, Chief Ministers of the four provinces, the Prime Minister of Kashmir, the Interior Secretary, Director General of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), all chiefs of intelligence agencies, and chiefs of Police department from all provinces. On September 25, 2018, Prime Minister Imran Khan chaired the first meeting of the BOG. Expressing dissatisfaction over the NACTA's performance, he ordered the establishment of a special committee to oversee its performance and make it competent.

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25 Musa Khan Jalalzai, 2018, op. cit. pp. 165-167.

26 "Joint Intelligence Directorate", National Counter Terrorism Authority NACTA Pakistan, Government of Pakistan, <https://nacta.gov.pk/joint-intelligence-directorate-jid/>.

In 2017, the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif tried to take control of foreign and internal policy of the country, but was disqualified from his post by the Supreme Court. He sought to lead Pakistan's India and Afghan policy in the right direction; but was intercepted, humiliated, and his movements were salami-sliced.<sup>27</sup> When former President Asif Ali Zardari tried to bring the ISI under democratic control, he faced the same fate. He was pushed around and his crippled and tortured body would be shifted to hospital in an army ambulance. The continuous militarisation and Talibanisation of society, and instability led to the catastrophe of disintegration and failure of the state, which was further inflamed by the US war on terrorism, and involvement of NATO forces in Afghanistan.<sup>28</sup> Pakistan's weak and unprofessional diplomatic approach towards Afghanistan prompted a deep crisis, including the closure of trade routes and a diplomatic impasse.<sup>29</sup>

One can easily focus on the Army's political and bureaucratic role in state institutions. According to the Constitution of Pakistan, every democratic government is answerable to the people of Pakistan. But in reality, they are actually answerable to the Army headquarters in Rawalpindi. Every single Prime Minister in Pakistan can only do his or her job smoothly if they completely surrender defense, interior, strategic decisions and foreign policy to the Army. It means the rules for civilian governments are pre-decided and they have been told to go by the book and not cross the red-lines defined by the defense establishment. This makes it a "State within a State" that, instead of ruling the country from the front, prefers

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27 Musa Khan, *The Afghan Intel Crisis: Satellite State- War of Interests and the Blame Game*, Algora Publishing, New York, 2017, p.133.

28 Musa Khan Jalalzai, 2018, op. cit., p. 133.

29 Ibid.

that the politicians and civilian governments implement its decision and exercise power.<sup>30</sup>

To punish Afghanistan's National Army, Pakistan's intelligence agencies provided sophisticated weapons to the Taliban and other extremist organisations to make the war in Afghanistan disastrous and unfavorable to Kabul since 2001. Pakistan's military establishment continues to train, arm, and transport terrorist groups inside Afghanistan to target civilian and military installations, and make the lives of civilians, including women and children, hell. The ISI has often been accused by the Afghan Army and Government of playing a role in major terrorist attacks. Pakistan has long been a vigorously troublesome state for Afghanistan, struggling to limit India's political influence there, and working to organise radical elements to create a war-like situation in Kashmir as well.<sup>31</sup>

### THE COST OF WAR

The war in Afghanistan has brought instability, hate, disparity and destruction due to regional rivalries. Peace is a distant dream in Afghanistan. Robert Kaplan warned that if the Taliban control Afghanistan again, radicalisation will get strong and Pakistan's sphere of influence will expand from India's border all the way to Central Asia. An Afghanistan that falls to the Taliban sway threatens to create a succession of radicalised Islamic societies from the Indo-Pak border to Central Asia. This would be, in effect, a greater Pakistan,

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30 Imad Zafar, "Dawn Leaks: A Tweet that Underscored the State within State", *The Nation*, May 1, 2017, <https://nation.com.pk/01-May-2017/dawn-leaks-a-tweet-that-underscored-the-state-within-a-state>.

