

**“DOING MORE TOGETHER”:
STABILIZING AFGHANISTAN AND BEYOND**

وما ارسلناك الا رحمة للعالمين

(*wa ma arsalnaka illa rahmatan lil-`alamin*):

“And We did not send you (Muhammad PBUH) except as a
Mercy to the worlds” (21:107) – Al-Anbiya

Muhammad Athar Javed

Abstract

The article focuses on the current stability strategy of the United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Afghanistan. The contextual character of “Do More” is linked with the US and NATO pressure on Pakistan to utilize more human and material resources to reconstruct a weak and badly governed Afghanistan. Without “Doing More Together”, it is argued, cannot serve the purpose of stabilizing Afghanistan and the wider South Asian region. From the operational perspective, it is stated that the US and NATO’s assignment to stabilize Afghanistan lacks a clear vision about the cultural knowledge of Afghanistan. Further, the character of prevailing mistrust between Pakistan, the US and the NATO demonstrates the lack of supporting Pakistan’s technological and economic advancement. The trajectory of Pakistan, the US and NATO partnership is considered crucial to establish stability in Afghanistan and beyond, but, a systematic media campaign to implicate Pakistan’s military and security institutions; is considered detrimental for a future cooperation between Western powers and Pakistan.

Objectivity

Let me begin my reflections on the subject of “Doing More Together,” with presenting a comprehensive “set of reasons”, as to why it is the imperative to work with other nations and countries to bring peace to this world. First and foremost, the Holy Quran provides a solid foundation for going beyond violence. Allah Almighty sharply Condemns aggression against fellow human

beings, and destroying life, whatever the delusive argument and rhetorical devices supporting such action may be advanced. The Quran urges to deter the wrong-doing with self-control and reconciliation.

The “togetherness,” which I intend to discuss is related to the fact that human/ideological diversity can never be ignored or stopped, and should not provoke hostility, killing or obstruct reasonable communication among fellow human beings. It is this pressing duty of tolerance toward other religions, societies, ethnic communities and countries, which demand a special attention from the most powerful to the developed nations, and from the most Islamic societies to modern religious segments in the Muslim World. The burden of history of wars, bloodshed, and the immense socioeconomic, security and political challenges enforces a sense of responsibility on the United States and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to deliver the promised gift of peace, stability, development and democracy to Afghanistan.

Introduction

To address the challenges of instability it facing, Afghanistan will need a coherent and focused plan from the United States, NATO and other regional partners. This characterizes, in particular that the states joined in NATO must remain committed to reconstruct social and political institutions there. Pressurizing only Pakistan to “Do More” will not bring the desired results of stabilizing the war-torn Afghanistan. The issues of common security can be resolved through a revised and a more Modern Security Strategy (MSS).

The most important aspect of this strategy is based on two interconnected policies: implementing the new strategic concept of NATO in the greater interest of stability, and building a long-term “Strategic Partnership” between Pakistan and the US.¹ At the core of Modern Security Strategy, there is a focus on centers of gravity, and a clear emphasis on long-term local participation in program designing and implementation of local socioeconomic agenda. This new vision will not only require huge material resources, but a “real

plan” to redress the issue of trust between Pakistan and the US, which is increasingly in short supply.

In the coming decade, the US and NATO need to develop better capabilities of Pakistan, and it seems to be the only solution to achieve the shared strategic goals. Transferring modern technologies, especially military/information technology to Pakistan. Improving operational capacity of Pakistan’s military, in order to exploit the advantages better planning and cooperation provides on the battlefield. Offering short-long term training programs to personnel of Pakistan’s armed forces by NATO member states the US, with a special focus at improving technical skills need to prosecute a campaign against the non-state actors, and militant outfits. Avoid drawing on wrong conclusions from any civilian unrest about the stability of Pakistan, (Ex. Pakistan would become a failed state etc.), rather than encourage more participation of Pakistan in wider consultations to stabilize Afghanistan.

The talk about “the long war,” and the notion that the United States and Muslims will be fighting for a century basically holds no proof, as the al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks have failed to create “confusion” between the US and the Islamic World. As usually the case, what appears permanent is only a passing phase. While the conflict in Afghanistan may end, the window of opportunity to stabilize and rebuild Afghanistan is closing.

Shifting responsibility on Pakistan to craft a stable environment in Afghanistan does not automatically give pretext to “turn the guns” on its territory. Today, the most common argument is that first Pakistan should be dealt with in terms of eliminating al-Qaeda and other terrorist networks, and then returning to establish peace in Afghanistan. Such a consideration to entrap Pakistan’s territory would not only jeopardize Pak-US Strategic Partnership, but will also directly impact the on-going peace and stability efforts.

There are strategic challenges, which both the US, NATO and Pakistan are facing. The nature of current confrontation is unique. The Pak-US alliance to stabilize Afghanistan and the region is standing at the crossroads of victory and a deep political

embarrassment. By only generating colossal documents and sophisticated language, the US and NATO cannot draw on any strategic and geopolitical perspective to elaborate on lofty objectives, rather, they must synchronize their understanding of how to stabilize Afghanistan with their strategic partner Pakistan.

Aim

The article aims at correlating the new strategic objective of NATO and the emerging patterns out of the Pak-US strategic dialogue, with a view to examine the previous failed strategies to stabilize Afghanistan, and what can be done to refrain from repeating the similar strategic miscalculations by the US, NATO and its frontline partner, Pakistan.

Impact

Without elaborating a deep insight on the social impact of radicalization and terrorism, and how media narrated the state of victim of terrorism, it would be impossible to untangle the complex question of how terrorists impact a society, which in turn undermines the peace and stability efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hence the article is divided into three unequal, but interconnected parts: Part-I deals with the stability strategy of NATO, Part-II analyses the Pak-US strategic challenges and Part-III examines the social impact of radicalization and terrorism keeping in view the role of media.

NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT OF NATO

Stabilizing Afghanistan: Tasks and Challenges

Throughout the history of its development, NATO's political and military capabilities outgrow its old "zone of hostility". The emergence of new conflict zones, especially Afghanistan is considered necessary to create a "new" NATO. With every decade passed, a new strategic concept replaced the old one. The single most paradox of these regular changes is that NATO never provided a sustainable strategy to demonstrate a formal competence in

stabilizing and reconstructing war zones. Conversely, the report titled “NATO 2020: Assured Security: Dynamic Engagement” urges that NATO engage dynamically with countries and organizations that are outside the Euro-Atlantic region.

The proposal also urges that NATO’s enhanced mandate should include military roles, expand its boundaries of activity, changing its operational methods and functional priorities. Counterinsurgency operations (COIN), combating emerging threats such as terrorism and the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), NATO would need strength of an industrial scale to continue neutralizing Taliban, and working through to stabilize Afghanistan.

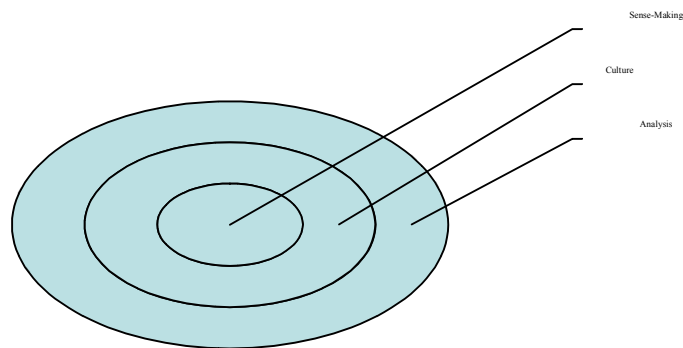
It must also be stated that NATO’s current “operational capacity” would require creating a functional government, using military capabilities to control a rugged terrain, train the Afghan police, army and judiciary, enhance anti-narcotics campaign, develop a market-structured economy and finally suppress the Taliban. Contrary to the script, the new strategic concept seeks to ensure energy security, to prevent global warming and protecting water and other natural resources. It is this lack of connection between the resume of a military alliance and international governmental/non-governmental institutions, which have raised the hopes higher.

Obviously, not achieving such high objectives in a stipulated period of time does not automatically warrant a “bad news,” the lack of integration, of these goals, however would raise serious questions. Beginning with, how NATO will protect its own members, if it is misplaced out of European boundaries, as NATO does not want a partnership with Russia. Also, it is not willing to give full membership to its chief ally, Pakistan, which ultimately limits its ability to manoeuvre under a “close-door policy,” although its venture to expand eastward have generated some temptations among former Soviet states. However, if to stabilize Afghanistan is not NATO's primary concern, then all the problems besetting the US and NATO’s capability would be a difficult scheme to share problems and concerns of the Afghan people.

Swinging the Balance: Role of Culture and Language

NATO's complex assignment is compounded with lack of knowledge about language and Afghan culture to complete the mission at hand. It also lacks a clear vision about how the NATO member states can improve the cultural and linguistic knowledge of the region, and thereby missed out on a major operational tool. In the case of Afghanistan, it has been widely believed that the knowledge of culture within the Military Intelligence (MI) organization supports the Operational Planning Process (OPP) in a complex battle space.² Traditionally, MI has been dominated by positive theories of sense-making.³ The concepts such as culture, identity and norms that have played a role in understanding international environment in which we had made security policy for over decades. Profiling personalities or governments, such as assigning them an ideological position as a radical, moderate or reformer has been used to help predict which positions are relevant. Based on those norms, predict patterns of leadership behaviour and a conclusive assessment about the future role of the respective political personality and party.

(Fig. 1) Constructive Sense-Making: Use of Cultural Intelligence



Adopting a constructive sense-making framework and assessing the cultural intelligence supports military leadership in their decision-making. By all accounts, it is not a new idea as one would like to think. It was for the most part the mainstay of the British & French Colonial Empires. From crossing into family

matters to establishing communication with powerful centres of a society, the main motto of gathering cultural intelligence has been to “learn all about Ashraf and Bedu. Get to know their families, clans and tribes, friends and enemies, wells, hills and roads.”⁴ Here a few troops could maintain a colony through the knowledge of local cultural norms and identities: “... captains, lieutenants and sergeants must perform with excellence in areas such as local politics, as well as social, education and economic development of the population”.⁵

The combination of cultural awareness and exploiting cultural intelligence is one useful way to strengthen modern security strategy. Furthermore, such capacity directly contributes to sense-making, at every level of decision-taking in any situation. It is my position that the management of uncertainty is always help searching better knowledge, which in turn provides distinct reference within the logic of strategic choice.⁶ Considering the typical case of Afghanistan, the application of this strategic choice is mainly related to the way Taliban, the US and NATO seek to propagate their vision of victory.

The use of rhetorical devices, media, cultural symbolism and other communication tools are being utilized to achieve maximum results. Taliban define victory in two different, but interconnected terms: a) based on their historical nature of fighting against the foreign occupying forces and, b) to de-legitimize the Afghan government. Conversely, NATO’s two pronged strategy is based on promoting security and development. NATO plans operations to legitimize the Afghan government. The character of both Taliban and NATO logical strategic choices reflect a gap between comprehending sufferings of the ordinary Afghan people, and their needs in terms of everyday routine.

