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Evaluating Impacts of Military Operations and Peace Deals in Former FATA and Swat Valley (2001–2013)

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ABSTRACT

The 9/11 tragedy in the US changed the world's political and diplomatic agenda with a particular emphasis on South Asia. America blamed Al-Qaeda for these attacks and invaded Afghanistan. Pakistan gave logistical support to the US campaign against Al-Qaeda. American war on terrorism (WoT) in Afghanistan expanded to Pakistan's tribal areas especially in former FATA. Pakistan started military operations in the tribal region. However, during these operations, Pakistani security forces adopted soft-handed policies and halted several operations to conclude peace deals. During these deals, terrorist groups gained time and repeatedly reorganized, leading to the formation of the TTP umbrella organization in 2007 to carry out large-scale terrorist activities in Pakistan. As a result, in 2009, the military conducted large-scale operations known as Rah-e-Rast in Swat and Rah-e-Nijat in South Waziristan Agency. However, amid these operations, militants diverted their attention to the North Waziristan Agency and Afghanistan. The study attempts to analyze the impacts of military operations and peace deals in the former FATA and Swat valley from 2011 to 2013. It also highlights reasons which increased terrorism in the country. Even Pakistan was placed on 3rd position

in the GTI ranking in 2013.

Keywords: Terrorism, TTP, Afghanistan, Pakistan, FATA, Military Operations

INTRODUCTION

Following the tragic event of 9/11, the US shifted its focus towards Afghanistan and attributed the attack on Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban. The US presented seven demands to Pakistan. These demands included stopping the presence of Al-Qaeda operatives along Pakistan's borders, stopping all logistical support to Osama Bin Laden (OBL), granting landing rights for military and intelligence operations, allowing territorial access to the US, permitting the use of naval bases for operations, providing immigration, database, and internal security information to the US, publicly condemning the events of 9/11, and halting the shipment of fuel and other items to the Afghan Taliban. Additionally, the Pakistani government was urged to sever diplomatic ties with the Afghan Taliban if they were found to be supporting Osama Bin Laden (Musharraf, 2006).

General Musharraf diplomatically agreed to the US demands in order to enhance the state's economy, safeguard its nuclear assets, and resolve the Kashmir Issue. Additionally, India was prepared to offer bases to the US as a gesture of diplomatic goodwill if Pakistan chose not to join the US alliance. As a result of agreeing to the demands of the US, Musharraf prevented Pakistan from engaging in armed conflict with both the US and India (Musharraf, 2006). The US then put pressure on Pakistan to send an army into former FATA (Federally Administrated Tribal Area). The American alliance also said that Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban should not be allowed to strengthen and build safe havens in the northern parts of Pakistan's border region, now called KPK (Khyber Pakhtun Khawah), which is close to the Afghan border (Nawaz, 2009). Pakistan had placed approximately 80,000 military personnel along the Afghan border to eradicate the sanctuaries utilized by Al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban in the northern regions of KPK province, like the tribal belt of Pakistan, in 2002 (Hussain, 2005).

Subsequently, these circumstances demonstrated detrimental consequences for Pakistan in the subsequent period (Nawaz, 2009). After the joining of US alliance as a non-NATO ally in 2004, Pakistan Army and security forces conducted different military operations against terrorist groups in the tribal area of Pakistan (Khan, 2013). Furthermore, the Army negotiated various peace treaties with the Taliban, but none of them were successful until 2008. As a result, the Army transitioned from a defensive to an offensive posture in 2009, launching operations Rah-e-Rast in Swat and and Rah-i-Nijat (2009-10) in SWA (South Waziristan Agency). However, the impacts of large-scale activities were not as significant as expected until 2013 (“On again, Off again”, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

Based on the primary and secondary sources, the study is descriptive, analytical and qualitative in nature. The data is analyzed lucidity and historic events are explained by using rational approach with focus on reason and logic.

Significance and Scope

The study is very much significant as it focuses on TTP's terrorist activities in tribal area likely former FATA of Pakistan and eventually Pakistan army's military operations and their impact on country's security situation.