31 "Why Pakistan supports terrorists Groups", *Vanda Felbab-Brown*, Brookings, January 5, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/01/05/why-pakistan-supports-terrorist-groups-and-why-the-us-finds-it-so-hard-to-induce-change/>.

giving Pakistan's ISI the capability to create a clandestine empire composed of the likes of the Haqqani Network and the Lashkar-e-Taiba.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, Afghans understand that the Pakistan Army pursued its own agenda in Afghanistan by providing funds and sanctuaries to Taliban on Pakistani soil. Its support to the Haqqani Network, and the IS/Daesh has prolonged the catastrophic Afghan war. These and other concerns have created great diplomatic and foreign policy challenges for Islamabad. Today, the country's leadership feels isolated, and no one is willing to dance to its beat. These and other afflictions and suffering have forced the civilian leadership to attempt to reconceptualise foreign policy. On February 28, 2018, *Dawn* reported the country's National Security Committee (NSC) decision to recalibrate foreign policy to make it more effective and regionally focused.<sup>33</sup> Pakistan's nuclear black marketing across the globe also caused much embarrassment.<sup>34</sup> The Army is behind the disruptive sectarian forces within the country, and provides clandestine support to sectarian religious groups in Pakistan as an instrument to undermine democratic governments.

Over the past three decades, Pakistan's military establishment has stoutly denied supporting violent religious groups regardless of whether a group's targets lay across national borders or, instead, its aim was to attain specific political objectives within Pakistan. But today the military's

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32 Robert D. Kaplan, *The Revenge of Geography: What the Map Tell Us About Coming Conflicts and the Battle Against Fate*, Random House International, New York, 2012.

33 "National Security Committee agrees to recalibrate foreign policy, initiate economic partnerships", February 28, 2019, *Dawn*, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1392089>.

34 Musa Khan Jalalzai, 2018, op. cit., p. 4.

attitude is more ambivalent. Both serving and retired senior Army officers are now openly expressing support for some groups. These include the religious parties opposed to the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N), notably Hafiz Saeed’s Milli Muslim League (MML) and Khadim Hussain Rizvi’s Tehreek Labbaik Ya Rasool Allah (TLYRA). Religious groups have already made their debut on the national scene and experienced initial successes in the NA-120 by-elections.<sup>35</sup> In a video that went viral, the serving Director General of the Pakistan Rangers, Punjab, Major-General Azhar Naveed Hayat Khan, can be seen handing out coupons of Rs1,000 to TLYRA demonstrators while assuring them support, stating, “*kya hum bhi aap kay saath nahin hain?*” (Are we not with you?).

On December 25, 2017, former Afghan Minister of Interior, Wais Ahmad Barmak warned that Daesh in Afghanistan receive support from Pakistan and that a majority of the fighters belong to Afridi and Orakzai tribes based in Pakistan.<sup>36</sup>

Pakistan’s militabishment and its secret agencies have been using jihadists in Afghanistan to achieve their strategic goal. Pakistan backed Taliban are fighting to control natural resources and sites in different provinces of Afghanistan. It was reported in May 2019 that illegal mining of gold and other precious minerals has dramatically increased in Taliban-controlled regions close to the border with Pakistan. One of the tribal leaders of Helmand Province, Najibullah Baloch who was the former District Governor of Khanishin, disclosed that, once excavated, the raw materials are smuggled into Pakistan,

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35 Kunwar Khuldune Shahid, “A Win for All: Pakistan’s NA-120 By-Election”, *The Diplomat*, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/09/a-win-for-all-pakistans-na-120-by-election/>.

36 Pervez Hoodbhoy, “Mainstreaming Jihad: Why Now?”, *Dawn*, December 16, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1376805>.

where they are processed.<sup>37</sup> The Pakistan Army has already constructed a road from Chitral to the Badakhshan Province of Afghanistan to allow easy access to natural resources' extraction sites.