The lack of public campaign to promote the “good” that is done by the US, NATO and Pakistan in terms of stability, has seriously damaged the “strategic thinking” of the US and NATO. Most decision-makers in the western military quarters⁷ are still not sure whether the purpose to combine military operations and development is fruitful in Afghanistan. In contrast, Taliban is out to dismantle the building structures, police and army posts, the

consequences of which are more related to morale of the Afghan and western governments, rather than to destroy the newly-built infrastructure.

On the other hand, Taliban's ability to challenge and continue to impede reconstruction programmes is an indication of their "outreach" and objective to inflict minimum damage, but at a consistent pace is a preamble of an alarming future situation in Afghanistan. It is this lack of planning and cultural misunderstanding of the US and NATO forces that swing the balance in favour of the "war-loving" forces including the al-Qaeda and foreign militant organizations.

Stabilizing Afghanistan and Changing the World

Every age has its compulsions and follies, perhaps the folly of the twenty-first century could be identified as an overstretched ambition to change the world, without even gathering a fair deal of details and understanding it first. Pursuing a deliberate strategy of social cloning of different cultural societies is one of the most unfortunate outcomes of the modern world. The lack of readiness to enter into a dialogue with those who are different and overprotected of their national and local heritage is considered a major risk and source of conflict. As earlier indicated that the Taliban are not only fighting to expel the foreign troops, but the organization is also seeking to unseat the current Afghan government. This objective in itself suggests that the opinion of a major part of population is either ignored or being selectively utilized.

The US and NATO on the other hand is convinced that the "good, bad and ugly" cannot co-exist. Hence, first we have to filter all those socio-political forces which support the current format of governance, and only then a process of reconciliation can commence. The problem with this argument is that in a complex battle-space such as Afghanistan's expanding war-dimensions will strengthen asymmetrical operational capabilities of Taliban and al-Qaeda. Since lack of sharing intelligence and slim technical and material resources that Pakistan possess cannot match high standard of the US and NATO forces, and thereby can never meet the

extraordinary demands of creating stability in Afghanistan, and guarding its own borders against internal and external enemies.

The complexity surrounding this misperception is tactically missing out the wider picture, and the long-term strategic disadvantages that would emerge in the post-Afghanistan conflict. This reflection is cemented by the argument that Afghanistan’s numerous stabilization strategies and plans have suffered deep flaws. Let me now list those reasons on the basis of which the short and long-terms plans failed to address the need of Afghan people.

Essentially, there are two sets of internal and external reasons, which is causing instability in Afghanistan:

Internal Reasons: The Lack of Performance by,

- Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS),
- Afghanistan Compact, (AC)
- Anti-Corruption Strategy, (ANCS)
- High Office of Oversight (HOO)

External Reasons

- The inward/outward movement of foreign fighters, especially from the Central Asian States and Arab countries has further inflated the issue of instability in Afghanistan. These fighters have now started crossing into Pakistan territory, doubling the difficult task of counterinsurgency campaign of Pakistan Army.
- Other militant fighters, radical Islamists, foreign nationals including the newly converted muslims from the US, Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Australia have now become the new targets for recruitment. The respective governments however have been unable to stop the flow of funding and this new assembly line of young western radicals. Not sharing intelligence and vital information with Pakistan is another fundamental reason for failing to control the radical elements in western societies.

- The disgruntled young European Muslims are brainwashed by their local religious leaders to launch a Jihad, which they believe is aimed at protecting their Islamic cultural heritage in the US and in other western countries.
- The Indian and Bangladesh based militant organizations have long been sources of instability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, unless a comprehensive strategy to openly deal with these organizations is not forwarded, these instability factors would develop into a very dangerous threat to peace and stability efforts of the US and NATO forces. The western superpowers must give-up the fear to “offend” big Indian economic power, and admit the gripping danger of home-grown terrorism and radicalization in India.
- The menace of “Reverse Terrorism”⁸ (Ex. The former Afghan Police and members of Afghan National Army, who were underpaid and untrained, have now joined the disgruntled unemployed youth, militant outfits, and the Taliban, and are accusing the government authorities of corruption, and holding responsible the Afghan government for all the instability there.

Common Characteristics

- Most programs are based on a “wish list”, with essentially no framework of implementation,
- Less effective, less accountable, with no transparent oversight at all levels,
- Most programs relating to stability strategy are thought, planned and executed by the foreign consultants, with no or minimum local-inputs, hence;
- No local demand is applied into any planning of programs (Ex. Danish local community leaders seek to build a model “Danish City” Viborg in Helmand province, the question is how, and are there enough Danish environmental resources and cultural behaviour to establish city? The simple answer is “NO”! It is better to reconstruct what has been destroyed, because

whatever is being built in the service of foreign identity may well be destroyed in the name of protecting the Islamic-Afghan culture.

The short-supply of real strategies, especially in terms of “rethinking” the US and NATO vision is compounded by the complexity of designing a country specific” strategic policies (Ex. enhancing Indian presence in the shape of human and material resources in Afghanistan), while ignoring the security and strategic concerns of other regional states that have less-friendly relations with India

The most crucial productive measure is to avoid any strategy that might become a source of inspiration for the anti-American and anti-western powers in the South Asian region. It would be unhelpful if this section do not mention the consequences of Israel-Indian strategic partnership, which is a growing phenomenon, especially in terms of transfer of Israeli arms/missile, communication, and nuclear technology to India. This argument does not suggest that states must establish their friendly relations under dictation from neighbouring countries, rather than it underlines the negative consequences of offensive diplomatic behaviour of India.