The Beginning of Militancy in Pakistan after 9/11

Pakistan's engagement in WoT precipitated a surge in terrorism occurrences as a consequence of the commencement of the US operation known as "Enduring Freedom" in 2001 (Chaudhry, et al, 2020). Pakistan had a surge in acts of terrorism, resulting in the emergence of target killings, suicide attacks, and extremist activities (Hussain, 2005). Consequently, the situation progressively deteriorated, leading to the infiltration of terrorism into the tribal regions of Pakistan. The deputy leader of Al-Qaeda released a proclamation calling for the assassination of Pervez Musharraf, then president and Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan (1999-2008) (Salim and Khan, 2019). In the year 2002, a collaborative terrorist attack was carried out by local individuals and Afghan Jihadists hailing from the tribal area, targeting the Pakistani army. This unfortunate incident led to the tragic loss of 12 soldiers' lives. Operation *al-Mezan* was initiated in the context of the assault on the armed forces and the prevailing state of security in SWA (Abbasi, et al, 2018).

Consequently, the armed forces encountered tremendous opposition from the local tribes, however in 2003, the governing body declared a pardon for non-native combatants. Hence, the occurrence of the terrorist strike at Wana camp, in January 2004, the prevailing circumstances deteriorated, prompting the military to initiate operation in the region of SWA. In March 2004, the military initiated a significant operation known as Kalosha with the objective of eliminating foreign terrorists from the region of SWA (Ahmad, 2014).

Era of Peace Agreements and Terrorists Response

In response to the limited achievements in military operations, Musharraf implemented a proactive strategy and entered into a peace agreement with insurgent leader Nek Muhammad in April 2004. The term "Shakai Agreement" is recognized as: according to the treaty:

- Militants will be offered amnesty and provided with financial assistance contingent upon their cessation of hostilities against the nation and the establishment of amicable relations with the state.
- Foreign militants will be effectively deterred from executing acts of aggression and subsequently apprehended, thereafter being transferred into the custody of relevant authorities or duly documented.
- Pakistan's territory shall not be utilized for the purpose of conducting cross-border attacks.
- Military action would not take against Nek Muhammad.
- All prisoners would release by government who were arrested during Military operation.

The accord disintegrated in June 2004 with the demise of Nek Muhammad in a targeted aerial attack. The occurrence of terrorist organizations resurfacing and the subsequent rise in terrorist attacks was a significant development. In 2005, a formal

agreement was entered into between Baitullah Mehsud, who succeeded Nek Muhammad, and the Musharraf government. This agreement, which took place in Sararogha (SWA), consisted of a 6-point agenda. According to which:

- The government would provide amnesty to Baitullah Mehsud and his pro-militants.
- The cessation of attacks by militants and their allegiance to the state shall be observed.
- The cessation of militant assaults on the military will be implemented.
- The military forces will be redeployed from the regions that are now under the control and influence of Baitullah Mehsud.
- The compensation for the destruction of houses during military operations and the resulting damages will be provided.
- Foreign combatants were not obligated to surrender (Ahmad, 2014).

Thus, in response to the escalating circumstances, a military campaign was initiated in the NWA (North Waziristan Agency) in 2005 with the objective of suppressing individuals engaged in illicit operations and exhibiting non-compliance with governmental authorities. This operation resulted in the elimination of 20 foreign terrorists and the apprehension of 100 tribesmen (Hussain, 2019). In September 2006, a peace pact was once again established between the army, tribal militants, and the Afghan Taliban in the NWA (and probably the Taliban as well, though the government denies this) according to this accord:

- The administration has reached a decision to cease ground and air strikes in the region of Waziristan. The cessation of militant movement across the border will be implemented.
- Foreign Jihadists residing in Pakistan should be compelled to depart from the nation, while those who are unable to do so ought to abide by the legal framework in a peaceful manner.
- The responsibility for managing checkpoints and border surveillance in tribal area will be entrusted to tribal communities, with the Pakistan army refraining from interference in these matters.
- The region will not be subject to any parallel governance and will be governed in accordance with the legal framework established by the government.
- The government will be required to utilize local traditions in order to address the issues at hand.
- Tribal leaders will take measures to guarantee the preservation of law enforcement officers and state property, ensuring their safety and integrity.
- Tribal members will be prohibited from bearing heavy weaponry; however they will be permitted to possess light arms.
- Militant individuals shall be prohibited from accessing the neighboring agencies of the NWA.
- The aforementioned measures encompassed the liberation of apprehended militants and the stipulation that they would not be subject to subsequent arrests.