Furthermore, the military-madrassa-mullah nexus has deliberately manipulated and encouraged jihadism by favouring a tactical deployment of jihadi groups in Kashmir and Afghanistan to expand Pakistan's regional influence. The internal conditions within Pakistan have also deteriorated over the past decades because of the focus on building up militancy and grooming Islamist extremist groups as weapons, in Rawalpindi's eternal and obsessive struggle against India. The military-militant cabal is the core problem of Pakistan today. The Abbottabad raid and the Mehran Naval Base attack were strong enough pointers in this direction. These two incidents were symptomatic of a larger malaise that has been eroding the army's professionalism for quite some time.<sup>38</sup>

Pakistan's support to the Taliban is due to two reasons: to establish its political and military influence in Afghanistan, and push India back to the borderlines of South Asia. Pakistan believes that India supports militants in Balochistan, and its 'Good Taliban' are those who fight against Afghanistan and India, while it's 'Bad Taliban' are those who fight against its own Army. On November 27, 2013, the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appointed General Raheel Sharif as Chief of the Pakistan Army, but Sharif later resisted his government's

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37 Mohammad Ilyas Dayee and Abubakar Siddique, "Taliban Ramp Up Mining In Southern Afghan Region", *Gandhara*, May 20, 2019, <https://gandhara.rferl.org/a/taliban-ramp-up-mining-in-southern-afghan-region/29952965.html>.

38 Jan Muhammad Achakzai, "Pakistan to become Singapore or Syria-the Choice is Starker", *Global Village Space*, December 25, 2018, <https://qoshe.com/yazar/jan-achakzai/2506681>.

pressure to introduce security and intelligence sector reforms.<sup>39</sup> This change of face ensured that any action against the Taliban would be ineffective, even as General Sharif's mission of killing Pashtuns in Waziristan failed to eradicate domestic militancy.

Moreover, a large number of General Sharif's Army officers and soldiers refused to fight against the civilian population. The Army Chief declined to negotiate with tribal leaders, and refused to respect Parliament and democratic norms. Instead, he designed the policy of shoot to kill in Waziristan, causing death of large numbers of innocents, including women and children, with impunity, and the kidnapping of tribal elders.<sup>40</sup>

The Army has failed to develop a true ethnic representation process or to motivate Baloch and Sindhis to join the ranks of the armed forces. However, a great deal of experience in the killing of innocent civilians has been amassed. In Balochistan, thousands of Baloch men and women disappeared in so-called military operations over the last 15 years, while the tortured and mutilated bodies of thousands of missing persons turn up on roadsides.

The 'integration of terror' into the military concept of war and strategy and the involvement of civilians in a total religious war naturally led to the idea of non-state players who could be acting in connection with the military as part of their pre-operational preparation, including striking 'terror in the heart of the enemy'. The launching of various civilian militant groups during Zia-ul-Haq's time can be traced to the evolution of this military doctrine. Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan

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39 Jon Boone, "Pakistan 'Unprepared' for refugees fleeing operation against Taliban", *The Guardian*, June 26, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/26/pakistan-displaced-military-operation-taliban-north-waziristan-humanitarian-assistance>.

40 Musa Khan Jalalzai, 2017, op. cit.

(SSP) and its militant wing the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) were floated to quell Shia and Christian opposition to pro-Sunni Islamisation measures and the promulgation of the Blasphemy Law, respectively.

### **WAR IN THE AFGHAN BACKYARD**

The militabishment and the ISI view the Afghan Taliban as the ‘Good Taliban’, and support the latter’s fight in Afghanistan as a welcome development. Regarding the issue of Good and Bad Taliban, the Pakistan Army views all such Afghan groups, including the Quetta Shura located in Quetta, Balochistan, and the Haqqani Network, located in Waziristan, as ‘strategic assets’. The Afghan Taliban is supported by the ISI to maintain influence over Afghanistan, particularly in a scenario after the American drawdown of Forces from the area, as many in Pakistan’s military establishment continue to think of the Afghan landmass as Pakistan’s backyard and an area which will offer them ‘strategic depth’ in the event of hostilities with India. Pakistan has also encouraged and promoted terrorist organisations such as the LeT, JeM, and HuM which it views as strategic assets to be used against India. These terrorist groups have been waging a proxy war against India over the past three decades in Kashmir at very little cost to Pakistan – a policy of bleeding India with a thousand cuts, but keeping the conflict below perceived levels of India’s threshold of response.<sup>41</sup>

General Raheel ordered armed forces into Waziristan to suppress domestic terrorism by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and shifted Afghan Taliban commanders to safe houses elsewhere. The challenge to Pakistan’s sovereignty in Swat and Buner was addressed with brute force only after the

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41 Dhruv C. Katoch, “Pakistan’s Armed Forces: Impact on the Stability of the State”, *Journal of Defence Studies*, Volume 5, Number 4, 2011, p. 72.