It has long been the “cry” of ordinary Pakistanis that the Israel, India and the US are ought to destabilize, weaken, and destroy Pakistan’s socioeconomic, political and strategic fabric, and ultimately are aiming to dislodge Pakistan’s nuclear arsenals. These reflections are not merely a common man’s view or media generated fears, rather than, the most qualified, and even western-based Pakistani Diaspora have also expressed their fears about the usage of Indian “underhand strategic” tactics in weakening Pakistan may well become the “new instrument” to disintegrate Pakistan.

According to news reports, the Pakistani military have discovered a large amount of Indian-made arm cache, and telecommunication equipment that further strengthened the evidence of foreign involvement in supporting anti-stability elements. The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, (TTP) and other militant groups certainly

cannot continue fighting Pakistani security forces until and unless they have a consistent supply of arms, money and propaganda material from unfriendly states in the region.⁹

ANALYSIS OF THE PAK-US STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

Pak-US Relations: “A Journey of Misperception and Hate”

Top Pakistani and American defence officials have completed a four-day dialogue (June 7-10, 2010) in Islamabad to boost defence cooperation. The working group is continued discussions held during the US-Pakistan Strategic Dialogue on March 24-25, 2010 in Washington D.C. These strategic talks are aimed at intensifying and expanding dialogue in the fields of defence, economy and trade, energy, security, strategic stability and non-proliferation, law enforcement and counterterrorism, science and technology, education, agriculture, water, health, communications and public diplomacy. The U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Anne Patterson stated that “these working groups are an important step towards broadening and deepening the comprehensive cooperation and friendship between the U.S. and Pakistan. We look forward to fostering goodwill between the people of Pakistan and the United States and working together to effectively address Pakistan’s political, economic, development and security challenges.

It is fundamentally important for the US to redress its system of relationship with Pakistan, because nearly all the past governments in Pakistan wittingly or unwittingly played on the tune of the US while the people of Pakistan hated the US. Despite this dichotomy, the US always helped Pakistan in time of need.

May it be natural calamities like earthquakes or floods, or concessions in debt servicing or getting new loans from world financial institutions, the US had always been the first to reach with material and financial help in the event of any national disaster. It also offered helping hand in getting loans from IMF/World Bank or getting the payable loans re-scheduled. Still, it remains the most hated nation by the people of Pakistan. The causes of this hatred are

not the ingratitude or ungratefulness of Pakistani people but, it is the lack of education and information reaching the common man. The Pakistani nation has been dragged into the hate syndrome, which serves the interest of a few radical leaders and fanatics.

From their childhood, a sizeable segment of Pakistani youth is taught to hate: Hate India, Hate Israel, Hate Americans, and Hate the West. Nations propagating hate cannot sustain a steady progress; rather they very soon plunge into the hate nostalgia themselves. The consequences of this “hate syndrome” are now obvious. It has become a dreadful routine that everyday people die because of a suicide/car bomb attack, widespread destruction, attacks on minorities, and always the blame is placed on “some hidden hands.” Most of it, if not all are still unproven, however, the involvement of Indian Security Service, Research and Analysis Wing, (RAW), and other foreign security services including the Israeli in these terrorist activities are not ruled out. Since Indian involvement in creating strategic confusion and mistrust between the US and Pakistan is not the subject of discussion in this paper, therefore, it precludes any further analysis and references on this matter.

Returning to the subject of “reaching back” to help Pakistan in the time of natural calamities and terrorism related issues, it is the US that always among the first to provide words of consolations and condemnation of the terrorism occur anywhere in Pakistan. Still the level of misperception is so high that nothing has changed the position of an ordinary Pakistani.

Corruption, Allegations and Inactive Policy Approach

For decades, the Pak-US relations have languished at the margins of a trust-worthy friendship. With the exception of a few years, particularly those focused on Pak-US joint venture against the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the successive governments in both countries failed to emphasize on a long-term strategic relationship. Yet this ever widening trust deficit formed a collective route to impede the radicalization of youth living in Pakistan and in the US, and in other western countries, an objective if not accomplished, may undermine the US activism in the South Asian

region. This situation is marked by a poor and corrupt socio-political and education system in Pakistan, and a failure of the modern forces in the US to spread social understanding about the importance of its economic and military aid to the only nuclear power of Islamic world.

Whereas, the Pakistan's political and religious elites exploited emotional and unemployed youth to spread anti-American sentiments, the US policy-makers have also failed to play any noticeable role to address this "inactive" policy approach. While key security and political policy interventions presented more swiftly, in practice, the US Administration fell short of highlighting the specifics about how the US had helped Pakistan in the times of need. More importantly, how well the future US administrations intend to focus on maintaining broader objective of strategic partnership with Pakistan.

The character of such efforts could have an immediate effect on the younger generation, who by all accounts consider US economic and military aid as a mean to colonize Pakistan. In the post-9/11 world, the lack of mutual trust between the muslims in general and Pakistanis in particular has engulfed the already deteriorating relationship. The consistent US accusations that the Pakistani government is swindling and misusing the economic/military aid barely reflect any trust building scenario. It is also an irony that there have been troubling lapses in the oversight of US aid to Pakistan. By all accounts, such pre-conceived notions of mistrust only added to cause for concern, and thus stretching the surface of deeply flawed assistance program to Pakistan.

Strategic Partnership, Radicals & the US Aid

Without a doubt, it is a fact that a stable, democratic and prosperous Pakistan is not only considered vital to the US interests in South Asia, but it will also have a positive impact on the counter radicalization strategy. Considering the scope and dimension of misperception about the US financial/foreign policies, the Obama Administration stated intentions to continue pursuing close and mutually beneficial relations with Pakistan. As part of its "new

strategic partnership”, tripling US non-military aid to Pakistan, so that ordinary citizens can have a better life. This makes Pakistan among the world’s leading recipients of US aid, obtaining more than 5.3 billion US dollars in overt assistance since 2001.