- Both parties also reached a consensus to facilitate the repatriation of confiscated armaments, vehicles, and communication devices.
- The government assumed responsibility for providing financial restitution following the devastation of infrastructure and loss of innocent lives within the region (Kanwal, 2008).

The unfortunate occurrence entailed the resurgence of terrorist organizations subsequent to the ratification of the peace accord, prompting the Pakistan Army to undertake operations aimed at reestablishing governance within the region. Therefore, Operation Silence was initiated in 2007 in response to the alleged complicity of Lal Masjid's administration in the abduction and murder of both law enforcement personnel and civilians (Chaudhry, et al, 2020). The operation at Lal Masjid had a profound impact on the conservative religious community of KPK, which consisted of a significant number of male and female religious students enrolled at Lal Masjid. They were greatly affected and harmed by this action. Furthermore, following this tragedy, there was a significant rise in the anger and aggression of Islamic militants across the country. Consequently, Baitullah Mehsud and other militant groups declared war against the country and its administration. As a result, a long term sequence of suicide bombings was started (Begum, 2017).

Formation of TTP Umbrella Organization

TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) was established on December 14, 2007 (Abbas, 2008). However, the primary cause of the TTP's establishment can be attributed to the downfall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan (Jadoon, 2021). Baitullah Mehsud was initially appointed as the leader of the TTP umbrella group (Siddique, 2010). By the consensus of 40 Shura members, Molana Gul Bahadur from North Waziristan was designated as the naib ameer (Deputy), while Molana Faqir Muhammad from Bajaur Agency was nominated as the third commander of TTP (Abbas, 2008). Consequently, TTP, the largest terrorist group in Pakistan, instigated acts of violence against the country's security forces. Due to the financial benefits it provides to TTP officials, along with foreign help, they actively engaged in extensive abductions in tribal area and other regions of Pakistan (Semple, 2016).

Baitullah Mehsud, the commander of the TTP, offered shelters and amenities to many smaller factions. He attempted to assemble factions under the guidance of Mullah Omar, the paramount leader of the Afghan Taliban (Rana, 2009). Subsequently, he was assassinated in a drone strike in 2009 and Hakimullah Mehsud was designated as the successor to command the TTP ("Profile: Hakimullah Mehsud", 2009). In 2009, the TTP established a close alliance with Al-Qaeda and recruited foreign workforces, all under the command of Hakimullah Mehsud. Additionally, they strengthened their connections with Sipah-e-Sahaba (SeS) and Lashkar-e Jahangvee (LeJ). The TTP's objectives, when connected with other militant groups, resulted in advantageous reputational gains. Therefore, the TTP gave a secure refuge to Al-Qaeda in former FATA, while Al-Qaeda extended financial and technical support. In February 2009, Nazir and Bahadur formed a robust partnership with TTP (Jadoon, 2021). As a result, the TTP functioned as a forum for smaller militant groups. In addition, the TTP umbrella group posed a

novel challenge for the Pakistani government and security services in the tribal area (Javed and Shafiq, 2022).

Continuity of Operations with Peace Deals

Therefore, in 2008, Operation Sirat-i-Mustaqeem was initiated in the Khyber Agency, while Operation Sherdil was launched in the same year in the Bajaur Agency (Abbasi, 2014). Hence, the 11th Corps of the Pakistan Army, in conjunction with the Frontier Corps (FC), initiated the Operation Sherdil and successfully built coalition posts in seven agencies within the former FATA. Throughout the course of this military operation, the armed forces encountered tremendous opposition from the extremist factions. Khar Qila was apprehended by security forces on August 12, 2008. During the aforementioned military operation, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) collaborated with the Army and FC, with the inclusion of artillery support (Mumtaz, 2019).