Taliban were ensconced in newer safe havens. The insurgency in South Waziristan was tackled on a war footing after years of procrastination, but the writ of TTP still runs in Waziristan.

The issue of ethnic representation within the armed forces has also raised serious concerns. Some experts argue that Pakistan's army is not a national army and view it as the club of Punjabi generals.<sup>42</sup>

Pakistan's foreign policy objectives include 'liberating' Kashmir and engaging the Indian Army in a long and an unending war, and terrorist proxies such as LeT have been created and are supported to this end. However, the formation of LeT also has an Afghan angle. LeT was established in the Kunar Province of Afghanistan as the military wing of the Pakistan-based Islamist fundamentalist movement Markaz al-Dawa wal Irshad. The LeT maintained several charities such as Falah-e-Insaniyat Foundation; Idara Khidmat-e-Khalq; Jamaat al-Dawa; Jamaat-i-Dawat; Jamaat Daawa, Paasban-e-Ahle-Hadis, and Milli Muslim League.

The international community first began taking notice of LeT after its coordinated attacks in Mumbai, India, in November 2008. However, the group was established far back in 1987, at a time when Pakistan was involved in the anti-Soviet campaign in Afghanistan. Over time, the group developed deep and enduring linkages with other Pakistani state proxies operating in Afghanistan, including the Taliban and al Qaeda. LeT had access to a steady supply of volunteers, funding, and – most important of all – sustained state support. Long bolstered by Pakistan's ISI Directorate, this Wahhabi group promoted the vision of a universal Islamic Caliphate through Tabligh

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42 Musa Khan Jalalzai, 2015, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

(preaching) and Jihad (armed struggle).<sup>43</sup> Once the Taliban had established its dominance in Afghanistan, LeT was redirected to wage jihad in Indian Kashmir. LeT follows Salafi version of Islam. This extremist organisation receives military training from the Pakistan Army.

Terrorist organisations including al Qaeda, LeT, Taliban, a range of Arab extremists and Takfiri jihadists in Pakistan and Afghanistan pose a threat to regional and world security. They train suicide bombers across Asia and the Middle East. Religious and political vendettas are settled by using suicide bombers against rival groups or families in Pakistan. A generation of fear is controlled by extremist elements and non-state actors in Waziristan, Kabul and Quetta.

Terrorists are trained by Pakistan to further its foreign policy agendas in India and Afghanistan. But some of these groups, or factions within them, have turned their weapons on the Pakistan armed forces. The controversial but faith-based connection between the Pakistan Army and the militants has weakened as a result of the kill and dump policy of the rogue army in the Waziristan region of erstwhile FATA.

### **THE DANGER WITHIN**

Despite the Pakistani state's denial, there have been clear pointers to the existence of sympathisers and collaborators of Islamist radical organisations within all three-armed forces of Pakistan. Every major attack on a military installation in the country bears clear marks of collusion by elements from within. Many Pakistan Air Force (PAF) and army personnel, including six officers, were convicted for attempts on the life of General Pervez Musharraf in December 2003, when he was the country's President. On August 20, 2005, an Army

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43 Ibid.

soldier, Abdul Islam Siddiqui, was hanged after an in-camera Court Martial, for triggering an explosion to target Musharraf in Rawalpindi. On another occasion, an anti-aircraft gun was discovered on the flight path of General Musharraf's plane, when he was taking off from Rawalpindi Air base on a pitch-dark night. In 2010, two former Army officers and two serving officers, including a colonel, were convicted by court martial for planning an attack on the Shamsi airbase, which is used by the Americans to fly their drones. Two serving Army officers have also been court martialled for links with Hizb-ut-Tahrir.<sup>44</sup>