Despite all the stated and existing facts about a clear picture of US aid, and its support to Pakistani military and educational institutions, the radicals has sought to direct the Pak-US relationship. Using rhetorical devices, printing anti-American handbills, distribution of propaganda CDs and DVDs, and obstructing operations of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the radicals in fact have managed to build a “sub-state” within a state.

Of course, only appreciating what the radicals have achieved in the service of anti-Americanism will not serve the purpose of explaining consequences of misperceptions about the US aid. The poor state of public relations campaign by the previous US administrations and the persistence xenophobia and anti-Muslim sentiments in some quarters of the US administration have impeded a way forward in this long and jerky friendship.

Therefore, the current US administration needs to be sensitive to the Islamist nature of Pakistani society and their diplomatic jargon needs to be tailored accordingly, so that the radicals do not contemplate on any misunderstood expressions of the US aid (Ex. negativity about the Kerry-Lugar Bill). The language/wordings of the “aid related” drafts must not be used to communicate with the radicals; rather than its main focus should be the young Pakistanis, who are the future wealth of both countries. Contrary to the script that it is vital to openly support “secular segments” in a country where an overwhelming majority abhors them, can only lead to generate more misperceptions and ultimately exploited by radicals to hire and rent more recruits.

There has never been a consistent public acknowledgement of Pakistan’s enormous sacrifices both in terms of loss of precious lives and economic/property by the people of the US, and other western countries. The international electronic/print media have also

not been generous in appreciating the role of Pakistani military and security forces including Police, Frontier Core (FC), Rangers and intelligence services , rather than the role of media has been partial, critical and in some ways the mainstream media chose to publish reports based on the pre-conceived notions and stereotypes.

It is entirely possible that in the service of their national interests, the US and NATO forces acquire ammunition for public consumption, but, in a fair assessment, such media campaign has also been negatively impacting the Pak-US relations, and thereby prompting inconclusive results of previous Pak-US dialogues. Hopefully, the current format would exclude any such results. The history of misperception about the US aid to Pakistan follows a predictable script, but if this time around the objectives are similar to the previous one, and aid is tied to several different security imperatives, then it can become an effective tool in the hands of radicals and terrorists.

The warning signals about how such misperceptions have increased the likelihood of the Pakistani youth being caught in the “hate syndrome” is evident. The US has to choose between continuous supporting Pakistan, in order not only to stabilize Afghanistan, but also stabilize the wider South Asian region or embarrassing a wide array of radical concepts. The ensuing analysis of consequences of mistrust between the US and Pakistan show that the strategic partnership will require to balance the pendulum of power, especially vis-à-vis Indian in South Asia, and this perception must not be ignored.

SOCIAL IMPACT OF RADICALIZATION & TERRORISM: ROLE OF MEDIA

Radicalization & Terrorism

No amount of condemnation and criticism is enough when it comes to the social impact of radicalization on both Afghanistan and Pakistani societies. In the wake of September 11 attacks and subsequent events in Afghanistan and elsewhere, the world’s focus has turned to how best to tackle the increasing menace of

radicalization and its links with terrorism. This focus will fade away with time – and probably quicker than many of us believe – but for now the issue of how best to understand the state of victim of terrorism, and how to resolve the conflicts that have become source of generating acts of terrorism, is the main subject of concern.

One clear certainty at this point is that if such a situation continues for longer than it already is the social impact of radicalization and terrorism will force the respective governments to surrender to the chaos and catastrophe. The character of this claim is directly related to the quality of solutions and research presented to resolve the issues of radicalization and terrorism. In examining the quality of research and reporting, it is estimated that ‘as much as eighty-percent of the literature is not consisted of research-based in any rigorous sense, instead it is too often narrative, condemnatory, and perspective.’¹⁰

A review of post-2001 research work also found that only twenty-percent published articles on terrorism are providing substantially new knowledge on the subject.¹¹ The rest are simply reiterating and reworking old data, which in turn makes the subject of studying radicalization & terrorism, suffer from a near-chronic lack of active research. The reports such as, “The Sun in the Sky: The Relationship between Pakistan’s ISI and Afghan Insurgents,” published by London School of Economic¹², only demonstrates the scope of misapprehension and deliberate efforts to spread “strategic confusion” between the US, NATO and Pakistan, and other international partners in struggle against terrorism. In order to terminate the negative impression that this report attempted to spread, it is utterly prudent that first I refer to the first impression of the publisher of this report. The disclaimer of the publishing house states as under:

“Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of material published in this working paper, the Crisis States Research Centre accept no responsibility for the veracity of claims or accuracy of information provided by contributions”¹³

The character of this disclaimer shows that despite the use of enormous resources/ sophisticated language, and the pre-conceived assumptions, the publisher has refused to take the burden of truth. Remarkably instead of taking the credit of supposedly “very vital” report, the publisher did not demonstrate any appetite to verify the truth behind the so-called “semi-structured interviews.”¹⁴ In contrast to this view, probably the most informed person on the war in Afghanistan, General David Petraeus, the Commander of the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) disocunted this report, and said: “I don’t want to imply that I would accept the London School of Economics study or the individual who wrote that for them...He expressed doubts about its authenticity and noted that links between Pakistani intelligence agencies and Afghans “date back decades from when we (the United States) used the ISI to build the Mujahideen, who were used to push the Soviets out of Afghanistan...”¹⁵ His reflections brought out some of the most interesting points in relation the LSE report on the assumed links of ISI. His remarks also indicate that the report is “sloppy”, and is merely based on interviews with Afghan intelligence/ or elements hostile to Pak-Afghan strategic cooperation.