In March 2009, Operation Sherdil was finished with the signing of a peace agreement between the tribal elders of Bajaur Agency and the KPK administration. The purpose of this deal was to establish peace in Bajaur (Mumtaz, 2019). The primary objectives of this agreement were the relinquishment of the senior leadership of the Taliban, cessation of hostilities in Bajaur, and disarmament. The agreement was reached based on the stipulations of:

- The eradication of Taliban factions in Bajaur Agency.
- The Taliban will guarantee cessation of hostilities. Furthermore, all factions of the Taliban will capitulate to their own tribes.
- The government expects the surrender of Faqeer Muhammad, Muslim Khan (spokesperson) and three other commanders of the Bajaur Taliban. However, the government will only adopt a lenient approach if certain conditions are met “to live peacefully if they promised not to fight government forces.
- The Taliban fighters will abstain from utilizing weapons.
- The Taliban will cease its assaults on security forces and installations.
- No parallel governments would be established by Taliban.
- The Taliban should acknowledge and abide by the authority of the government without questioning or opposing it.
- Foreign combatants must be prohibited from residing in the tribal regions, and tribe’s people should refrain from renting out their homes to foreign soldiers.
- The Bajaur Agency region will not be utilized for insurgent activity.
- The Taliban will not establish their training camps in Bajaur.
- The tribes will take measures to prevent the Taliban from interfering in the affairs of other countries.
- The government personnel and security forces would be authorized to operate in the tribal region and respond to insurgent attacks.
- The government will not tolerate anti-government propaganda and will implement a policy of non-acceptance.
- The government will oversee the registration of Islamic seminars.

- To guarantee the safety of international contractors in the tribal regions.

This agreement was terminated due to a breach which prompted the terrorists to resume their actions shortly thereafter. Furthermore, the tribe elder failed to uphold law and order in the tribal regions (Roggio, 2009).

Operation Rah-e-Haq in the Prism of Peace Deal

The terrorist organizations reemerged and resumed their activities within the tribal territories. In these circumstances, the military decided to recommence activities in the tribal regions with the aim of reinstating governance and initiated Operation Rah-e-Haq-I within the Shangla district of Swat in 2007 (Abbasi, 2014). Therefore, the second phase of the Rah-e-Haq was initiated in the regions of Shangla and Swat Valley in the year 2008 (Abbasi, 2014). In May 21, 2008, a peace agreement was signed between Molana Sufi Muhammad, the leader of the Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM), and the military. The agreement outlined certain requirements on the implementation of Sharia law in Swat Valley and the Malakand division.

- Sharia law will be imposed in Swat and Malakand.
- Withdrawal of security forces from Swat and Malakand.
- The Taliban will accept the authority of the government and have cooperated with security forces and local people.
- The Taliban will stop the attacks on barbershops and music centers.
- The Taliban will transfer the formidable armaments, such as rocket launchers, firearms, and mortars, to the government.
- Advertising of weapons in public places will not be allowed.
- The Taliban will collaborate with the government to facilitate the vaccination campaign against polio.
- The Taliban will cease engaging in suicide bombings targeting security forces and local civilians.
- The Fazlullah Madrassah will undergo a transformation and become an Islamic University.
- The withdrawal of foreign militants will be mandatory.
- The women would have the opportunity to work without any apprehension of the Taliban.
- The training camps of the Taliban will be eliminated over the entire region.
- The local Taliban would facilitate the government's investigation of crimes.
- The Taliban would not attack the infrastructure, such as police stations, offices, and law enforcement agencies (Tajik, 2011).

Afterward, the ceasefire resulted in both parties attaining a sense of preserving their reputation; however the implementation of Shariya law remained unattainable (Shahzad, 2011). Subsequently, the prevailing circumstances began to deteriorate, prompting the initiation of the third phase of Operation Rah-e-Haq in January 2009, with the aim of reinstating a state of tranquilly and governance (Shahzad, 2011). Despite multiple actions carried out during Operation Rah-e-Haq from December 2008 to February 2009, the situation deteriorated every day, with no major progress made. As a result, the administration pursued political options to restore calm in the

Swat Valley. Meanwhile, the ANP (Awami National Party) government began peace talks with the leadership of the TNSM. As a result, the state consented to implement Nizam-e-Adl in Swat and Malakand, and President Asif Ali Zardari signed the law on April 13, 2009. This deal was a modification of the 2008 peace deal that retained the same terms and conditions. However, terrorists expanded their activity in Swat and launched militant attacks on military convoys, and Sufi Muhammad refused to accept the appointment of judges for Dar-ul-Qaza on May 3, 2009. As a result, the TNSM and ANP's peace deal grew unstable (Salik, 2019).