Terrorists have also attacked Pakistan's nuclear installations. In 2007, two air force facilities in Sargodha, housing deliverable nuclear weapons were attacked. On 21 August, 2008, terrorists attacked the Ordnance Factories in Wah in Punjab Province, Pakistan's principal nuclear weapons' assembly unit. In July 2009, a suicide bomber struck a bus that may have been carrying A.Q. Khan Research Laboratory scientists, injuring 30 people. Further, two attacks by Baloch militants on suspected Atomic Energy Commission facilities in Dera Ghazi Khan have also drawn international attention to the security of the country's nuclear installations. In June 2014, two suicide bombers killed high ranking military officers linked to Pakistan's nuclear programme in Fateh Jang. Moreover, on October 10, 2009, nine terrorists, dressed in army uniforms, attacked the Army's General Headquarters (GHQ) at Rawalpindi, which also houses the Army Strategic Forces Command, the nerve centre of the country's nuclear weapons command and control.

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44 Alok Bansal, "radicalisation of Pakistani Armed Forces", *CLAWS*, June 28, 2011, <https://www.claws.in/624/radicalisation-of-pakistani-armed-forces-alok-bansal.htm>.

Pakistan has all the signs and symptoms of an ailing state that may not be able to sustain itself at the current rate of deterioration. People, an important constituent of the elements that defines a State, are fast losing faith in their institutions. Democratically elected governments have been accused of shameless inability and inefficiency in handling the tottering state, particularly over the past four decades. Pakistan is, moreover, at war with itself. This partial civil war has been caused by the misadventures of many state agencies, as well as of many internal and external forces. All these forces are working on divergent agendas, with little care about the future of the Pakistani people and the implications of these deadly agendas for South Asia and the rest of the world.

Among internal forces, religious parties endorse and encourage extremism, *jihad*, and intolerance, and relentlessly prepare Muslim youth for *Ghalba-e-Islam* (the global dominance of Islam). This task is being executed in an estimated 2.1 million religious seminaries spread all over Pakistan.<sup>45</sup> Originally the religious parties were providing *jihad* training to youth in collaboration with those who were providing training to the Mujahideen in the anti-Soviet campaign in Afghanistan, campaigns that subsequently expanded to include Indian Kashmir. All this was being done with funding and weaponry from CIA, through the ISI. The Mujahideen, created by the CIA and ISI, are now fighting against Americans in Afghanistan, against India in Kashmir, and against the Pakistan army in Swat, Waziristan and other tribal areas of Pakistan.<sup>46</sup>

The poverty-stricken and economically failing Pakistani state has become a headache for its neighbours. Pakistan needs

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45 Yunis Khushi, "Pakistan's Internal and External Enemies", *Annals of Social Sciences & Management studies*, Volume 1, Issue 4, 2018, p. 1.

46 Ibid.

to specify its direction of either joining the path of Singapore and Malaysia, or joining the club of failed states. The country is now facing unprecedented challenges. Economically crumbling, with a dysfunctional political system, corrupt political elite, unemployed youth, extremism – both religious and now ethnic – and the only Muslim country to have nukes... the list of problems feeding a rising chaos goes on.

Pakistan lacks a coherent, long-term view on issues, and this is reflected in its poor diplomatic efforts. Governments come and go, but the challenges confronting the nation persist, indeed, escalate, demanding periodic re-assessment based on emerging situations. The war in neighbouring Afghanistan is weakening Pakistan as a modern state. The longer the war in Afghanistan continues the more it will complicate the situation in Pakistan.<sup>47</sup>

The most disturbing aspect of all is the lack of capacity of the current system to cope with these challenges. Even worse is the agony of realising that the contemporary system is beyond repair. It is so rotten that any fix will take decades. The country is already on the edge, and one may not need to wait for decades to experience a gloomy future. The choice for Pakistan is clear: does it want to be a progressive country, or fall into the debris of violence and destruction, like Syria, Iraq, and Libya.<sup>48</sup>

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47 Yasmin Aftab Ali, "Isa failing state?", *Pakistan Today*, February 13, 2018, <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2018/02/13/is-pakistan-a-failing-state/>.

48 Jan Muhammad Achakzai, 2018, op. cit.

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Dr. Ajai Sahni

Editor

Email: [icm@satp.org](mailto:icm@satp.org).