The public rejection of the report by the senior most US commander is also an indication of the fact that no amount of propaganda and rhetorical publications can undermine the Pak-US relationship. The Celandine effort to limit the operational scope of Nuclear Pakistan’s security services is counterproductive to gain success over the Afghan and foreign militants operating in the Pak-Afghan border area. Moreover, the timely statements by the Commander of CENTCOM question the validity and intentions of academic productions of this standard.

Never in the history of any national security services, has it demanded that a country in question must restructure the intelligence apparatuses according to the strategic requirement of the opponents or geopolitical goals of any superpower for that matter. The idea in itself is flawed and based on fabricated facts. Even the smallest country on this planet would seek to maintain the structure of its security services according to its internal and external security needs. Challenging or threatening to change the strategic dynamics

of armed/security forces of independent states cannot serve the purpose of establishing a real stability mechanism in South Asia.

It is then a fair assessment that at a time when there is an increasing sense of paranoia regarding the potential radicals and terrorists, there is a powerful need for balanced role of media/academia to question rightly the efforts of a respective state in terms of counter terrorism, but, ensuring the credibility of their sources, especially of those who are serving the western societies in a positive manner.

Conversely, the Western nations too have failed to contain the exaggerated reaction to the regular and mandatory Islamic practices. The new wave of anti-Islamism has seriously gripped the young Western Muslims, and thus is crafting a generation, which is trapped in a “double identity crisis. The process of racial profiling, for example raise serious questions about the future immigration policy of the US and other western nations, which in turn has created further mistrust between the native and the migrant communities.

The Pakistanis living in Denmark, Holland, Germany, United Kingdom and the US are particularly targets of stereotypes and anti-Muslim racial behaviour. The most demanding social norms is that the Muslims should clarify and defend their ideological positions, especially in the face of anti-Islamic laws and against the publishing of any offensive and insulting material about the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Whether it is the issue of wearing a headscarf, the inter-family marriages, watching Pakistani channels on satellite-dishes, and sending children to faith schools, the Muslim Communities face a barrage of criticism about their backwardness, and being less sensitive to their western-orientation of Christian culture. In several ways, it is not justified and not justifiable that freedom-loving democratic societies and media enforce two parallel principles of freedom on one society.

Considering the level of misperception and hatred that have grown out in the post-9/11 events and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is only prudent that more should be done to redress the system of

relationship between the ethnic communities and the natives of the western countries, rather than inflating the conflict to the level of social implosion, and fracturing the traditional values of tolerance in the democratic western societies. Building a confrontational baseline between the native western citizens and the migrant Muslim communities would only cast doubts over the role of US and NATO countries in stabilizing and reconstructing societies such as Afghanistan.

Most importantly, the media have not effectively curbed the rhetorical/propaganda campaign against the Muslims communities, although some if not all the families living in the western societies might have suffered at the hands of terrorist organizations. The ethnic communities living abroad and in respective Muslim societies would not demand less than a responsible media, whose duty is to combat all negative responses from terrorist and radical toward a vibrant and coherent society.

Factors Influencing Media Coverage

A variety of factors impact modern news reporting and coverage. Technological advances, demanding public and editorial convictions fundamentally have shaped the content, character and timeliness of the news-worthy event. Technology advancement has meant tighter deadlines often with less informed, unedited, and unscrutinized news reports¹⁶, The consequences of which is a fierce market competition, and turning a human and sensitive story into a dramatic and sensational news product.

The owners and editors who believe that the news must be reported regardless of its nature may be manipulated by individuals or groups intent on obtaining coverage.¹⁷ As it can be observed from the post-September 11 coverage of almost all terrorist actions and consequences that the terrorists and radical elements were allowed to manipulate major networks of the world. The terrorists would send out handbills, video/audio tapes to spread the message of hate and war against states, general public and especially the Pakistani armed/security forces.

This media manipulation of terrorist organization, especially al-Qaeda produced a countless number of miseries in Afghanistan, Pakistan and on the wider Muslim community living in other parts of the world. This has led to calls for self-restraint and for legislation to curtail reporting that might glorify the terrorist cause, disseminate terrorist propaganda or involuntarily aid operational capacity of major terrorist organizations.

There have been very severe reactions by the human rights/media freedom organizations to such measures:

- The powerful institutions (Ex. military & interior ministry) of frontline states including Pakistan were accused of undemocratic behaviour, and that the media holds the right to publish what “fits-in” in its editorial framework, although freedom comes with a responsibility, not in any other way and form.
- Journalists may well end-up taking “sides,” not in terms of an open support to terrorist organizations, but, in the service of providing “better and fast” information to the public, and thus trapping into the propaganda network of foreign and domestic terrorist organizations.
- The lack of close scrutiny and disregarding the “supreme national” security interest by some media organizations ultimately place the security organizations and ordinary citizens at a higher risk of being targeted by the terrorists. In some instances, the terminology “supreme national interest” was even ridiculed and questioned, just for the sake of opposition to Pakistani military/ISI and Military Intelligence (MI), all that was and is being carried out “just” in the name of serving the democratic/liberal norms of freedom of press.

The Responsibility of Media: Reporting Radicalization and Terrorist Acts

Controversy over the appropriate role and responsibility of the media in reporting the terrorist events is perhaps predictable¹⁸ and derives from the competing needs and perspectives of the

radicals and terrorists. Media coverage and propaganda is an essential weapon of terrorists. The radical and terrorist groups use this tool in multiple ways:

- To convey the message of violence and hate,
- To gain recognition of their causes, demands and grievances, and
- To spread fear, anxiety and generate conflict within among the different ethnic communities, minorities and undermining the socio-political harmony.

The portrayal of shocking events, the chaos that ensues, inability of authorities to prevent the act, protect the citizenry and provides security¹⁹, undermine confidence in governmental institutions and democratic ways of ruling a state.