Consequences of Peace Deals

The peace accords between the TTP and military forces were strategic maneuvers by the terrorist groups to strengthen their authority while appearing to be cooperative (Begum, 2017). Meanwhile, the TTP had splintered into several subgroups, with one group not deeming the peace agreement with another acceptable. The militants consistently exploited this technique, repeatedly violating their peace accord and initiating terrorist assaults after a certain amount of time. As a result, the peace agreements revealed the inadequacy of the security forces and government in tribal area. As a result, TTP was able to establish a significant presence in the tribal communities at the local level. During the period of peace negotiations, the TTP managed to establish a robust connection with other extremist groups such as LeJ, Al-Qaeda, and foreign fighters (Ali, 2013).

During the peace negotiations, the TTP did not demonstrate their allegiance to the state, and the militant factions also used weapons. Nevertheless, the armed forces' peace agreements and lenient approaches have inadvertently emboldened the terrorist factions, allowing them to rebuild and strengthen their ranks (Begum, 2017). Foreign terrorists thrived in Pakistan's tribal region by exploiting lenient regulations, and they also managed to retain their alliances and collaborations with the TTP and other local factions (Ali, 2013). Over time, foreign militancy escalated its terrorist actions in the tribal area and Pakistan. The indigenous insurgents clandestinely offered secure refuge and aid to the foreign insurgents, masquerading as peace accords (Ali, 2013).

Diversion from Small to Large Operations

The Pakistani Taliban had been engaging in duplicity with the government and security forces. After a period of peace negotiations, the Pakistani Taliban resumed their terrorist attacks in the Swat and Malakand regions. On May 4, 2009, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, declared a new military operation named Rah-e-Rast in Swat (Salik, 2019). The context of this operation was the Taliban's breach of the agreement following the enforcement of the Nizam-e - Adal order. The Taliban refused to cease the public display of weapons and initiated militant attacks on security personnel, including the Police, FC, and Army (Afridi and Yousufi, 2014). APC on May 18, 2009, focused on the security situation in Swat and the government's efforts to counter the Taliban in order to establish the authority of the state. The PML-N demonstrated its endorsement and backing for the government's proposal, while other opposition parties also acknowledged the measure taken to combat terrorism in Swat and Malakand ("APC endorses Swat

PML-N's", 2009).

During the operation in Swat, there was a threat to the local population's safety. To ensure their security, the Army ordered the locals to leave Swat and relocate to secure areas. As a result, a large number of people migrated to specially designated areas for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), including Peshawar, Islamabad, Mardan, Noshehra, Charsada, and Swabi (Khan and Khan, 2021). In May 2009, the Armed forces turned toward the defensive to offensive mode in first time during War on terror and successfully reestablished authority over Mangora with the implementation of Operation Rah-e-Rast. The counter-terrorism operations conducted by the Pakistan Army exhibited a significant degree of success, resulting in the restoration of state control over the tribal territories (Hussain, 2019).

Dimension and Achievements of Rah-e-Rast

On June 29, 2009, the operation that started from many directions successfully connected at important intersections. By securing the Biha valley in the North and Shamoza in the West, the main locations controlled by terrorists were completely cleansed. Their command hierarchy had been completely dismantled, their training facilities uncovered and obliterated, their new members either eliminated or forced to flee, their stockpiles of ammunition destroyed, and their central offices at Peochar, Chaprial, Matta, Khawazakhela, Mingora, Kabal, Banai Baba Ziarat, Sakhra Valley, Saidu Sharif, and Biha had been annihilated. The security forces in Swat have successfully established communication at Khel Kandao and are currently operating in Bunir. They are also strengthening their positions in the surrounding villages of Dangram, Kukarai, and Jambil. The security forces established a safe perimeter surrounding Khazana, Zarra Khela, and Garai. They then conducted a thorough clearance and search operation from Shalkosar towards Jukhtai and from Balasur towards Shah Dheri (Afridi, et al, 2014).