In the past decade or so, the Pakistani government have used the media to address public concerns over the menace of terrorism and radicalization, although the sufferings of civilians kept on mounting. Still electronic media in Pakistan and other developing nations is passing under a process of maturity. On the other hand, modern societies relies heavily on broadcast and electronic media to alert and inform the public, but, in the post-Afghan and Iraq wars, the role of western media is linked with pre-conceived notions of hate and stereotypes, and thus undermining the task of educating people about the positive aspect of other religions and nations. This mechanism is vital in preparing and projecting a community and in generating an effective response to the propaganda of terrorist networks. A number of considerations are crucial to establish the patterns of this reaction.

From the perspective of journalists and the media, a free society, in part at least, the unfettered ability to report events and issues, especially those with a political message.²⁰ Censoring news about terrorism, the journalists argue, infringe on the public's right to know, potentially depriving the public information needed to assess and react to events and trends.

Two important reflections can be determined from this argument. The first aspect is related to the fact that reporting idea and encouraging discussion about different ideologues do not amount to support terrorism, provided that such discourse is not aimed at spreading message of hate and violence. The second reflection indicates that by implicitly or explicitly advocating the terrorists and radicals, the media deprives victim the right to question the pretext under which the acts of terrorism were conducted.

In the light of sufferings that victim of terrorism endures, the media can also be problematic in terms of telling and re-telling the so-called trauma story or re-reporting events relating to all forms of terrorism. In the aftermath of suicide/car bombing and other terrorism related events, it has been observed that journalists from electronic and print media can be aggressive in their attempts to photograph victims, potentially exploiting them in the process.

In terms of posting a counter response to terrorist activities, the need to demonstrate displeasure and opposition to message of violence is important. Though little noticed electronic/print media reporting, moderate Muslim activists, retired civil-military bureaucrats and youth organizations arranged peaceful rallies against the acts of terrorism and violence by the al-Qaeda and other militant outfits. From New York to London, and from Copenhagen to Amsterdam, these important bulwarks work against the spread of “hate syndrome” and militancy. More importantly, the organizers of these protests are mostly natives of respective Western countries including the US, the UK and France.

A number of moderate leaders, intellectuals, journalists and members of civil society were threatened and many of them are also being killed. Mainstream Muslims in Afghanistan, Pakistan and in the west are also victim of radicalization, although in a more subtle way, the actions rhetoric of both Islamic and neo-conservatives²¹ often produce blind, primitive responses from non-muslim communities leading to increased religious bigotry, hate and Islamomophobia.²²

The Danish Cartoon controversy (2005-2010) about the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), and its aftermath clearly reflect that the European and Scandinavian countries have become the breeding grounds for confusion and a major source for inspiring radicalization and instability in wider South Asian region. It is this link between social impact of radicalization and terrorism, which is consistently challenging the US and NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Conclusion

The most important conclusion can be drawn from the Quranic teaching of “going beyond violence.” The ensuing analyses of three interconnected parts demonstrate the complexity of stabilizing Afghanistan and beyond. This observation springs from a combination of inherent complexity of the issues and an additional complexity of intentions frequently evident in the pervasive contortion of the US and NATO policies towards the issue of wider peace in the South Asian region. Although it is difficult, and ultimately impossible, to make final conclusion about relevance of stability strategy, the core objective however is to constitute and agree on the specifics of “doing more together.”

The article concludes that the reasons behind disagreements between US and NATO position flows from insistence on Pakistan “do more,” and to strengthen Indian influence and military might against a “weak technical support system” to Pakistan (Ex. civil nuclear deal between the US and India, the consistent transfer of military and missile technology to India by Israel and Russia). The fact that none of the earlier strategies to establish peace in Afghanistan have been successful in terms of extensive use of military force evidently reveals the misperception about the new strategic concept of NATO. Hence, the conclusion is that it does not possess the capability and resources to stabilize “war zones.” The anti-war hysteria and public anger against the US and NATO countries are not merely perceptions or propaganda. These views must be counted in terms of democratic values.

Recommendations

The current state of instability in Afghanistan once again draws the only global power into a perfect storm and the Asian section is shuddered. The three unequal, but interconnected sections in this article are aimed to draw on the following recommendations:

- Tolerance and understanding of each other’s socio-political needs are the keys to “doing more together to stabilize Afghanistan. Realistically, at the moment, the US, NATO and Pakistan’s conflict with radicals appears so powerful and of such overwhelming importance that it is difficult to imagine it simply fading away. Therefore if the trajectory of the US-Pak strategic partnership remains practical, intact and of special interest for both the countries, then toward the end of this decade, the United States must be able to redress the system of relationship with the Muslim World.
- There is a great need to promote good governance and justice in Afghanistan. In order to suspend the flow of drug money to the militants, there is a great need to improve anti-narcotics measures.
- Balancing the role of regional players against Indian influence in Afghanistan (Ex. China, Iran and the Central Asian Muslim States), and assigning role to Muslim Countries in reconstruction and stability efforts, given the cultural sensitivities of primitive Islamic-tribal Afghan society
- Implementing local programs, and not failing Pahstun and “other” communities in the areas of education, small business loans and medical care. This policy will help preparing Afghanistan for better inter-tribe relations including the future relations between the former Taliban leadership. The character of such initiative must evolve a forward-looking policy of relations with Pakistan, as this planning will shape a stable environment in the post-US and NATO and South Asia.