Operations had been launched by the security forces in the fortified regions of Kabbal, Dhadara, Akhun Khalle, Rangeela, and Zarra Khela. The operation yielded impressive outcomes within a brief timeframe. By June 30, 2009, security forces had effectively cleared the Swat Valley, Malakand, Mingora, and Char Bagh areas. They managed to apprehend a total of 1635 terrorists and arrest approximately 254 terrorists. Their camps and hideouts have been completely destroyed. The Rah-e-Rast operation successfully eradicated the terrorist network in the Malakand Division within a period of 60 days. At a press briefing discussing the progress of Operation Rah-e-Rast, Major General Athar Abbas, a military spokesperson, revealed that the TTP terrorists were being supported from across the border in Afghanistan. Throughout the operation, the security forces made a successful discovery of a substantial stockpile of weaponry from the United States and India. They successfully gained full control of Mingora city, effectively eliminating major terrorist training centers and neutralizing key militant commanders (Afridi, et al, 2014).

TTP Leadership in FATA and Swat

The TTP leadership established the guidelines for attacks and other operations, while local commanders in various regions carried out the directives of

higher authorities.

Table 1: Commanders of TTP in Various Agencies in Initial Years

Name	Position	Province	Agency
Hakimullah Mehsud	Leader	FATA	Khyber ,Orakzai, Kurram
Wali-ur-Rahman	Deputy Leader	FATA	North Waziristan
Azaz Tariq	Spokes person	Unknown	Unknown
Wali Mohammad	Local Commander	FATA	South Waziristan
Haji Omar	Local Commander	FATA	South Waziristan
Tarq Afridi	Deputy Commander	FATA	Khyber
Gul Meida	Local Commander	FATA	Khyber
Pir Saif-ur-Rehma	Local Commander	FATA	Khyber
Fazal Saeed Utezai	Deputy Commander	FATA	Kurram
Mullah Toofan	Local Commander	FATA	Kurram
Mullah Rafique	Local Commander	FATA	Kurram
Akhunzada Aslam Farooqui	Deputy Commander	FATA	Orakzai
Mufti Ilyas	Deputy Commander	KPK	Dara Adam Khel
Maulana Ismail	Local Commander	FATA	Bajaur
Dr Ismail	Local Commander	FATA	Bajaur
Maulana Muhammad Jamal	Commander	FATA	Bajaur
Qari Zia Rehman	Commander	FATA	Bajaur
Omar Khalid	Commander	FATA	Mohmand
Mullah Falullah	Commander	KPK	Swat
Ibn Amin	Deputy Commander	KPK	Swat

Source: (Australian Government, 2013).

Under the guidance of Baitullah Mehsud, the group of TTP commanders orchestrated numerous militant strikes around Pakistan, with Baitullah Mehsud being regarded as the main pillar of TTP. During the year of 2011-2012, the TTP force had an estimated strength of around 20,000 to 25,000 (Australian Government, 2013).

Mechanism of Operation Rah-i-Nijat

The scenario faced by the SWA over an extended period might be characterized as a tragedy. The Pakistani government made numerous attempts to establish the authority of the state, which proved to be a challenging undertaking. Consequently, the demise of Bitullah Mehsud as a result of a drone strike on August

5, 2009, precipitated a really unfavorable predicament for the TTP (Salik, 2019). The TTP has escalated its acts of terrorism across the nation by targeting the military and police in various regions. On October 5th, the Taliban carried out a suicide attack on World Food Program officers who were suspected of spying for the US and Pakistani forces. The attackers were disguised in paramilitary uniforms. On 9th October, a total of 50 individuals were reported missing in another incident of violence in Peshawar. The largest assault occurred on October 10th when the perpetrator infiltrated the General Head Quarter (GHQ) while dressed in military attire. They proceeded to seize 40 individuals as hostages and caused the deaths of other individuals. Against the backdrop of these events, the government, under immense public pressure following the attack on GHQ and the large-scale public killings in Peshawar due to suicide strikes, made the decision to initiate a decisive military action in South Waziristan (Khan, et al, 2023). However, the leadership crisis emerged subsequent to the assessment of the prevailing circumstances, prompting the Pakistan Army to initiate Operation Rah-i-Nijat on October 16, 2009, taking advantage of their favorable position (Salik, 2019).

The civil government approved and cooperates with army during this operation, ISPR (Inter Services Public Relations) chief Major General Athar Abbas said to journalists: “The army has launched an operation after receiving order from the government. The operation was launched early in the morning. Both air and ground troops are taking part” (“Army embarks on Rah-i-Nijat finally”, 2009). An estimated range of 8,000 to 10,000 individuals from the local population, and approximately 1,500 foreign combatants hailing from Uzbekistan, Chechnya, China (specifically the Uighur ethnic group), and Arabic-speaking regions, engaged in armed conflict alongside a force of 28,000 military soldiers (Malik, 2009).