Author

Mr. Muhammad Athar Javed is a Pakistani/Canadian, and currently resides in Copenhagen, Denmark. He is expert in Pakistan's military and national security affairs. Mr. Javed is working as a Research Analyst with a private Danish company, and also performs duties as a part-time instructor at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In numerous professional capacities, he has contributed to various departments and organizations including the Royal Danish Defence Academy, the Carsten Niebuhr Department, University of Copenhagen, the Department of National Defence Canada, Canadian Council for International Peace and Security, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI), Centre for Strategic and Future Studies, Kuwait University and Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Canada.

Notes

¹ ...the President of the United States will face a daunting set of challenges in seeking to stabilize Afghanistan and its region...It remains prime operational area for al-Qaeda; it is replete with interconnected security dilemmas, and it an area where the reputations of both the United States and NATO are squarely on the line, Maley, William: *Stabilizing Afghanistan: Threats and Challenges*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 2008, p.1.

² Mitchell, William, Dr., *Swinging the Tomahak – The Role of Cultural Experts in War Fighting*, Danish Military Journal, (Militært Tidsskrift), 138 number (årgang), Number 4 – December 2009, pp. 442-443. The author advises NATO, and works at the Royal Danish Defense College, Institute for Leadership and Organization R & D Section, C2 and Intelligence.

³ A sense-making process consists of subjective context of a given task, and the matters, which provides a theoretical foundation for our understanding of complex battle spaces that often incorporates both cognitive and physical domain.

⁴ Ibid. For further reference, see US Army Manual (2009), FMI 3-24.2 *Tactics in Counter Insurgency*, March 2009.

⁵ Raoul Giradet, *La Société Militaire de 1815 á nos jours*, Perrin, 1998, p. 228. For a good overview of this period, see Colonel Hennri bore, "Complex Operations in Africa", *Military Review*, March-April 2009, pp. 65-71.

⁶ The most obvious reference to strategic choice in this paper is the way Taliban, US and NATO forces have set the "war theater." The logic to gain more territorial and security control plays out on the parallel and conflicting goals of all the parties involved in Afghan conflict. Hence, the logic of strategic choice is particularly mentioned to define victory related claims, rather than gauging broader implications of their choices.

⁷ Author’s informal discussions with the former Director General of International Staff of NATO, General (Rtd.) Ole L. Kanborg, the subject of discussion was the role of NATO on reconstruction and military operations in Afghanistan, May 20, 2010, Copenhagen, Denmark.

⁸ “Reverse terrorism” can be defined in terms of losing control of those militant forces that in one or another form was once sponsored by a state, non-state actor, or by a collective set of countries. In the case of former Mujhaideen (some of them now Taliban leaders) in Afghanistan, the US, its Western allies, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and all those who oppose Russian invasion in Afghanistan, have supported the creation of volunteer fighters from mostly Muslim countries. At the end of this assignment, these fighters left without any further perspective, and in the wake of civil war in Afghanistan and consistent frustration, they have developed a sense of revenge towards their former sponsors. This perception in terms of reverse terrorism that we now face cannot be ignored.

⁹ For further reference, see print/ electronic media reports (September-December, 2009/January-March 2010), Daily Dawn, The News, Express News and Geo News English Urdu TV Channels.

¹⁰ Schmid, A.P. and Jongman, A.J. *Political Terrorism*, 2nd edition, Oxford North-Holland Publishing Company, 1988, p. 179.

¹¹ Silk, A. The Devil you know: Continuing Problems with the Research on Terrorism, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2001, 13 (4), 1-14.

¹² Waldman, Matt, “The Sun in the Sky: The Relationship between Pakistan’s ISI and Afghan Insurgents,” *Crisis States Discussion papers*, number 18, published by London School of Economic, June 2010, www.crisisstates.com

¹³ *Ibid.* cover page.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 2

¹⁵ Gen. Petraeus Discounts London Report Tying Pakistan to Taliban, *Dwan News*, June 19, 2010, Internet edition, www.dawn.com.

¹⁶ Kingston, S. *Terrorism, the Media and Northern Ireland Conflict*, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, Volume 18, 1995, pp. 203-231.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Elimquist, S. The Scope and Limitation of Cooperation between the media and the authorities, in Y. Alexander and R. Latter (eds.), *Terrorism and the Media*, Brussey’s INC.

¹⁹ Nacos, B.L. *Terrorism and the Media: From Iran Hostage Crisis to the World Trade Centre Bombing*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1994.

²⁰ Perl, S. *Terrorism, the media and government: Perspectives, trends, and options for policymakers*. CRS Issue Brief, 22 October, 1997. As viewed at www.fas.org/irp/irs/crs-terrorism.htm.

²¹ Historically, 30 years ago it meant a former liberal who became a conservative. The cliché was because “they (the neocons) were mugged by reality,” but it was because they saw the empirical failures of liberal welfare, state and foreign policies, and they were therefore less ideological than other conservatives and brought much more of a social science background to their argumentation, for further reference, see: So, what is a 'Neocon'? By Bill Steigerwald, *TRIBUNE-REVIEW*, May 29, 2004

²² “The report provides *prima facie* and empirical evidence to demonstrate that assailants of Muslims are invariably motivated by a negative view of Muslims they have acquired from either mainstream or extremist nationalist reports or commentaries in the media.” “Islamophobic, negative and unwarranted portrayals of Muslim London as Londonistan and Muslim Londoners as terrorists, sympathisers and subversives in sections of the media appear to provide the motivation for a significant number of anti-Muslim hate crimes.” The document – from the University of Exeter's European Muslim research centre – was written by Dr Jonathan Githens-Mazer and former special branch detective Dr Robert Lambert. For further reference, see Media and politicians ‘fuel rise in hate crimes against Muslims:’ By Vikram Dodd, January 28, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/jan/28/hate-crimes-muslims-media-politicians>, last visited June 8, 2010