The Pakistan military executed Operation Rah-i-Nijat, marking their inaugural fully coordinated combat operation. In this military operation, strategic planning is carried out by the military to combat ground insurgency from military components. The objectives are then allocated in three different routes within the South Waziristan Agency. The Pakistan military executed comprehensive operations utilizing three strategic battle-axes.

- Jandola-Sararogha-Janata axis.
- Wana-Kanigurm-Ladha axis.
- Razmak-Makeen axis.

The Pakistan military swiftly executed Operation Rah-e-Nijat with a well-designed strategy (Salik, 2019).

In December 2009, military ground forces successfully seized control of the majority of the Sararogha, Ladha, and Makin territories. The TTP implemented a strategy to vacate the South Waziristan Agency, resulting in the relocation of TTP terrorists to various regions in neighboring agencies. Terrorists relocated to Orakzai, Kurram, and NWA, while others moved to Shawal valley. Consequently, certain extremists relocated to Afghanistan via the Afghan border. The Pakistani military assumed control of the Mehsud regions and dismantled the command and control structure of the TTP. In December 2009, the 11th corps briefly withdrew from the

South Waziristan Agency. Following the departure of the troops from the region, terrorists resumed their activities in the South Waziristan Agency. The TTP initiated both minor and major strikes. The mosque in Rawalpindi was targeted with grenades and gunfire. A total of 36 individuals lost their lives in the assault, which included 7 military personnel. Additionally, 45 individuals sustained injuries. Following the aforementioned incident, the Pakistan military conducted a targeted assault on the positions occupied by terrorists, thereby eliminating their presence in the South Waziristan Agency region (Jones and Fair, 2022).

Since the beginning of 2010, the armed forces had completely eliminated any insurgent presence in the SWA, therefore regaining control over the whole territory. In addition, in March 2010, the military launched another offensive in the Orakzai Agency, effectively establishing government authority in the region. During the operations carried out in 2010, the security forces detained a grand number of 8863 persons who were associated with the TTP and other terrorist organizations (Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies, 2012).

Aftereffects of Operation Rah-i-Nijat

With the implementation of Operation Rah-i-Nijat, TTP and other extremist factions initiated their endeavors against the state within the NWA (Jones and Fair, 2022). Several additional terrorist organizations, such as the Haqqani Network (HN), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), and the Islamic Jihadist Group (IJG), engaged in collaboration with the TTP (Javed, 2016). The security situation in Pakistan has deteriorated, with an escalation in terrorist threats observed on a daily basis. Pakistan experienced a period characterized by widespread violence and conflict (Zulfqar, 2017). The incident involving the assault on Kamra Air Base occurred in the year 2012, with the TTP claiming credit for this act of aggression. The militant organization asserted that the assault was a consequence of the demise of Osama bin Laden, which entailed the destruction of three aircraft and the loss of 12 military personnel (Malik, 2012).

The severity of the crisis had escalated to the point where terrorists were indiscriminately targeting innocent children, women, and marketplaces. Even educational institutions and passenger buses were not exempt from these threats ("Victims of terrorism 2012", 2012). In the year 2013, there was a notable increase in instances of terrorism, with terrorist organizations displaying significant levels of mobilization. Consequently, Pakistan was positioned as the third-ranked country in terms of terrorism, as reported by the Global Terrorism Index (GTI), following Iraq and Afghanistan. However, it is noteworthy that in 2013, Pakistan held the position of being the second-largest country in terms of fatality rate caused by acts of terrorism. A total of 2,740 fatalities were recorded as a result of 71 instances of suicide attacks ("Pakistan ranks third on Global Terrorism Index", 2014).

Administration Change and Failure of Negotiation

In 2013, Nawaz Sharif assumed office as the 18th prime minister of Pakistan, following his election victory and the acquisition of a majority of parliamentary seats ("Nawaz sworn in as PM", 2013). In light of the escalating occurrences of terrorism and the prevailing security conditions within the nation, Prime Minister Nawaz

Sharif convened the APC. The individuals involved in this process encompassed prominent political parties and high-ranking military officials, such as the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and the Director General (DG) of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). These individuals provided a comprehensive briefing to the Prime Minister regarding the prevailing security situation. Subsequently, a consensus was reached to engage in negotiations with non-state actors. However, the user did not provide any specific details regarding the terrorist group or the TTP. Instead, they emphasized the importance of employing a strategy centered on dialogue. Moreover, it was clarify that:

The process should be as inclusive as possible, with full participation of the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other stakeholders. The ‘guiding principles’ for talks should be respect for local customs and traditions, values and religious beliefs and the creation of an environment which brings peace and tranquility to the region. (“APC backs govt push for peace talks”, 2013)

Following the decision made by the government, the negotiating process commenced, wherein the negotiators convened for talks at undisclosed places in the NWA region during the initial stages. The government released over twelve members of the Taliban in order to facilitate the completion of the talk’s process. However, as a result of the division among the Taliban, the progress of the negotiation process came to a halt. A portion of the individuals expressed their endorsement for engaging in discussions, while others persisted in their acts of aggression. Throughout the course of the negotiations, many instances of aggression were observed, significantly impacting the well-being of the local populace. The civilian population was subject to potential harm as a result of the military's punitive measures undertaken in reaction to acts of militancy (Khan, et al, 2014). However, the military operations were solely a reactive measure in light of terrorist acts that occurred concurrently with the diplomatic process. Consequently, pro-army violent factions initiated acts opposing the army (Khan, et al, 2014).

War on Terror (WoT) and Fatalities from 2001-2013

Resulting the 9/11 catastrophe, Pakistan suffered terrorist strikes as a result of the United States' engagement in Afghanistan and Pakistan's development of anti-terrorism strategies. Nonetheless, Pakistan has suffered significant and devastating consequences.

Table 2: Fatalities in Terrorist Violence in Pakistan 2000-2013

Year	Civilians	Security Force Personnel	Terrorist	Total
2001	29	9	0	38
2002	88	7	44	139
2003	140	24	25	189
2004	435	184	244	863

2005	430	81	137	648
2006	608	325	538	1471
2007	1522	597	1479	3598
2008	2155	654	3906	6715
2009	2324	991	8389	11704
2010	1796	469	5170	7435
2011	2738	765	2800	6303
2012	3007	732	2472	6211
2013	3001	676	1702	5379

Source: <https://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/casualties.htm>

Pakistan experienced a significant number of militant strikes between 2001 and 2013. As a result, the violent attacks resulted in a significant number of civilian and security personnel fatalities. Nevertheless, between 2009 and 2013, there was a significant surge in militant attacks. From 2009 to 2013, Pakistan had a period of intense violence and terrorism, resulting in tremendous loss of life (Institute for Conflict Management, 2021).

CONCLUSION

In sum and substance 9/11 attacks had fully changed the scenario of the world order with focus on South West Asia again. The US held responsible Al-Qaeda and attacked on Afghanistan with goal to assassinate Osama bin Laden and eliminate Al-Qaeda. When Pakistan government decided to play its role as front-line state and supplied logistical support to NATO/US forces a wave of terrorism had arisen in Pakistan's tribal area likely former FATA. In this context, Pakistani security forces were compelled to conduct military operations in the former FATA and concluded peace talks. Initially Pakistan's security forces avoided taking immediate direct actions and instead followed political option to settle issues through peace deals and dialogue. However, as a result of the peace talks it is observed that terrorists reorganized and started large-scale attacks on security forces and civilians in the former FATA. These terrorist acts repeatedly disrupted peace talks. Even TTP arose in 2007 which drew a large number of terrorists to join its ranks. The TTP's formation aimed to provide a forum for small and unofficial terrorist organizations within a single refugee camp. However, in 2009, the Pakistani army took a decisive action against terrorism and launched large-scale operations in Swat, including Operation Rah-e-Rast in Swat and Operation Rah-i-Nijat in SWA, which lasted until 2010. Large-scale operations resulted in a huge influx of terrorists to Afghanistan and the NWA. Despite this a wave of terrorism swept across Pakistan, making it the third-largest country in the GTI index after Iraq in 2013. During large-scale operations 2009-2013, the military targeted certain areas of the former FATA but

terrorists sought refuge in NWA and Afghanistan which prompted their reformation in 2011. It is a fact that despite Pakistan army's operational policy terrorism had been increased in the country between 2011 and 2013.

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